



TOWARDS FAIRNESS

A multicultural Australia for all

Cover artwork

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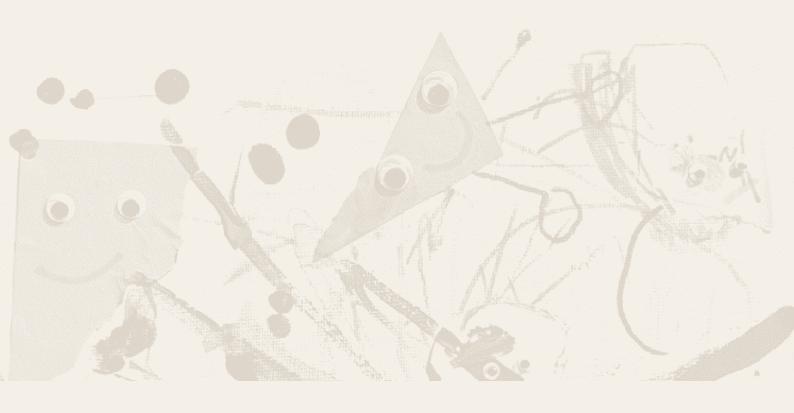
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TOWARDS FAIRNESS

A multicultural Australia for all

Acknowledgement of Country

The Review Panel acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.

The Panel



(L—R) Ms Christine Castley, Dr Bulent (Hass) Dellal AO — Chair, and Ms Nyadol Nyuon OAM.

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THE FIRST WORD

by June Oscar

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner



Australia's identity as a nation-state is inherently multicultural. Our nation is founded on, formed by, and will continue to grow through, a diversity of cultures, languages, global heritages, religions, spiritualities and faiths. Within our territorial borders we have a living and breathing history of encounter, connection, and familial and community relationships forged between our citizens from countless cultures and backgrounds.

Across Australia, there are stories of intergenerational multiculturalism where the fabric of communities is formed by the economic, political and religious factors that have drawn people here, from across the world.

Take my own community in the Kimberley, far north Western Australia, where we have incredibly rich family heritages. We are strongly Indigenous but many of us also have family or ancestral lines that connect us to Europe, China, Japan, Malaysia, India, Vietnam and nations across Africa. The vast array of cultures and traditions that form our lives and ways of being today is endless. Throughout the colonial era, in the Kimberley, many of our peoples formed close friendships, generational ties and married those that came to the region as travellers and workers — from the Afghan cameleers to those from across Asia who were part of the pearling and pastoral industries.

Pre-colonisation, we have stories of complex and interconnected trading systems that traversed our Indigenous Countries from the north to the south and east of this landmass. We also know of trading and migratory routes that extended across the seas — our borders are permeable. There is amazing evidence of trade and marriage between Arnhem Land and the Makassans from Indonesia who traded trepang. The Torres Strait has deep connections with Papua New Guinea and the South Sea Islands. All this is just a small window into our history of multiculturalism.

Australia, as a democratic nation-state, prides itself on our values of acceptance, inclusivity and freedom of expression. We want Australian citizens to feel confident in being all of who they are as individuals; we want them to engage in the many cultural, religious and spiritual practices that come from this history of interconnectedness and the arrival of new Australians. We also want every citizen to feel Australian and to have a deep belonging to this land.

From our Indigenous heritages etched into the earth and landforms, to our extensive migrant history, we know that multiculturalism is Australia's founding, most enduring and uniting strength. It is important that all Australian governments and citizens recognise this truth, celebrate it, and do what we can to nurture and grow our shared multicultural identity.

Unfortunately, this truth is too little recognised or valued in our writings on Australian history and our projections about what Australia can become. We consistently fail to elevate the multicultural lives and stories — the binding agent of our social cohesiveness.

We grapple with revealing and investing in the strength of our multiculturalism because we grapple with a reckoning of the parallel, painful history of our often violent attempts to eradicate anything deemed counter to Western Anglo society. Through legal and political structures, processes both overt and subtle have enabled Anglo dominance while reducing the significance of other cultures.

This shadowy history began almost immediately in 1788, when Australia was considered terra nullius. Indigenous peoples — the oldest living civilisation on earth — were seen as less than human by the British and with no connection, no sense of belonging or ownership to this land. This lie was eventually thrown out with the Mabo High Court decision in 1992.

By that point the lie had already wrought significant damage and harm to our peoples, which started with conflict and massacres, and continued through policies to assimilate us into Anglo society, the most well-known being the one resulting in the Stolen Generations. For a substantial period of the shallow history of this contemporary polity. the Australian nation-state was committed to maintaining its Britishness and ensuring the Australian population would predominantly be of Anglo-Celtic origin. One of the first significant pieces of Commonwealth legislation to pass after Federation was the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, more commonly known as the White Australia Policy. elements of which remained intact until 1973.

This history is within living memory and plays out in the systemic and institutional racism experienced by First Nations and racially marginalised and minoritised people today.

In overcoming discrimination, dismantling barriers to achieve equity and justice for all, and accepting the strength of our multicultural identity, we must recognise and learn from this history. Processes of truth-telling can support our embrace of one another, rejecting the fear and anger that festers along the lines of division, to remind us of our entwined histories as we embark on this ever-evolving journey of multicultural nation-building.

This Multicultural Review enlivens the most important values of Australians, of generosity, courage, love and care for one another. It also elevates our unrelenting commitment to the fair go and the belief that when everyone from all backgrounds can contribute to the life and institutions of Australia it enhances our politics, economy and society far into the future. It also recognises that new or first- and second-generation Australians are eager to understand our multicultural history and in particular the languages and cultures of First Nations peoples.

At heart, the concept of multiculturalism is not foreign to this great and expansive land. For 60,000 years and counting, since time immemorial, this continent has held the sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and kin groups emanating from hundreds of specific Countries or, as we have come to refer to them, First Nations.

Our First Nations laws, song lines and ceremonies travel thousands of kilometres, intersecting and connecting with hundreds of languages and cultural traditions. The travelling songs of Australia hold immense stories and knowledge. They live in the land and speak and teach about how to exist throughout this continent and to support and enable the flourishing of vibrant and diverse relationships among all humans and non-human relatives.

Here on this ancient continent that we have all come to call home, the oldest and most intricate kinship system can act as our foundation, scaffolding, and inspiration for a multicultural framework today.

June Oscar AO

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

LETTER TO THE MINISTER

Dear Minister

We are pleased to present to you the report Towards fairness: A multicultural Australia for all. The terms of reference required the panel to assess and make recommendations on policy and the implementation of a framework to support a cohesive multicultural society. The Panel's deliberations were informed by extensive consultations across Australia, gathering the thoughts, ideas and stories of a diverse range of individuals and organisations, all expressing the desire to progress the future of a multicultural Australia.

The panel considered 796 public submissions (15% in languages other than English) from individuals and corporations, unions, think tanks and other interested parties. We held 216 public consultation sessions, in every state and territory. In addition, the Panel met with officials from federal, state and territory government agencies, and with a comprehensive cross-section of representatives from across the community, including service providers, business groups and faith leaders.

This Review sets out a necessarily ambitious framework for Australia's multicultural future for the Australian Government's consideration. Embarking on a much-needed national conversation following the COVID-19 global pandemic and other international events that have profoundly impacted Australian society, the Review presents a blueprint for addressing existing, emerging and future challenges. As such, the report will contribute to the government's implementation of a multi-decade multicultural framework, strengthening Australia's social fabric and economic prosperity by building on our productive and evolving multicultural society.

The recommendations in this report are founded on conversations held Australia-wide in which we listened and carefully considered the many views, hopes and aspirations of those who consider Australia home. In undertaking the Review, the Panel felt the weight of responsibility to formulate a report that revealed current issues, while being cognisant of the opportunity to shape the future of our country. We recognise that this is a once-in-a-generation reform agenda requiring a whole-of-government and community approach that will position Australia to realise its full potential as one nation made up of many cultures, faiths and experiences. With this in mind, we deliver this report to the Australian Government in the hope that it will receive the recommendations in the spirit of advancing Australia's social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

The Panel was very ably assisted in its work by a dedicated secretariat provided by the Department of Home Affairs and by a committed Reference Group, with representation from peak bodies and business and community sectors, all of whom went over and above the call of duty in supporting the work of the Panel.

In fulfilling our role, we hope to convey the vision and aspirations of everyone who participated in the Review. Our sincere thanks go to the people of Australia for engaging with us and entrusting us with their thoughts and ideas.

Yours sincerely

Dr Bulent (Hass) Dellal AO — Chair Ms Nyadol Nyuon OAM Ms Christine Castley

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This Review is concerned with Australia's multiculturalism. It set out the Panel's assessments on Australia's current multicultural framework and offers recommendations on what measures are needed to remain a country that continues to enjoy the benefits of its diversity and the measures needed to adapt to the present social, economic and political landscape.

The Review was initiated on the 50th anniversary of then immigration minister Al Grassby's speech outlining for the first time the vision of a multicultural Australia. Since its adoption as public policy, multiculturalism has been subjected to ongoing reviews; this Review builds on that legacy.

Australia has experienced substantial changes since Grassby's speech in 1973. We are now facing a new era of uncertainty, where the beliefs and concepts we previously counted on for stability are being put into question by changing circumstances. This Review is vital in steering through these changes and moulding a positive future for coming generations.

The Review Panel travelled extensively across Australia to conduct public consultations and invited submissions that would inform its report to the government. Throughout the six-month review period, we discovered a lasting truth: Australian communities are the driving force behind the success and resilience of multiculturalism. From remote rural areas to bustling cities, Australians from diverse backgrounds have upheld the essence of multiculturalism, despite changes in government focus and priorities. Though they might not explicitly articulate it in this way, they have embraced an attitude of acceptance and tolerance, demonstrating that multiculturalism is not just a social policy but a lived experience. Their acceptance, understanding and willingness to embrace diversity have shaped the success and resilience of multiculturalism in Australia.

In numerous consultations and submissions, there were recurring appeals to embrace the principles of multiculturalism that shifted Australia from an emphasis on White Australia to being a nation that values and protects the diverse experiences within its population. The principles of mutual respect and equality embedded in multiculturalism are not privileges reserved for a select few; they are fundamental indicators of societal wellbeing for all and a way of fostering a thriving, harmonious community. This report urges proactive steps in building a resilient multicultural nation that can effectively address contemporary challenges, including recent events that highlight the need to embrace diversity. Our openness to welcoming this opportunity and the challenges of our time will shape us now and shape the future success and unity of our country. We all have a role as members of this era and this nation.

REVIEW TIMELINE

23 February 2023

Consultations and public comments open on the draft terms of the Multicultural Framework Review.

11 July 2023 | Week 1

The panel begins the community consultation phase with a fortnight of in-person, virtual and hybrid consultations with a broad range of community members, federal and state government departments in the ACT.

30 July 2023 | Week 4

Consultations in regional Australia kick off with first consultation by Castley in Cairns, Far North QLD.

14 August 2023 | Week 6

Dellal consults with media stakeholders in Sydney, NSW, as Castley and Nyuon head to Perth and Regional WA.

26 August 2023 | Week 8

Dellal and Castley consult with a broad range of community representatives in Melbourne, VIC.

11 September 2023 | Week 10

The Review Report starts to take shape; the Panel commences report planning.

25 September 2023 | Week 12

Dellal convenes a consultation forum with community leaders in Morwell, VIC. Panel returns to the ACT, engaging with community representatives and federal departments. Castley convenes a consultation forum for community representatives in Brisbane, QLD.

25 October 2022

The Australian Government commits \$1 million to a review of Australia's multicultural policy settings.

2 June 2023

At the 50 Years of Multiculturalism event in NSW, Minister Giles announces the launch of the Review. The Review Panel is announced: the Panel Chair,

The Review Panel is announced: the Panel Chair, Dr Bulent (Hass) Dellal AO, Christine Castley and Nyadol Nyuon OAM.

24 July 2023 | Week 3

Dellal kicks off inter-state community consultations with first consultations in Adelaide, SA.

7 August 2023 | Week 5

Castley and Nyuon travel to Toowoomba and Townsville, consulting with a broad range of community stakeholders in Regional QLD.

20 August 2023 | Week 7

Dellal and Nyuon consult broadly with community in Sydney, NSW. Castley travels to NT and meets key groups in the multicultural sector in Darwin.

4 September 2023 | Week 9

Dellal consults in Mount Gambier and Salisbury in Regional SA. Nyuon meets with stakeholders in Hobart and Launceston in TAS.

19 September 2023 | Week 11

Dellal heads to Bendigo, Shepparton and Geelong in Regional VIC and Albury in Regional NSW, consulting with a broad range of stakeholders.

29 January 2024 | Week 24

Report cover design art competition for children and young people closes.

December 2023 | Week 22 — Week 23

The Report takes its final shape as it undergoes reviews and readings. Panel members meticulously review report drafts to ensure the diverse voices and experiences from broad consultations and submissions are captured in the framework.

23 November 2023 | Week 20

Castley attends the Australian Institute of Interpreters & Translators Conference and the National Settlement Conference.

7 November 2023 | Week 18

Panel convenes in Canberra to progress the Review Report.

23 October 2023 | Week 16

Dellal travels to Wagga Wagga in Regional NSW.

10 October 2023 | Week 14

Dellal and Castley meet with media houses and community organisations in Sydney and the ACT. Australians provide 796 submissions to the Review.

March 2024

The Panel presents their final report to Minister Giles.

18 December 2023 | Week 24

The Panel presents their draft report Towards Fairness: A multicultural Australia for all to Minister Giles.

27 November 2023 | Week 21

The Panel returns to Canberra and attends the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Conference. The report cover design art competition for children and young people is launched at this conference. Consultation with the Review Reference Group and the Australian Multicultural Council is also conducted.

13 November 2023 | Week 19

Castley travels to Armidale, Regional NSW, consulting with community representatives and multicultural stakeholders.

31 October 2023 | Week 17

Dellal virtually consults with national sporting bodies and sporting clubs. Dellal and Castley travel to Alice Springs, NT consulting with community representatives and multicultural stakeholders.

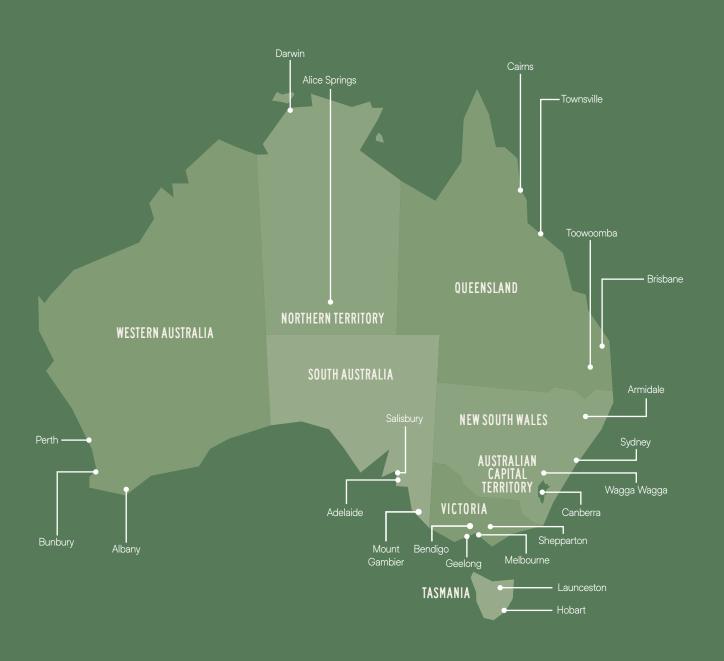
16 October 2023 | Week 15

Dellal and Nyuon consult with Members of Parliament. Castley begins a fortnight of in-person consultations in Brisbane, QLD with a broad range of stakeholders.

3 October 2023 | Week 13

Dellal consults with QLD Government stakeholders as the Review Report takes shape.

CONSULTATION LOCATIONS





Overview of the report chapters

There were over 60 themes identified in the submissions to the Panel. Figure 1 displays the relative prevalence of the top 10 themes: inclusion and belonging; discrimination and racism; language services; education; visas; grants or funding; policy; employment and workers' rights; access and equity; and recognition of cultural activities and events. These themes were also evident throughout consultations.

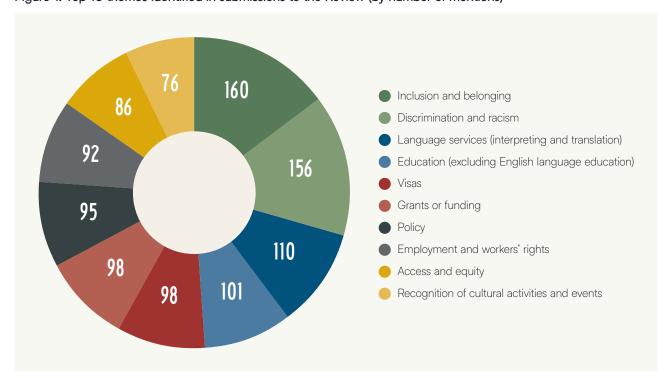


Figure 1: Top 10 themes identified in submissions to the Review (by number of mentions)

We have drawn on these themes (see Appendix F for further details) along with the Review Terms of Reference (Appendix A) to form the Report chapters. In particular we have focused on the themes of identity, belonging, inclusion, representation and engagement through media, the arts and sport, addressing discrimination and racism, sustainable and accessible language services, education, employment, access and equity policy, grant programs and connecting communities at the grassroots level through to all layers of government.

The report aims to bring these themes together to build on the strength that is our diversity as a nation, weaving throughout the importance of support for multiculturalism, especially for youth and regional Australia and inclusive of First Nations people as an integral part of multiculturalism.

To continue the journey forward, we provide a road map for a renewed multicultural framework. This road map, along with the right institutional settings, provides the continuum needed to sustain a successful, fair multicultural Australia for all.

AUSTRALIA'S MULTICULTURAL FRAMEWORK - A ROADMAP

CONNECTION Setting the foundations

- Bipartisan **national commitment** to multiculturalism based on social cohesion, cultural identity and equality of opportunity.
- Strong leadership and accountability:
 - Multicultural Australia Commission to lead implementation of Multicultural Framework.
- Strategic planning and coordination through a dedicated Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship.
- Collaboration across the country and community, Multicultural Ministerial Forum and Multicultural Community Advisory Council.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Creating a welcoming Australia

- National Plan to celebrate multiculturalism.
- Implement a sustainable **national language policy** for social and economic outcomes.
- Refreshed citizenship process that reflects a modern, multicultural nation.
- An independent and diverse multicultural media sector.
- Invest in community organisations and cultural programs for creative solutions to drive social change through the **arts and sport**.

INCLUSION

Working together to get services right

- Embed **culturally responsive services** including health, disability, education, aged care and housing.
- Uplift of **cultural capability** across the Australia Public Service, driven by proactive and accountable leadership by APSC.
- A modernised multicultural grants program centred on sustainability, certainty and impact.
- Design and implement Strategy to bridge the cultural digital divide.
- Focus on unique needs of young people and regional communities.

Data Research Reporting

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel has made a set of 29 recommendations. The full summary list of these recommendations is available at 'Chapter 10: Implementation' of this report. Set out below are 10 high-priority recommendations that the Panel views as immediately actionable.

- Australian Government to affirm commitment to multicultural Australia
- Australia to formally observe the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March
- Develop a national plan to celebrate Australia's cultural diversity, to synchronise existing federal, state, territory and local government initiatives such as Harmony Week to acknowledge and celebrate Australia's cultural diversity
- Establish a Multicultural Affairs Commission and Commissioner, and standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship, with a dedicated minister
- The Department of Home Affairs, through government and non-government consultation to action an immediate review of the Australian citizenship test procedures, including considering providing the test in languages other than English and in alternative and more accessible formats
- Leverage Australia's diversity of languages to support our economic prosperity through a revitalised language policy led by the Australian Government
- Ensure the sustainability and quality of language services (interpreting and translating)
- Establish a fully funded TIS National capacity within the existing business unit
- Boost National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) funding
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of multicultural grants and funding programs, with consultation and co-design of guidelines and common standards across the Australian Government, state and territory and local governments and community sectors



Setting the context for multiculturalism in Australia



Many cultures, languages, and faiths have shaped the history of Australia. This diversity has both tested and shaped our society.

Embracing everyone within its borders while celebrating differences and integrating them into a narrative of unity has presented both obstacles and successes. These cycles continue to shape the ongoing national conversation about our identity and prospects for social, political, and economic progress.¹

From the beginning, there was diversity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as the First People of this continent. The diversity of languages (over 250 language groups identified thus far) and complexity of social structures continues to facilitate relations between groups and has done since time immemorial.

With thousands of years of tradition and language, First Nations cultures and histories are central to Australia's national fabric.

This is a continuing story of resistance, ever since violent attempts at eradication in 1788 with the arrival of British colonisers.

It started with the forced dispossession of land through conflict and massacres that decimated Indigenous populations.² It continued in the implementation of assimilation policies that sought to eradicate Indigenous cultures.³ It persisted as Australia established itself as a nation-state in 1901 through policies of racial exclusion that sought to maintain its predominantly Anglo-Celtic origin of 1788 (which was based on the premise of terra nullius).

Denying diversity to creating a new society

The history is familiar. In the 19th century, British colonisers sought to develop a society for British migrants. British laws, social structures, symbols, culture, and identity were imposed on everyone living in the colonies at the time. Still, the presence of diversity before settlement and among settlers in 1788 challenged the imposed myth of racial and cultural uniformity.

The colonisers on the First Fleet brought their differences at the time of settlement, meaning diversity was already shaping the fabric of the colonial community. Historical records show Muslim people, Jewish people and people of African descent were among the convicts on the First Fleets, though their numbers were small. As the colonies expanded, various immigrant groups contributed to colonial societies' demographics and cultural landscape, including Chinese migrants, South Sea Islanders, Afghan migrants and European migrants. These stories show the diversity of those that came to Australia in the 19th century.

Citing these examples does not do justice to the richness of the stories of these cohorts, nor does this Report attempt to provide a complete history of Australia's early diversity. However, they do serve as evidence that diversity has long been an integral fact of life on this continent, despite being denied through laws and attitudes promoting racial superiority during colonial times and the later White Australia Policy.

Maintaining the 'myth' of White Australia against the realities of diversity

The White Australia Policy attempted to maintain racial uniformity despite diversity being the reality. Leading supporters refused to admit the demographic realities of the time and wanted to secure a 'white Australia' against non-white immigrants. The Policy succeeded: in 1947, Australia was '99 per cent white and 96 per cent British'. Securing white Australia did not, though, ensure economic or social stability, and the policy was abandoned at the height of its 'success' as the country needed to 'populate or perish'.

Dismantling the White Australia policy and the emergence of multiculturalism

The shift from White Australia was gradual. Australia's immigration policies continued to include elements of racial criteria as a determinant of settlement. 'Racial criteria' remained a barrier for non-European migrants, while it was relaxed for European migrants, who were allowed to settle in larger numbers. All migrants, though, were expected to assimilate by conforming to the dominant culture: to belong no longer required being British by ancestry but becoming so through conformity.

Assimilation policies eventually failed as migrants held on to their languages, traditions and customs. They refused to abandon their 'cultural 'baggage' in exchange for an identity grounded in British heritage. As a result, assimilation was replaced with integration.

The integration policy recognised the importance of cultural retention — but still limited its expression. Migrants were supposed to practise their culture within their private sphere while displaying conformity publicly. Limited services were provided, without any overarching legal or policy frameworks for effectively managing cultural diversity. Multiculturalism began gaining traction as a more suitable policy approach to Australia's diversity.

Foundations of multiculturalism in Australia

Multiculturalism emerged through grassroots activism and demands from academics and community organisations before it was adopted as government policy.⁵ This grassroots movement prompted an increased understanding of cultural diversity, ultimately shaping the Fraser government's formal adoption of multiculturalism in 1977, which ushered in a comprehensive framework that offered crucial infrastructure, research, policies and services to uphold multicultural values, while preserving individual cultural identities within Australian society.

Table 1 displays the key reforms and initiatives adopted before, during and after the Fraser government measures that established Australia as a multicultural nation. We continue to depend on these reforms 50 years later.

Table 1: Key reforms and initiatives of multiculturalism

Key reforms and initiatives of multiculturalism

1973 'Multiculturalism' introduced into Australian policy discourse

 Grassby, Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam government, issued a reference paper titled A multi-cultural society for the future.

1975 The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 is passed

- Prime Minister Whitlam considered the Act a 'historic measure' that aimed to entrench new attitudes of tolerance and understanding in the hearts and minds of the people.
- Whitlam's reference to Australia as a 'multicultural nation' indicated the government's commitment to multiculturalism.

1977 Australian Ethnic Affairs Council established

- · The Fraser government established the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, which recommended a policy of multiculturalism based on three principles:
 - social cohesion
 - cultural identity
 - equality of opportunity and access.

1978 Australia formally adopts policy of multiculturalism

• On the council's recommendation, Australia adopted the policy of multiculturalism, embracing diversity as a strength rather than a threat to social cohesion.

1978 Galbally Review of Migrant Programs and Services

- · A significant step in assessing and improving settlement services for migrants, the Galbally Review's recommendations helped shape settlement services to better meet the needs of a diverse population.
- · Significantly, this report was translated into nine community languages, signalling the government's commitment to a multicultural nation and the need to encourage a multicultural attitude across Australian society.

1977–78 Implementation of post-arrival programs and services to migrants

- · The Fraser government implemented the first official national multicultural policies, informed by the Galbally Report, focused on government programs and services for migrants.
- The critical elements of the report and its influence on government policy were to:
 - establish guiding principles for multiculturalism, emphasising social cohesion, equal opportunity and cultural identity, thereby providing a framework for what multiculturalism should achieve in society
 - declare that all Australians have the right to maintain their culture without fear of prejudice, suggesting that preserving cultural diversity enriches the nation's culture as a whole
 - recognise the need to address ethno-specific rights, primarily related to accessing government services, to reduce the disadvantage experienced by migrants
 - recommend the creation of special programs and services for migrants to ensure equality of access and provision, acknowledging that migrants might have different needs when settling into a new country.
- The report was a significant step in defining multicultural policy and settlement programs. It led to a more clearly articulated multicultural policy and improved settlement services to meet the needs of a diverse population.
- The government's adoption of the Galbally Report marked the emergence of multiculturalism as a well-articulated and officially endorsed policy — a significant shift, as it based the national approach to diversity on an ideal of a society that fully embraced the principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity and cultural identity.

Key reforms and initiatives of multiculturalism

1978 Ethnic television and radio services established

- SBS (Special Broadcasting Service) was established as an independent statutory authority on 1 January 1978 under the Broadcasting Act 1942, replacing the experimental ethnic radio stations set up during the Whitlam era with a permanent service.6
- · A ground-breaking initiative, the creation of SBS was part of a broader policy initiative to acknowledge and support the cultural diversity within Australia.
- · SBS's establishment was a key step, providing a platform for sharing the different cultures, languages and stories that comprise the Australian community; it was also a move towards inclusivity, ensuring non-English-speaking Australians had access to news and information in their languages.

1979 Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs established

- · The Fraser government passed legislation to establish the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) as a statutory body to report to Parliament on how well the Galbally report's recommendations were being implemented.
- The AIMA was established as a government-funded independent research and advocacy body aimed at asserting pluralism and ensuring that it was a source of strength.

1986 Office of Multicultural Affairs established

- · The Hawke government abolished AIMA and created the Office of Multicultural Affairs in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- This move underscored the importance of multicultural affairs at the federal level.

1987 A Fair Go, A Fair Share: Access and Equity for a Multicultural Australia report

• The Hawke government announced the first official access and equity report, A Fair Go, A Fair Share: Access and Equity for a Multicultural Australia, Access and Equity Report No. 1.

1989 The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia produced

- The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia was produced by the Hawke government after community consultations and advice from the Advisory Council for Multicultural Affairs.
- The Agenda clearly defined the three dimensions of multicultural policy:
 - cultural identity
 - social justice
 - economic efficiency.
- · It underscored the right of all Australians to express and share their cultural heritage and the need for equality in treatment and opportunity, while also emphasising the practical benefits of utilising the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.
- · For the first time, the National Agenda set out the limits of Australian multiculturalism, which helped to outline the expectations and responsibilities inherent in a multicultural society. This was important in balancing the rights to cultural expression with national values and unity.
- The Hawke government expanded the multicultural narrative, linking it to mainstream Australian values and ensuring that 'multiculturalism is for all Australians'. This was achieved through educational efforts and public celebrations that placed multiculturalism within a narrative of cultural diversity and tolerance.
- The most significant achievement came with the Hawke government's adoption of the National Agenda in 1989, signalling a formal and high-profile endorsement of multiculturalism as a positive and integral part of Australian society. This marked a golden era for Australian multiculturalism, characterised by a high-profile and celebratory expansion of the multicultural narrative.

Key reforms and initiatives of multiculturalism

1994 National Multicultural Advisory Council established

 The National Multicultural Advisory Council was established, leading to a 1995 report that recommended further initiatives.

1996 Office of Multicultural Affairs closed

· Following the election of the Howard government, the Office of Multicultural Affairs was closed down.

2011 The People of Australia multicultural policy released

• The People of Australia multicultural policy was released, and the government initiated an inquiry into multiculturalism, focusing on the economic, social and cultural impacts of migration.

2017 Multicultural Australia statement

• The Turnbull government launched the 'Multicultural Australia — united, strong, successful' statement, highlighting shared values and strategic directions for multicultural policy.

2023 Multicultural Framework Review commissioned

 The Australian Government formally commissioned the work of this Panel to review the policy of multiculturalism in today's Australia.

The golden era of multiculturalism

The vision of the Whitlam government in 1973 established the basis for multiculturalism as a government policy that departed from the history of White Australia policies. The Fraser government's reforms cemented multiculturalism as a fundamental element of Australian government policy,⁷ and the Hawke government efforts in the 1980s were a high point in Australia's multicultural story, signifying a period of growth and enthusiastic support for multiculturalism.

This period was characterised by support for multiculturalism, increased funding and recognition of cultural diversity as a core national principle, and acknowledgment of the rights and contributions of diverse communities. The notion of multiculturalism in Australian government policies has since not been maintained with the same enthusiasm or political support.

Evolution of justifications for multiculturalism: from economic necessity to securitisation

The evolution of multiculturalism in Australia reflects shifts in political, social, and economic perspectives across different eras. Multiculturalism gained traction after the 1960s primarily for economic reasons, focusing less on national security. The period from the late 1970s to the early 1990s marked a crucial turning point, with government policies that acknowledged that embracing cultural diversity could foster economic advantages and social cohesion and bolster national identity. From the mid-90s to 2000, Australia's justification for multiculturalism varied widely, seeing a shift that continues today. The mid-1990s marked the beginning of a notable change.

Changing tides: shift from the concept of diversity to harmony found on shared values

Under the Howard government in the mid-1990s there was a shift from using the term 'multiculturalism' to emphasising concepts such as 'harmony' — an approach entrenched in the Harmony Day initiative still celebrated today. Harmony Day was introduced as a response to changing social attitudes to multiculturalism, exemplified by the rise of the One Nation party on a platform of opposition to immigration from Asian countries, multiculturalism, and policies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

During this backlash against multiculturalism, the government commissioned the National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC) to prepare a report, which found Australians generally still strongly supported multiculturalism, with 78% of respondents stating multiculturalism had been good for Australia. Noting the views of respondents who were more sceptical about multiculturalism, and mentioning the role of divisive individuals in exacerbating tensions, the report warned that though Australian democracy and multiculturalism had 'proved robust enough to withstand this challenge successfully' there was 'no room for complacency on matters of such fundamental importance'.

In the policy context, the report endorsed the 1989 National Agenda adopted in the golden era of multiculturalism policy, but also, to acknowledge different views on multiculturalism, advocated placing 'inclusiveness' at its core, to embrace the whole community.

In its response to the NMAC report, the Howard government reiterated a commitment to a multicultural Australia but did not adopt any substantive measures to support the policy. Instead, it commissioned a market research company to undertake a survey to inform how the government should undertake an anti-racism campaign to address concerns expressed in the NMAC report.

The research concluded that 25% of the community supported racist views and 33% were 'fence sitters'. A positive counterpoint was that 90% of respondents agreed with the statement that 'An Australian is anyone committed to Australia; it doesn't matter where you were born.' The report noted that it would not be possible to shift the views of those who held racist sentiments but suggested that the theme 'living in harmony' would resonate with the rest of the community.

This report informed the government's community harmony agenda, which included naming the UN International Day for Eliminating Racial Discrimination as 'Harmony Day'.8 Harmony Week — renamed from Harmony Day in 2019 aims to promote cross-cultural understanding and celebrate Australia's multicultural society.

Initiatives like Harmony Week signalled a shift in the method and substance of multicultural policies. Although there was ongoing support for multiculturalism, the concept became fragmented as government efforts often lacked substantial resource allocation and embraced different interpretations and focuses. Instead of significant investment, various advisory bodies produced reports and organised communications initiatives such as statements or anti-racism campaigns. These measures, while needed, were not adequate and failed to prepare the nation to respond to the broader community impact of counter-terrorism measures and asylum-seeker policies.

This limited focus led to a noticeable departure from traditional multiculturalism, signalling the start of a challenging phase for multiculturalism.

Harmony Week itself has become an issue of concern among individuals and organisations working with Australia's diverse communities. Recommendations 1 and 2, outlined later in this chapter, aim to respond to these concerns. In doing so, the Panel acknowledges that the spirit and intent of Harmony Week embodies the aspiration we hold as a society. It allows communities to come together to recognise and celebrate the values of cultural diversity as a nation. There is an essential place for maintaining Harmony Week and its role in celebrating and strengthening Australia's diversity.

Securitisation of multiculturalism

A key theme in recent Australian multicultural policy has been a focus on security concerns, with this approach fundamentally reshaping the understanding of Australia's multiculturalism. The discourse of the 'war on terror' and calls for stronger border-control measures against asylum seekers linked immigration and multiculturalism with national security concerns, prompting a characterisation of immigration and cultural diversity as possible threats to national security rather than opportunities for social improvement.

Government policy responses prompted a national narrative that restricted perspectives on 'acceptable' cultural behaviours and instead promoted 'shared Australian values' that all groups were expected to follow to integrate into Australian society. As a result, attention shifted towards 'social cohesion', which incorporated assimilationist attitudes compared to the advocacy of inclusivity and respect for cultural diversity that underpinned multiculturalism. Responsibility for multiculturalism policy was shifted into government institutional structures overseeing national security matters.

The shift in framing and the institutional responses to multiculturalism significantly impacted social cohesion (to the point where the term itself has become problematic) and intercultural relations, creating a sense of distrust and suspicion towards minority groups, particularly those perceived as different or foreign. These minority communities experienced increased surveillance, discrimination and prejudice, as their cultural practices and identity were seen as representing a threat, rather than being celebrated and embraced.

Since the mid-1990s, multiculturalism has been highly politicised, losing the substantive bipartisan support it once had. The word 'multiculturalism' has lost much of the unifying impact it may have once had; it faded from government use while being exploited by far-right groups promoting xenophobic ideologies under the guise of addressing public order issues, cultural identity preservation, protecting 'jobs for Australians' against migrant 'encroachment', and maintaining social stability.

Today, while multiculturalism is generally accepted, the policy approach has become fragmented and the institutional arrangement remains structured so that securitisation overshadows necessary social and economic factors that are complementary to achieving social cohesion and national unity. We need change: Australia needs a multiculturalism framework that responds to the opportunities and challenges of our times and our changing demographic composition and meets the aspirations expressed in consultations and submissions to this Review.

Australia's changing population

The diversity of Australia's population has significantly expanded since the 1960s, particularly from the 1990s until now. Highlighting the full diversity of contemporary Australia, the 2021 Census showed the presence of 320 different ancestries, with nearly every country represented in our population (Figure 2). Figures 3—5 further demonstrate our growing diversity.

Figure 2: Snapshot of people in Australia



25,422,788 people in Australia

▲ 8.6% since 2016

320
different ancestries

▲ 4 since 2016

Source: SBS Australian Census Explorer, 2021



429

languages spoken

including 183 Australian Indigenous languages

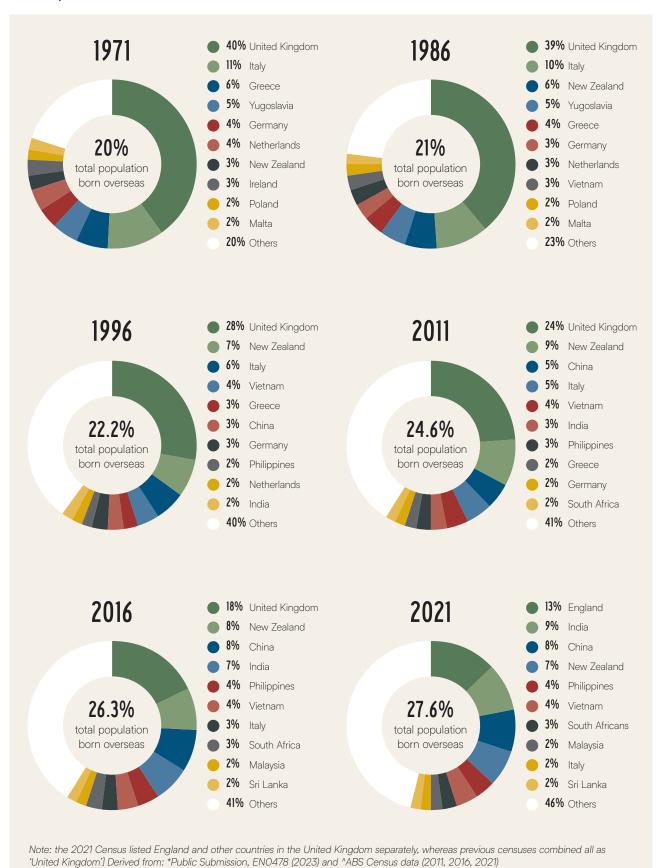


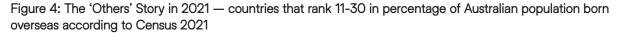
3.2%

identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

▲ 0.4% since 2016

Figure 3: Top 10 countries of origin for overseas-born population and percentage of total population born overseas over the period 1971-2021





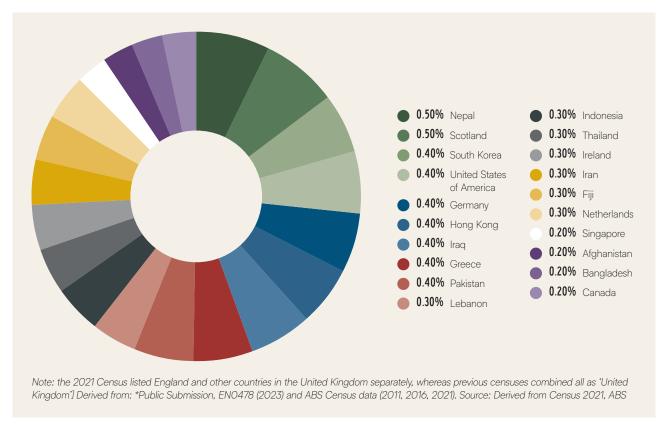
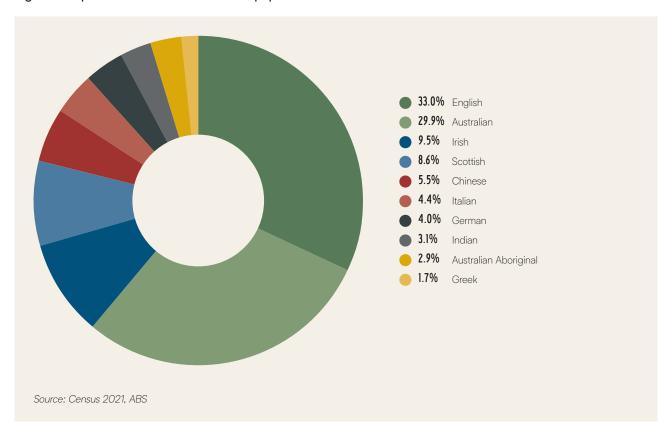


Figure 5: Top 10 ancestries of the Australia population as listed in Census 2021



A multicultural framework for Australia's changing population

The significance of population diversity extends beyond representation; it shows Australia's remarkable evolution into a society that embraces cultural richness and language diversity — a clear departure from its earlier attempts at a racially exclusive society.

To maintain this as the foundation for progress, we must adopt institutional settings, innovative policies and ambitious measures suitable for our current situation. Australia's multicultural history demonstrates the potential to uphold the richness of diverse cultures, promote social unity and propel economic advancement. Our country embodies diversity from across the globe, with many languages spoken and faiths observed. The changing demographics underscore the scope of our diversity and present unparalleled prospects, with current choices shaping future possibilities while moulding the heritage and identity of future generations.

The submissions and consultations from this Review reveal that many Australians understand the nature of the task ahead: communities are willing to confront challenges and continue working to overcome them. We heard calls to face the truth of Australian history and the dispossession of First Nations peoples of their lands and cultures and for recognition of First Nations history, demonstrating the desire for a more reconciled Australia and cohesive society.

There were also calls to acknowledge the experiences of racism and discrimination and prioritise listening and respecting the voices of marginalised communities when developing policies — highlighting that celebrating Harmony Day on 21 March, the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, stood in stark contrast to this approach, suppressing the important conversations that need to happen if we are to dismantle the racism that is too often part of the lived experiences of community members.

Communities across Australia conveyed to the Panel a strong desire for Australia's diversity to be recognised and fully embraced, including through highlighting the significance of First Nations histories and integrating them into the education system for new arrivals in Australia. This emphasis on acknowledging and celebrating the cultures and languages of First Nations peoples is seen as essential for genuine reconciliation and the need to achieve equality for all, without which multiculturalism is incomplete.

In short, the Panel witnessed a maturity and willingness in community and across the country to embrace a much more nuanced and sophisticated approach to multiculturalism as part of the Australian national identity, when compared to the approach reflected in current government policy, institutional arrangements and service delivery models.

Given this, the panel makes the following recommendations.

1.1.1. Recommendations 1 and 2

Recommendation 1: Australian Government to affirm commitment to multicultural Australia

In conversation with communities, the Panel was encouraged by the enthusiasm and commitment to understanding and promoting a multicultural Australia within the context of broader concepts of our national identity. Our review encompassed a thorough consideration of Australia's history and growth as a nation. A retrospective view of this history clearly indicates the importance of strong leadership, particularly from the Prime Minister and the government of the day to shape and influence the success of multicultural Australia as a nation.

To set the foundations for a truly successful multicultural nation we recommend that, as soon as practically possible and appropriate in 2024:

- the Prime Minister make a statement in Parliament reaffirming the Australian Government's and our nation's commitment to multiculturalism
- the Leader of the Opposition, in a spirit of bipartisanship, similarly affirm a commitment to multiculturalism.

Recommendation 2: Australia to formally observe the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March

The panel recommends that 21 March be formally recognised in Australia as the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and that the Prime Minister, the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, and the Australian Government affirm a commitment to observe this day on 21 March.

We propose the implementation of comprehensive anti-racism initiatives, tailored to specific needs and across a wide spectrum of settings, including educational institutions, workplaces, service delivery, community and sporting organisations. A key aspect of these initiatives is to invite community groups to showcase their innovative approaches to eliminate racism and allow for the sharing of best practice, foster a culture of collaboration and mutual learning, and support the important work of the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in its anti-racism strategy. Though these initiatives can include cultural celebrations, these should be centred in respect that leads to a deeper understanding across cultures.

Whilst 21 March has traditionally fallen within Harmony Week or on what has been called Harmony Day, the date of 21 March as the UN international Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination should not be compromised. It should be observed and acknowledged as intended.

The Panel acknowledges that the spirit and intent of Harmony Week shows where multiculturalism has flourished, and that there is an important place for Harmony week celebrations. These events should continue, reflecting the momentum and strength of the Australian community coming together to celebrate the many positives that have been gained from celebrating the strength of Australia's cultural diversity.

Terminology

Australia has not had a Multicultural Review in almost a generation. The concept of multiculturalism and the terms that shape our understanding of it has evolved, reflecting changes in the country's demographic composition and aspirations. So it is necessary to revisit some terms and labels to accurately understand and define multiculturalism in today's society, encompassing different senses of belonging and identities as they emerge. We will examine two terms: 'multiculturalism' and 'culturally and linguistically diverse'.

Multiculturalism

The need to clarify the meaning, role and function of multiculturalism was raised through consultation and submissions across the country. The questions raised went to the function of multiculturalism as an approach and as a term of definition.

The Panel seeks to clarify how the term 'multicultural' was conceived and how it will use the term in this Report.

The National Agenda for Multicultural Australia of 1989 (the Agenda) provided the definition that continues to be supported today, offering a detailed description based on three key dimensions, outlined in Table 2. The Agenda report marked the height of policymaking in the context of the evolution of the concept.

Table 2: Explainer of the National Agenda for Multicultural Australia of 1989

National Agenda (1989) definition of multiculturalism			
The three key dimensions of multiculturalism			
1. The right to c	1. The right to cultural Identity (within limits)		
Definition	The Agenda asserted the right of 'all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage including their language and religion'.		
Adoption	This principle was adopted by ensuring that various cultural expressions, languages and religious practices were respected and celebrated within Australian society. Cultural festivals, language classes, and the preservation of religious practices became more prevalent, supported by government policy and community initiatives.		
2. The right to e	2. The right to equal opportunity and fair treatment (social justice)		
Definition	The Agenda emphasised 'the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender, or place of birth'.		
Adoption	Policies and laws were developed to remove barriers and promote equality. Anti-discrimination laws, like the <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> , and the establishment of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, aimed to enforce this principle. Access and equity strategies were also implemented to ensure equal access to government services for people of all cultural backgrounds.		
3. The need to r	recognise and utilise the diverse skills and talents of migrants (economic efficiency)		
Definition	The Agenda recognised the need to 'maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background'.		
Adoption	Government and private sector initiatives began recognising and utilising the diverse skills and talents brought by immigrants, including by recognising overseas qualifications and providing support for migrant professional services and businesses.		
Principles and o	Principles and obligations that accompany multicultural policies		
Commitment to Australia	The Agenda's defining of multiculturalism imposed an overriding commitment to Australia and its future, promoting unity and shared values.		
Acceptance of Australian principles	The Agenda demanded the acceptance of the basic structures and principles of Australian society, such as the rule of law and parliamentary democracy.		
Rights and responsibilities	The Agenda emphasised a balance of rights and responsibilities, where cultural expression comes with the responsibility to accept the expression of others.		

The Panel believes the Agenda's definition of multiculturalism provides the best guide for understanding and using the term and so adopted the definition for this Report. The Panel also considered the Agenda appropriate for our time because its definition was limited in operation; unlike other terms, 'multiculturalism' reflected a public policy approach and not a means of defining people as holding particular characteristics in comparison to others.

Culturally and linguistically diverse

The term 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) was devised in 1999 at a meeting held by the Council of Ministers of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, including Commonwealth, state and territory ministers, to replace the previous term 'non-English speaking background' (NESB). This council noted several issues with NESB, including that it had developed negative connotations.

The balance of submissions and views expressed during consultations shows that what happened to NESB is happening to CALD; the term is now being reconsidered in various contexts. The issues raised by many stakeholders were well encapsulated in the Australian Multicultural Council's submission:

A label that emphasises deficits, even ones such as CALD, Marginalised Groups, Refugees, tends to 'other' the people involved, albeit with the best of intentions in most cases. Deficit-based words risk over time becoming labels with negative connotations (as inherent characteristics) and may act to reinforce some of the very same negative stereotypes and prejudices that our Government is fighting against. Deficit-based labels also tend to centre views from the majority group's perspective, with connotations of an outsider coming in as 'a rescuer'. They can be patronising; they can contribute to a dynamic whereby minority groups are regarded less as partners and more as objects of charity or victims, thus reinforcing power imbalances. This is counter-productive to building inclusiveness.

Furthermore, several Australian Government agencies, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, advised that they are moving away from using the term, as it is too broad and does not sufficiently characterise Australia's diverse communities and their experiences, needs and challenges.

The Panel heard many different opinions on using the term CALD and adopting new options. As the Panel believes that adopting terminology is a function of community practice, not a selection made by experts, our approach does not assume any of the emerging terms for the Report. Rather, the Panel has produced a glossary with a list of terms and their meanings as submitted for this Review, which provides information on how other organisations might change their practices using these terms (Appendix C).

This list is provided not to suggest or impose a particular practice but to allow those who engage with the Report to see how the new lexicon for our complex demographics is taking shape and to reflect on their approaches on how best to relate to those terms.



Photo: MFR consultation with Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council in Perth, Western Australia — August 2023.

Conclusion

Terms and labels are simply words. But words are powerful. Words are how we invent meaning. They give us the tools to express who we are and provide a means to bridge the distance between us and others through understanding. With the right words, we can build the necessary connections for the moral and social consensus that joins us to reimagine ourselves and the future — as was the case at the inception of multiculturalism.

Throughout this Review, we met many people, especially young people, who feel reduced when words are deployed without consideration of their own distinctiveness or sense of emerging identity. We know that many migrants still recoil at the words they were once called or meet individuals hemmed in by words that display the judgments of others' prejudices and fears. It is essential that, whatever practices are adopted, we are careful of the limits of terms as labels that can fully capture and express the complexities of life and experiences.

At the dawn of multiculturalism in Australia, immigration minister Al Grassby, in the speech commemorated at this Review's launch, made a statement about the role of labels in the multiculturalism of the future. He warned that 'all labels have an unfortunate habit of becoming devalued with use,' and was mindful that labels not 'be conjured up out of the air'. To Grassby, any label 'must evolve from real demand for it and ultimately come to stand on its own feet, if it is to prove viable with the passage of time' — we think his observation provides a helpful guide today. As Meera Deo has noted:

Language is complicated and messy and ... we'll never find the perfect [term], but the key to moving forward is consultation. Individuals want to be included in the process of coming up with labels or terms that are meant to represent them, and there must be opportunities for communities to 'navigate new terms' and to make it clear how they prefer to be identified.¹⁰

Identity: how we want to be seen



In Australia, multiculturalism is seen as an integral part of Australian national identity — though it still raises some concerns of entrenching cultural difference over a shared national identity and favouring ethnic minority groups over Australians. Yet others have noted that the 'everyday multiculturalism' is a triumph.¹¹

The complexities of 'identity'

Identity has both a collective sense — as in an 'Australian identity' — and an individual sense, as when a person wants to describe how they see themselves and want to be seen. The scale of the collective sense can vary, ranging from a family to a local community or organisation, through to, in a broader social arrangement, the nation or beyond.

Collective and individual senses of identity may relate to each other in harmony or cause friction. An individual or smaller group's identity may align with a larger concept or be formed in opposition to it.

Identity involves naming, or at least prioritising, different aspects of a person or a group of people. The act of labelling can create tension; for example, the Panel heard that many people, particularly younger people, feel the label 'multicultural' undermines their sense of simply being 'Australian'.

For some individuals and groups, their sense of identity is expressed through the notion of 'identity politics'. Adherents of identity politics seek to have a particular aspect of their identity recognised by the broader community. In seeking recognition of their own terms, they also seek to overcome the exclusion they experience. At least as early as the 1960s, migrant community members who began advocating for recognition and acceptance of their cultural traditions, as distinct from the 'Australian' community of their time, could be seen as practising 'identity politics'. Though the term became more prominent later, such advocacy continues to this day.

Others, especially those who have not had similar experiences of exclusion, have criticised identity politics as divisive, claiming it undermines a greater sense of unity. They also argue that group identification — central to identity politics — obscures a person's individual characteristics and qualities. The criticism is unconvincing and self-contradictory; one's identity is invariably part of a larger grouping, and no one is immune to how others attribute social value to their identity, fairly or not. Wherever people feel their identity is recognised, accepted and valued, on the terms they prefer, both the individual and the broader society will be stronger.

Multifaceted identities

Members of communities across Australia with whom the Panel engaged spoke about how their individual identity is made up of several dimensions. People do not want to be defined by only one aspect of their life. Rather, they explain how the different aspects interrelate — some providing powerful ways of empowerment and self-expression, others compounding their experiences of marginalisation.

The interconnection of these aspects of identity and matters in an individual's life was expressed in submissions and consultations, through examples of young people navigating multiple identities between what is considered mainstream and their cultural background, between cultural identities and medical needs, and considering the place and role of faith in connections to one's cultural background. These examples, and others not explored here, show that identity is often complex, drawing on a person's ethnicity, socioeconomic status (class), religion, gender, disability and sexual orientation.

Individuals and organisations are embracing this multifaceted understanding of identity and calling for greater awareness of how the interconnected aspects impact people's daily lives and, importantly, how they engage with the social services and support they seek.

One personal submission the Panel received illustrates the efficacy of 'intersectionality' as a means to understand overlapping or cross-cutting aspects of identity or marginalisation. The individual describes herself as a single mother from a Middle Eastern background who has a child on the autism spectrum. While seeking support for her child and realising that autism is not well understood within her Middle Eastern community, she too has been identified as being on the autism spectrum. Doing volunteer work as an advocate for other unemployed single mothers led to her becoming a participant researcher. She writes that viewing her experiences through an intersectional lens has enabled her to continue her research and voluntary work, which she wishes would receive greater recognition from the employment providers with whom she has had to engage.12

A submission from a youth support organisation notes that '[c]onsideration also needs to be given to the intersecting experiences and identities of children, young people and their families.' This organisation points to research findings in relation to Aboriginal children but which could be applied to other children — that 'embracing their cultural background could provide children and young people with a clearer focus on their identity and other coping strategies to enhance resilience.'13

In the course of our consultations, the panel met with Dr Nada Ibrahim, Adjunct Research fellow at the University of South Australia, whose work refers to young people and 'hybrid identity'. Hybrid identities involve reconciling heritage and mainstream cultural connections, drawing on stories of integration and solidarity, amplifying educational and professional achievements, creating safe spaces in mainstream media and in family narratives, and finally facilitating pathways to citizenship. As long as these elements are in place people with hybrid identities can better resolve the challenges posed by discriminatory forces and cultural confusion. As Dr Ibrahim notes, the concept helps to bridge cultural gaps, create stable identities and promote acceptance.

For many people, religion is also core to their identity. This point required some attention, as multiculturalism is often applied as a descriptive term for 'all difference' in a manner that undervalues a person's faith. This was a particular concern raised by faith groups. Several submissions emphasised the need to acknowledge people's religious affiliation as a core part of contemporary multicultural Australia. The submissions also recommended support for interfaith dialogue.

An individual's multifaceted sense of identity has implications for how they relate to and feel they are treated by the broader society. This in turn goes to a sense of a shared national identity.

Shared national identity

Defining a 'modern shared Australian identity' itself raises questions. Past considerations of Australian multiculturalism have invariably sought to emphasise what binds Australians together in terms of non-negotiable values — these have been set out in the various statements on multiculturalism referred to in Chapter 1 of this report. Broadly termed 'democratic values', they are taken as given — the Panel holds that commitment to democratic values is an obligation placed on all Australians no matter their background or how they arrived at calling Australia home. It is a value we all accept by virtue of citizenship, which makes us all civic equals.

However, discussions of what should constitute our shared identity, whether initiated at the government level or in social domains, give rise to tension. Of course, we should accept any tension arising from such a discussion of identity as a clear example of the freedom of expression we enjoy - recognising that these tensions cannot be ignored and finding ways to navigate around them is a fundamental tenet of a successful shared identity.

As people discuss the topic of our shared identity, it is quickly apparent the discussion will reveal as much, if not more, about a person's own views, values and assumptions, as it does about the topic itself. In addition, whenever the topic of Australia's national identity is broached, not least by governments, the purpose of the discussion is clear: it is an effort to engender a sense of unity.

Yet, people do not tend to base a shared identity on an explicit understanding or acceptance of the underlying democratic values governments enunciate. Personal relationships in their immediate locations are more important to their sense of identity and belonging and therefore contribute more to social cohesion and unity. Their understanding and acceptance of Australia's 'democratic values' tend to play a smaller contributing role in their sense of a shared Australian identity.

Another important aspect of identity is that it is often dynamic and fluid, reflecting not just changing government preferences, but changes in society and at the individual level.

Defining an Australian identity is not an easy task. Identity is not permanent and is continuously evolving, shaped by changing culture and times.¹⁴

While Australia's national identify is not predicated on ethnicity or race which means our national identify is fluid and can change over time, identity and belonging are central to the success of multiculturalism. Thus, it is crucial to recognise the importance of creating a contemporary definition of multiculturalism that everyone can feel connected to, especially for young people, for whom a sense of belonging is fundamental to their development.15

Levels of doubt

The path to a shared identity is not smooth: the debate is likely to continue. Scepticism about the positive effect of multiculturalism on Australia's unity has a long history and is still with us. Broadly, this sentiment ranges over three levels:

- a soft scepticism about multiculturalism
- a sense of nostalgia and loss provoked by multiculturalism
- · a strong rejection of multiculturalism.

The first level, soft scepticism, was reflected in a few submissions the Panel received from individuals who expressed a preference for 'common' or 'shared' values over multiculturalism as an end in itself. One regional council displayed some doubt about multiculturalism. In its submission, this council praises the vital contribution of the town's workforce from diverse backgrounds, discusses how it has co-designed its cultural partnership plan, and embraces cultural diversity; in doing so, the council believes that embracing diversity, 'rather than multiculturalism specifically', would go a long way to defining a modern shared Australian identity.16 The Panel accepts this is a genuine position. But the predominant view conveyed to the Panel — including from other regional communities — is that multiculturalism is integral to enhancing the social life, cohesion and mutual understanding of communities across Australia.

Another level of doubt derives from a sense of nostalgia and loss. People who have this sense feel that the focus on multiculturalism disregards the contribution of British institutions to Australia's identity, and fails to appreciate the distinct culture that evolved in Australia prior to large-scale migration. Several submissions to the 2021 Senate report Nationhood, national identity and democracy ('the 2021 Senate report'), ¹⁷ including from academic researchers and community organisations, expressed this view. The Panel responds by reiterating that diversity has always been part of this land. This includes the diversity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who were, and remain, custodians of the country now known as Australia. Moreover, the positive aspects of the 'Australian character', which some may feel are no longer appreciated, as well as the institutional arrangements derived from the British, continue alongside and interact with our much greater cultural diversity. Several submissions recognised this and cited Noel Pearson's description of the three parts of our national story: 'the Ancient Indigenous Heritage which is Australia's foundation, the British Institutions built upon it, and the adorning Gift of Multicultural Migration'. In this light, nostalgia would seem out of place.

At the most intransigent level, unfortunately, a strong rejection of multiculturalism maintains that it inevitably creates division and is fundamentally incompatible with a unity based on what its adherents call Western or liberal values. Proponents of this incompatibility refuse to accept that Australia's shared identity could ever derive from its multicultural character and point to the dangers of 'cultural relativism'. This rejection can, but does not necessarily, entail racist sentiments. What is more evident is how assertions of cultural incompatibility are used and how those on the receiving end are compelled to defend their loyalty to a shared identity that does not include them. These are particular challenges in the age of social media, cultural wars, and the speed with which the impact of international issues makes them local matters too. This Review puts forward pathways and strategies throughout this report to respond proactively as a nation to these emerging issues and draw on the strength of our diversity.

Troubling events undermining our unity

In 2019 the Senate Standing Committees on Legal and Constitutional Affairs initiated an inquiry into nationhood, national identity and democracy that considered shared identity in the context of present global and national pressures and debates. Its terms of reference included consideration of:

- social cohesion and cultural identity in the nation-state
- the role of globalisation and economic interdependence and economic development in forming or disrupting traditional notions of national identity
- contemporary notions of cultural identity, multiculturalism and regionalism.

The inquiry considered the cultural war debates on 'identity politics' and its impacts on undermining social cohesion and democratic discussion. It noted that both 'left-wing and right-wing identity politics also often focus on ethnicity, in different ways: for the left, it is about resisting the exclusion of minorities, whereas for the right it is often a barely disquised form of xenophobia.'

The inquiry noted how online discussions based on 'identity politics' amplify polarisation, pointing to the risks posed by social media; identity politics itself may or may not be the issue, but social media presents serious challenges as it draws people into limited and closed worldviews online and incites public acts.

The Panel notes also concerns raised in submissions about social media and its impact on our shared identity. The Challenging Racism Project at Western Sydney University states:

The global research is clear that misinformation/ disinformation and conspiratorial thinking are associated with far-right hate, authoritarianism, and anti-democratic narratives. These are significant challenges to constructing a 'modern shared Australian identity and strengthened understanding of multiculturalism as a collective responsibility."

And the Migration Hub at the Australian National University notes:

Many people now get both their news and entertainment through large privately-owned social media platforms based in other countries, which have become incubators for misinformation that has been designed (sometimes by foreign adversaries and other bad actors) to create social divisions over migration, multiculturalism, and diversity.²⁰

The media regularly reports on the impact of global events on public opinion about our shared identity. The online opinion site The Conversation tags articles under the topic of Australian or national identity. A 2014 article, for example, noted how 'events in the Middle East' - the flaring of violence at the hands of ISIS - gave rise to discussions domestically about Islam's threat to Australia and the failure of Australia's multiculturalism. In rejecting this interpretation, the author acknowledged that this concern raised a legitimate question: how to 'teach what it means to be Australian and democratic values'. The article refers to 'Discovering Democracy', an Australian Government program that ran from 1997 to 2004 targeting Year 6 and Year 10 students, but cites evidence it had not been successful; a more engaging approach, the author argues, would have directly covered the 'complexities, successes and failures' of Australia's democracy, rather than a dry overview of democratic institutions.²¹

These examples show how the old debate on shared identity is playing out today. Although unity has been both a constant theme and goal throughout considerations of multiculturalism in Australia, today's concerns can be exacerbated by international conflicts, beliefs, and troubling representations and interpretations in the media, including social media. Whatever approaches are adopted, the new context of social media and hyper-connectivity is a reminder of the need for thinking about the design of activities and of collaboration in addressing these matters.

Multiculturalism as the foundation of our shared identity

All the concerns noted above need to be acknowledged, understood and addressed to the greatest extent possible. Education and ongoing research into their various dimensions are both required.

Multicultural Australia noted in its submission that one of its guiding principles is changing the conversation, which is 'an active process of engaging with the wider community around the positives of multiculturalism, the benefits of migration for nation building and creating a shared national identity across our diversity."22

The Panel affirms and takes comfort in the widely held view that the demographic reality of Australia's cultural diversity, which first gave rise to multiculturalism as a policy approach, has long been foundational to Australia's shared identity.

The National Multicultural Advisory Council's 1999 report Australian multiculturalism for a new century: Towards inclusiveness was 'confident that Australian multiculturalism will continue to be a defining feature of our evolving national identity and contribute substantial benefits to all Australians.²³ It stated that 'inclusive multiculturalism is of fundamental importance to our social harmony and a key element in the continual development of our national identity,' again reflecting the message of unity.

This remains the case whether governments of the day seek to emphasise or downplay and underfund the importance of multiculturalism in Australia. The Panel contends more is to be gained from emphasising the reality that multiculturalism is a fundamental part of who we are.

More than confidence is required, though. And the blithe assertion that Australia is the 'most successful multicultural society in the world' is no longer sufficient — if it ever was. The key to a vibrant shared identity is that everybody can see themselves reflected in our society, media and institutions; to feel part of a shared identity, people must feel recognised. The 2021 Senate report noted this point well, quoting Ms Ly Ly Lim, a University of Technology Sydney researcher:

... it is very difficult to join and participate in Australia's nationhood journey and feel a sense of belonging here when there is such a disjuncture between what our political leaders say and the reality of life in the community. For example, it's very difficult to join this journey when you enter a court room and there is no judge who looks like you and when you turn on the television you see no reflection of anyone who looks like you or similar to you at all. This is true also for this parliament, the executive, the ministers, as well as senior public servants and leaders in the corporate sector.²⁴

The report also referred to MYAN Australia's submission that 'traditional notions of nationhood and national identity are framed by government and ignore the lived reality of young people in contemporary Australia.²⁵ These two references from the Senate report demonstrate that government statements, while necessary, can only go so far.

A shared Australian identity grounded in the diversity of our society, can be achieved through a more focused and resourced approach. This is required at the community level (see the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Foundation submission, for example),26 across different age groups, including youth (see the MYAN Australia and Townsville Youth Council submissions, for example)²⁷ and older generations (see the Benalla Migrant Camp Inc submission, for example),²⁸ for people who have arrived as refugees (see the Refugee Council of Australia and MYAN Australia submissions, for example),²⁹ and must fully engage with all aspects of people's being (see the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association submission, for example).³⁰

A shared identity grows from the ground up. Still, governments can — and need to — do more to nurture its growth, in particular by:

- working across different agencies and jurisdictions
- recognising the potential of the arts (see submissions from Creative Australia and The Boite, for example)³¹
- working with the volunteer sector (see the submission from Volunteering Australia, for example)³²
- engaging with the private sector and businesses
- working with rights organisations.

A combined submission from two Western Australian community organisations — United in Diversity WA Inc, and Nuanced: Community innovators — makes the point:

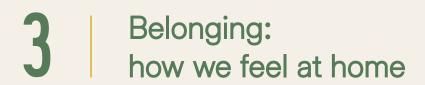
For Australia to truly embrace a shared identity, it is imperative to recognise and harness the potential of its diverse communities. By empowering community leaders and promoting entrepreneurship within CALD communities, we can accelerate the journey towards a cohesive, integrated, and prosperous nation.³³

The Panel has heard how a shared identity embraces a 'fair go' and relates to our multicultural society:

A cornerstone of the Australian national identity is the ethos of 'mateship' and the conviction of providing everyone with a 'fair go'. This spirit of camaraderie, mutual respect, and equality reflects Australia's multicultural roots. The definition of the Australian identity is not attributed to a singular culture but to a collective set of values that acknowledges diversity.³⁴



Photo: MFR consultation with Pasifika community leaders in Brisbane, Queensland — October 2023.



Deeply intertwined with identity, a sense of belonging is a fundamental aspect of human experience and the foundation of social cohesion. The relationship between identity and belonging underpins an individual's agency, meaning, and fundamental right to human dignity.

Belonging is rooted in the historical and cultural tapestry of our communities; it shapes the myriad of ways in which people identify with each other, their shared environment and shared values. The imprint of historical events, such as colonisation or significant social upheaval or international affairs, leaves enduring marks on how communities conceptualise and experience belonging. These events, which come with complex emotions and memories, significantly affect the collective narrative of a community.

A connection through belonging emphasises the importance of acknowledging diverse identities, beginning with a recognition of First Nations people:

The acknowledgement of First Nations peoples is not just a respectful nod to history; it is an essential step towards understanding the complex tapestry of multicultural societies. In this context, the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and multicultural communities becomes a pivotal point of reflection. It serves as a reminder of our shared histories and the diverse paths that have led us to the present. Multiculturalism and belonging, therefore, should be seen not just as concepts, but as collective responsibilities. These responsibilities call for an environment where cultural differences are not just tolerated but celebrated, fostering a sense of unity in diversity.³⁵

Being recognised is the first step to having a sense of belonging, but recognition alone is insufficient. Actively engaging in and contributing to your community is fundamental to a sense of belonging, to feeling at home.

As Australia's population has grown, so too has its multicultural identity — pivotal in defining a shared sense of community and belonging. This evolution has not always been linear or conflict-free. When conflicts arise from cultural differences, communities often find themselves navigating a delicate balance between adapting to new realities and preserving essential cultural elements. This process of adaptation and resolution demonstrates the resilience and dynamism of communities in the face of challenges.

The intricate interplay of historical and cultural factors is crucial to understanding the complex nature of belonging. This interplay not only shapes the collective memory of a community but also influences how communities recount their stories and perceive their place within the larger societal fabric. The narratives born from these memories and histories play a defining role in a community's identification and cohesion.

For multicultural communities, reflecting on connections to historical roots is an integral part of the journey to understand the ways in which they belong in Australia. This reflection, rich in traditions, memories and experiences, shapes their sense of belonging and identity. Historical and cultural factors, therefore, do not merely provide a backdrop for understanding belonging; they are active agents in articulating and shaping belonging and the narrative of communities within multicultural Australia.

Federal, state and territory and local governments play a crucial role in offering opportunities for belonging. Through policies and programs they can create platforms for cultural exchange and dialogue, fostering a sense of community and inclusion. Such efforts contribute significantly to the development of societies where belonging is not just a notion but a lived reality for all, irrespective of their cultural background.

Cultural programs and government initiatives to bolster communities not only preserve cultural heritage but create spaces where different cultures can thrive and contribute to the nation more broadly. Cultural expression enables belonging, where heritage and traditions contribute positively to a community's richness and diversity and provide a sense of continuity and pride.

However, heritage and traditions can also create challenges. Differing cultural values and practices may lead to misunderstandings or conflicts. Navigating these complexities is crucial; otherwise, people's sense of belonging to the broader society will suffer.

Art and creative cultural expression are vital in exploring and affirming cultural identity, serving as powerful mediums for communicating experiences, values and perspectives, transcending linguistic and other barriers. In the context of belonging, art becomes a universal language that not only showcases the uniqueness of various cultures but also highlights shared human experiences, fostering a deeper understanding and connection among diverse groups.

Creativity is a powerful resource [...] to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing and build a modern shared Australian identity.³⁶

Belonging is built on shared values — values that resonate across different cultures and backgrounds. It is about recognising and appreciating the richness that cultural identities bring to the mosaic that is multicultural Australia.

We can no doubt benefit greatly from sharing the values that unite us, but there is also much to gain from the rich insights, aspirations and know-how that come with the different cultures, traditions, faiths and languages represented in Australian society. It is by developing this dual approach that we can most creatively manage Australia's irreplaceable asset that is its cultural diversity.³⁷

In embracing the multiplicity of cultural identities we open the door to a world where belonging is a collective journey, enriched by the diverse experiences and perspectives each individual and group brings. This journey is not without challenges, but it is through these challenges that the true essence of a vibrant, inclusive society is realised.

There can be little doubt that Australia's multicultural fabric represents an asset of immense value to Australia. However, as with all assets, the value to be derived from our ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity depends ultimately on how the asset is understood, managed and nurtured.³⁸

Spirit of welcome

Australia's approach to multicultural affairs has long been the subject of public debate, one that is often clouded by anti-immigrant rhetoric. It is time to move the conversation away from 'us and them' and embrace multiculturalism as central to our national identity.³⁹

While a more comprehensive history of multiculturalism has been elaborated in an earlier chapter, it is essential to recognise, in the context of belonging, how the concept of multiculturalism has navigated through various degrees of scepticism and idealism. The initial envisioning of a multicultural nation was imbued with hope, a vision of a modern multicultural Australia. A range of Review submissions reflected a desire to:

reignite the dreams of those who first articulated the multicultural framework.⁴⁰

Those who championed the idea of a multicultural nation did so with an aspiration to create a home where individuals from diverse backgrounds could thrive, contributing to a richer, more inclusive society. This vision was not just about tolerating diversity but celebrating it as an integral part of the nation's identity. However, the journey from vision to reality has been complex and fraught with challenges. The ongoing narrative of multiculturalism is often overshadowed by issues related to migration and settlement. Stories of struggle, adaptation and — at times — resistance have become common threads in the tapestry of modern multicultural Australia.

Despite these challenges, the core intention of welcoming newcomers from all corners of the globe endures. It reflects a continuing commitment to the foundational principles of multiculturalism. This commitment is not just a governmental or policy-driven endeavour but also a collective responsibility that permeates throughout multicultural communities across the nation. And it is this spirit of welcoming that one review submission highlights as the way in which the seed of belonging is planted:

How does welcoming feel? When you are accepted, acknowledged and welcomed in different ways. If I was accepted, I will feel more than happy, I will feel like I belong to the society.⁴¹

The idea of a nation that is a safe haven for diverse cultures remains a guiding principle, even as the nation navigates the complexities of integrating new members into its social fabric.

For individuals and communities, the challenge is to find a balance between staying connected to their roots and adapting to the demands of living in a new country. This balancing act is central to the experience of belonging in a multicultural context. It may involve preserving cultural heritage while embracing new cultural experiences. The success of this endeavour is crucial to the wellbeing of individuals and the health of the community as a whole, as it determines the extent to which a truly inclusive and cohesive multicultural nation can be realised.

Our multicultural framework must be built on the premise that multiculturalism is an asset to be enhanced, developed and capitalised on, not based on multiculturalism being an issue or social challenge.⁴²



Photo: MFR view Panel discussion at Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) Conference, in Canberra, ACT — November 2023.

Perceptions and narratives

In the life of multicultural communities, the relationship between belonging and the perceptions and narratives that individuals encounter is intricate and profound. These narratives, whether rooted in media, literature or public discourse, shape the collective consciousness about inclusion, diversity and community identity.

However, this positive impact is often challenged by the presence of negative narratives. These are frequently manifested in stereotypical representations, biased reporting or the exclusion of multicultural groups from mainstream discourse. Such narratives, subtly or overtly, reinforce a sense of exclusion and marginalisation in those misrepresented or not represented. The impact is particularly pronounced in the media, where the dominance of a single cultural narrative can eclipse the rich diversity of a multicultural society. In environments where media and discourse are predominantly monolingual or monocultural, this imbalance in representation can significantly skew public perception and sentiment, reinforcing a narrow and often flawed understanding of multicultural dynamics.

The portrayal of multicultural communities and international affairs in media also has a profound impact, especially on diaspora communities. The representation of global events and international affairs shapes local perceptions of communities, influencing their sense of belonging and identity. Media representation is essential in ensuring that the complexity and richness of multicultural communities are acknowledged and understood.

Moreover, public and social policies themselves often serve as powerful narratives that influence perceptions of belonging in multicultural societies. These policies, formulated and implemented by governments, have the ability to craft, reinforce or challenge existing societal narratives. They can either endorse a narrative of inclusivity and diversity or, conversely, perpetuate exclusion and marginalisation. For instance, policies related to immigration, education and cultural funding not only reflect but also actively shape societal attitudes towards multiculturalism and diversity, what is valued and who belongs in social frameworks. This aspect of policymaking underscores its role as a narrative tool, one that has far-reaching implications for how individuals and communities perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

Storytelling serves as a powerful medium to share experiences perspectives and cultural heritage. By having an active role in shaping storytelling policies, multicultural communities can ensure their voices are heard their stories are represented authentically and their narratives are given the respect and recognition they deserve.⁴³

Furthermore, the narrative of 'othering', where certain groups are perceived as fundamentally different or outside the societal norm, has become entrenched in many societies. This narrative, often subtly woven into the fabric of language, plays a significant role in how individuals perceive themselves and others. Challenging and redefining this narrative is essential in moving towards a more inclusive and diverse society.

Social policies and belonging

The connections between government initiatives, organisational strategies and the fabric of social belonging are intricate. Submissions to the Panel provide insights into how Australia might navigate the complex landscape of social inclusion, culture and diversity.

At the forefront of the treatment of social and multicultural policy is the impact on social cohesion. Effective policymaking in multicultural settings demands an acute awareness of diverse cultural, religious and linguistic differences. The success of these policies is measured in their implementation and reception by the communities they intend to serve. Policies fostering equitable access and recognising diverse needs can enhance social cohesion, while those overlooking these aspects inadvertently fuel division.

Religious and multi-faith considerations are reflected in a range of Review submissions. There is a demand for policies that acknowledge and accommodate various religious practices and beliefs to better demonstrate respect for cultural and religious diversity. This respect is crucial for individuals to feel a sense of belonging in a society where their faith and practices are acknowledged as part of the national tapestry. The challenge lies in balancing these considerations with secular principles and ensuring a harmonious, collaborative and productive multi-faith environment.

I am hoping that the Multicultural Framework will incorporate Multi-faith as an integral component of this framework. To omit the Multi-faith/interfaith/spiritual identity is to whitewash multiculturalism into our predominantly secular paradigm of government policy and programming.44

A central challenge identified in the future formulation of policy was the delicate balance between cultural integration and the preservation of distinct cultural heritage and language. Integration requires thoughtful consideration in policy settings. It entails creating pathways for diverse communities to contribute to, and be immersed in, the larger social narrative, without the implicit expectation of diminishing their cultural identities. This balance is pivotal in ensuring that policies do not just pay lip service to diversity but actively nurture it.

In an era where global and domestic spheres are increasingly intertwined, social policies must be responsive to international trends and events. These global influences, from migration patterns to international sociopolitical movements, have a tangled effect on domestic social dynamics. Policies need to be adaptable, catering to both the global influences and the unique cultural tapestry of the domestic, multicultural landscape.

Equity and access are fundamental to the effectiveness of social policies in multicultural settings.

We live in a multicultural country so access and equity, with policies and practices to reinforce basic rights must be prerequisite to all government decision making. The further it moves from whole-of-government consideration, the more watered down or 'optional' the behaviours within federal, state and local governments.[...] of all tiers of government, local government is best placed to understand the complexity and diversity of their communities and facilitate a whole of government approach.⁴⁵

The development of multicultural and social policies is a reflection of how Australia perceives and values its diverse population. They are a litmus test for the nation's commitment to not just tolerating but also embracing the growing diversity of our nation. The crafting of these policies, therefore, is not merely an administrative task but a profound exercise in shaping the nation's identity and sense of belonging among its people.

Educational opportunities

The role of educational institutions, particularly schools, in shaping a genuine sense of belonging and forming the identity of young people cannot be overstated. Schools act as a crucible for identity formation, where the values of inclusivity, diversity and belonging are either fostered or impeded. This critical phase in a young person's life is where foundational perspectives of the self and others are shaped; it is, therefore, central to a discussion of belonging in modern multicultural Australia.

In the context of schools, learning is more than the acquisition of academic knowledge; it is an act that shapes critical thinking and provides opportunities to engage with perspectives different from one's own. This process is essential in challenging established ways of thinking and engaging in cognitive development. Schools, therefore, are not just centres of learning but pivotal spaces where a sense of belonging is nurtured or neglected. Representation of diverse cultures and backgrounds in educational content, inclusivity in classroom practices, and equity in access to educational resources are all crucial elements that contribute to or detract from this sense of belonging.

Beyond academic settings, sport emerges as another significant space for growth, education and bonding. Sports activities in schools break down barriers, fostering teamwork and camaraderie among students from various backgrounds. Participation in sports can be a powerful tool for acceptance and inclusivity, offering a common ground where diversity is not just tolerated but celebrated. Through sports, students learn valuable lessons about cooperation, respect and embracing individual differences, contributing to a more inclusive and accepting society.

However, several of the review submissions highlighted a notable gap in the ways in which young people are acknowledged and participate in the shaping of multicultural Australia. Despite being the primary beneficiaries of educational policies, young people are often absent or under-represented in the decision-making processes that shape their educational experiences. This exclusion can lead to policies that are out of touch with the realities and needs of multicultural student cohorts, particularly those from diverse or marginalised backgrounds, and it often falls to community organisations to provide spaces and opportunities for young people to belong.

Young people are underrepresented in policy making any systemic reform; youth services, community hubs and education systems are spaces young people use frequently.⁴⁶

For migrant students and families especially, schools can become inadvertent spaces of exclusion due to cultural and linguistic barriers.

Parents spoke of their confusion with Australian schooling, child protection and justice systems and thus their limited capacity to support their children. They often felt deliberately excluded from schools in particular.⁴⁷

This confusion and sense of alienation highlight the need for educational institutions to be more than just physically accessible. They need to be culturally responsive, ensuring that all students are included, supported and have agency in their education. More than this, students' voices must be heard and contribute to the ongoing dialogue that shapes Australia's developing multicultural identity.

To embrace multiculturalism in Australia, we need to learn to embrace and respect difference, instead of rewarding conformity. [...] By including people in a respectful and informative conversation at a young age, we could foster much tolerance and appreciation for the wide variety of cultures that make up Australia. This is the only way to create a future where we as a society can, at all levels, learn to respect and embrace a multicultural Australia.⁴⁸

Discrimination and diversity

Fostering inclusion and belonging necessarily involves actively combating discrimination to create an environment where everyone is valued and respected.

Direct discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another because of their background or certain personal characteristics.

Indirect discrimination occurs when there is an unreasonable rule or policy that is the same for everyone but has an unfair effect on people who share a particular attribute.

In Australia, there are several Acts of Parliament that combat a range of discrimination forms.

- The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their race, colour, descent, national origin or ethnic origin or immigrant status.
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 protects people from unfair treatment on the basis of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy or breastfeeding. It also protects workers with family responsibilities and makes sexual harassment against the law.
- The Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 established the Australian Human Rights Commission and its statutory power to receive, investigate and conciliate complaints of unlawful discrimination under Australia's anti-discrimination legislation.
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their disability, including in employment, education, obtaining or using services, renting or buying a house or unit, and accessing public places.
- Section 18 of the Public Service Act 1999 requires the Secretary of government agencies to have a workplace diversity program.
- The Age Discrimination Act 2004 protects people from discrimination based on their age.
- The Fair Work Act 2009 contains general protections.

Inclusivity is not only the absence of discrimination; it is an active commitment to creating spaces where all individuals, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds, feel valued and where their basic human rights are upheld. 'Human rights are based on the principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect; they recognise the inherent value of each person, regardless of their background, where they live, what they look like, what they think or what they believe.'49 Diversity extends this notion by embracing the variety of human experiences, encompassing differences in age, gender, cultural background, religion, language and other identity markers.

Diverse backgrounds go beyond the multicultural, they include age, gender, country of birth, culture, religion, language, sexuality etc.50

Workplaces are a microcosm for observing the practical application of these concepts. 'Australian laws require organisations to protect some human rights. These include laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment in the workplace, laws requiring employers to provide equal employment opportunities, and laws ensuring fair and safe conditions of work." Beyond the adherence to Acts designed to combat discrimination, true workplace inclusivity demands a deeper cultural shift. It requires policies and practices that acknowledge and actively celebrate differences, fostering environments where diverse perspectives are not merely tolerated but sought.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a worrying outbreak of discrimination at the community level. Australia's Chinese communities in particular experienced this immediately and directly. The report of an April 2020 to June 2021 community-led survey tracking incidents of discrimination against Chinese and other Asian members of the community recommended better government support and resource data collection on discrimination.⁵²

The impact of this discrimination is still raw for many.⁵³ Professor Fethi Mansouri has written that the multicultural agenda in Australia was one of the 'pandemic's casualties', noting that the pandemic's first wave caused the Chinese Australian community to be targeted, while the second wave led to the vilification of other communities, particularly in Melbourne suburbs with high proportions of migrants.⁵⁴

In a submission to the Panel, Professor Mansouri underlines that the challenges that emerged during the pandemic remain unaddressed. He also identifies other large-scale forces impinging on Australia's cohesive multicultural society, including climate change, technological transformations, structural demographic shifts, increased urbanisation, a declining public trust in political institutions, and shifting geopolitical dynamics in our region.⁵⁵

The make-up of a multicultural community or organisation is a key determinant of how individuals perceive their sense of belonging. In environments where diversity is embraced and inclusivity practised, individuals are more likely to be empowered and feel a sense of connection and identification within the group. This sense of belonging is not static but evolves as the community itself grows and diversifies.

The responsibility for fostering inclusivity and diversity extends beyond individual entities to encompass governments at all levels and communities and individuals. Governments must ensure that policies and laws uphold and protect diversity; communities must actively engage in inclusive practices; everyone has a role in creating an accepting, safe and open environment.

The government should work in conjunction with all sectors in implementing the recommendations so that a culture of inclusiveness is experienced by everyone in Australia in all aspects of social, civic and economic activities.⁵⁶

Collective effort is required to shape a society where belonging is a shared experience, accessible to all in its richness and diversity.

The strength of multicultural Australia's capacity to embrace and celebrate diversity is reflected in our vibrant and cohesive communities around the country. Community organisations and peak bodies play a pivotal role in this, not only caring for their respective communities but celebrating important events and milestones that underscore cultural heritage. Integral to these celebrations is the profusion of community and mother-tongue language schools across the country. Language, as the primary instrument of culture, forms the backbone of these initiatives, ensuring that the intricate tapestry of a nation's heritage is maintained and revered. Such efforts highlight the collective commitment to embracing diversity and contributing to a richer, more advanced society.

Psychological and psychosocial wellbeing

The interplay between belonging and psychological and psychosocial wellbeing is a critical aspect of community health. Belonging serves as a psychological anchor, shaping the identity and connectedness of individuals and communities. In its absence, individuals and communities often grapple with feelings of isolation, marginalisation and alienation, leading to adverse mental health outcomes.

Belonging directly affects individual mental health, fostering a sense of security and self-worth. This connection supports psychological resilience, reducing stress and enhancing overall mental wellbeing. Conversely, the experience of exclusion, whether due to racism, prejudice or social ostracism, can trigger a range of psychological issues, including anxiety and depression.

Racism prejudice and feeling unwelcome or othered can have significant mental health impacts.⁵⁷

These negative experiences not only affect individual mental health but permeate the collective psyche of the community.

The health and cohesiveness of a community transcends individual experiences, as it is shaped by shared histories and social interactions. Systemic issues, such as discrimination and the pervasive sense of being 'othered', can erode community cohesion, exacerbating collective psychological distress. Effective community health strategies must therefore address these broader social dynamics, fostering environments where diversity is acknowledged and respected.

Access to culturally competent mental health services is paramount in addressing the particular needs of diverse communities. These services should be tailored to overcome language barriers and the cultural stigmas, sometimes found within communities, associated with mental health issues, ensuring that all members can access support in a manner that respects their cultural context and linguistic needs.

Effective communication is a cornerstone of psychological wellbeing, particularly when navigating the terrain of diversity in multicultural communities. Facilitating clear communication and the accessibility of information and support services in a preferred language is crucial delivering and sustaining mental health services. Linguistic inclusivity is key to building trust and a sense of belonging, allowing individuals to fully engage with mental health support systems. Chapter 6 discusses the issue of language in more detail.

Initiatives such as faith-based counselling and community-led support groups can significantly enhance psychological wellbeing. These approaches provide culturally resonant support, reinforcing the sense of community and belonging, and offer tailored assistance that aligns with experiences and targets the needs of multicultural community groups.

Community engagement and participation

Community engagement and participation are the cornerstones of belonging in modern multicultural Australia.

Communities are the lifeblood of the Multicultural Framework — whether they are defined by cultural, ethnic, religious, or other affiliations. Communities emerge from the different interactions and associations we have with one another and can often serve as support systems for both the existing and the newly arrived, helping people navigate the complexities of culture and society. People find a place of inclusion, belonging, and a sense of purpose in the community and can foster healthy patterns of thought and behaviour, such as mutual support and reciprocity.⁵⁸

The way individuals and groups engage with policymaking, federal and local government decisions and initiatives, and the broader social fabric of our nation profoundly influences levels of inclusion and feelings of belonging.

Active involvement in policymaking and government decisions is a critical avenue through which communities can assert their presence and voice. This participation ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in the processes that shape multicultural Australian society. When individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds contribute to policy discussions, it not only enriches the decision-making process but also reinforces their sense of belonging. This involvement signifies recognition and respect for their contributions, fostering a feeling of being valued within the societal structure.

Community activities, ranging from cultural festivals to local government meetings, are often perceived as barometers of belonging. The critical assessment lies in determining whether these activities truly contribute to a sense of belonging or are mere symbolic gestures — often viewed as tokenistic, and lacking depth and genuine inclusivity. Authentic community activities should be inclusive and responsive to the needs and aspirations of diverse groups. They should provide spaces where individuals feel seen, heard and respected.

The arts and belonging

The realm of the arts holds a unique and powerful place in fostering a sense of belonging within Australian multicultural communities. Artistic expression, whether through visual arts, music, theatre or literature, provides a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers. The arts can be a tool for showcasing diverse cultural heritages and fostering a shared community identity. Initiatives such as community-driven arts projects, multicultural festivals and museum exhibitions offer spaces where diverse narratives and histories are told and celebrated. These artistic platforms enable individuals from various backgrounds to connect with each other's experiences, fostering empathy and understanding. Moreover, participation in and appreciation of different art forms help in breaking down stereotypes, challenging prejudices, and building a more cohesive and inclusive society.

Sport and belonging

Similarly, sport serves as a vital conduit to belonging, especially in multicultural communities. Sports activities, whether at amateur or professional levels, have the power to unify people from diverse backgrounds around common goals and shared experiences. Sport can bridge divides, cultivate teamwork, and encourage mutual respect among participants. Local sports clubs and community organisations play a significant role here, offering inclusive and accessible environments for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage and interact. Through sport, individuals find common ground, where the focus shifts from cultural differences to shared passions and pursuits. This commonality found in sports contributes significantly to a sense of belonging, fostering social cohesion and a sense of community spirit.

Active participation in community events and initiatives is more than a form of engagement; it is a vital mechanism for galvanising a sense of belonging. When individuals actively participate — whether in cultural celebrations, community projects or civic initiatives — they forge connections with others, share experiences, and build collective memories. These activities allow individuals and groups to express their identities, learn from each other, and create a shared sense of community. The act of participating, contributing, and being part of something larger than oneself reinforces the feeling of belonging and strengthens community bonds. Active involvement is crucial in building resilient, inclusive and cohesive societies, where every member feels a sense of belonging and investment in the future of multicultural Australia. During the Panel's consultations with community sports organisations the following view was expressed:

Many communities still experience systemic racism, we try to support people in a cultural safe space in the sports sector.⁵⁹

Likewise, interactions and collaborations among different cultural, ethnic, and social groups within a community are central to fostering mutual understanding and respect. Such engagements provide opportunities for communities to break down stereotypes, build empathy, and appreciate the rich diversity that characterises multicultural Australia. When communities engage with each other, it paves the way for collective problem-solving, shared celebrations of cultural heritage, and the development of unified relationships.

Cross-community dialogue and collaboration are essential to creating an inclusive social fabric where differences are not just tolerated but valued. Through active engagement with each other, communities look beyond their immediate circles and develop their perspectives and understandings through others' experiences and cultural knowledge. The fostering of interconnectedness has the powerful capacity to move communities towards a more cohesive and harmonious environment where belonging is a shared and collective experience.

Citizenship

The concept of citizenship, both as an act and an institution, plays a complex role in the narrative of belonging within modern multicultural Australia. Citizenship can be seen as both a symbol of inclusion, offering a sense of belonging to a nation, and a potential mechanism of exclusion, particularly when cultural diversity is not fully embraced.

Citizenship, in its ideal form, should act as a facilitator of belonging, providing a sense of identity and membership within a nation. It offers individuals legal recognition and a formal connection to the state, which can be a powerful affirmation of belonging. However, this ideal is often complicated by the realities of cultural diversity. For individuals from multicultural backgrounds, obtaining citizenship can sometimes feel like a negotiation between their cultural heritage and the dominant culture of the nation. The challenge lies in ensuring that citizenship does not become a tool for assimilation that compromises one's cultural identity; rather that it is a means of embracing and celebrating cultural diversity.

The purpose of citizenship, therefore, should extend beyond legal recognition. Acquiring it ought to be a process that acknowledges and respects the cultural heritage of individuals, integrating that into the larger national narrative. This inclusive approach to citizenship can strengthen the sense of belonging for all members of society, ensuring that cultural diversity is seen as an asset rather than a barrier. Policies shaping and driving citizenship processes need to reflect this ethos, promoting inclusivity and respect for diversity in all aspects of civic life.

In the broader scope of social integration, citizenship becomes a critical factor in how individuals and multicultural communities connect with and are accepted by broader Australian societies. It raises important questions about the role of existing structures and narratives in fostering a genuine sense of belonging. Does the process of acquiring citizenship and the associated rights and responsibilities enhance an individual's sense of belonging, or does it inadvertently create barriers, particularly for those from diverse cultural backgrounds?

Questions about the nature and function of citizenship as an agent of belonging are fundamental at this point in Australia's multicultural journey; they are at the heart of a more inclusive future.

Australia stands at a unique crossroads, where it's stories past and diverse present offer an unparalleled opportunity to craft an inclusive future. The essence of our multicultural spirit is not just in celebrating our differences but in recognising that these differences collectively form the mosaic of our national identity.60

3.1.1. Recommendations 3 and 4

Recommendation 3: The Department of Home Affairs, through government and non-government consultation, to action an immediate review of the Australian citizenship test procedures, including considering providing the test in languages other than English and in alternative and more accessible formats

The Department of Home Affairs, through government and non-government consultation, should action an immediate review of the Australian citizenship test procedures.

To ensure that the Australian citizenship test reflects the true spirit of our modern multicultural nation, we propose a critical examination of the current test procedures. The Panel has heard that the current process is predicated on an exclusionary approach and fails to capture the essence of contemporary Australia. To enhance accessibility and inclusivity, we recommend considering providing the test in languages other than English and in alternative and more accessible formats.

We also propose transforming the final step — acquiring Australian citizenship — into a more welcoming and inclusive process befitting a modern multicultural nation. The current citizenship booklet should reflect all the elements of our shared history, including the history of First Nations Peoples, the influences of British settlement, and the contributions of migrants. These histories of interconnectedness reflect how the Australian nation is 'founded on, formed by, and will continue to grow through, the diversity of cultures, languages, global heritages, religions, spiritualities and faiths', as expressed by Commissioner June Oscar in the first word of this report.

Recommendation 4: Develop a national plan to celebrate Australia's cultural diversity, to synchronise existing federal, state, territory and local government initiatives such as Harmony Week to acknowledge and celebrate Australia's cultural diversity

To celebrate Australia's rich cultural tapestry, we recommend the development of a national plan to celebrate Australian multiculturalism, with associated funding, led by the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and designed with the Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs in partnership with state, territory and local governments, commencing in 2025. This comprehensive plan would encompass initiatives and promote cultural exchange while fostering understanding and strengthening Australia's experience as a truly inclusive and multicultural society, and synchronise existing federal, state, territory and local government initiatives to acknowledge and celebrate Australia's cultural diversity.

Representation: media, communication and the arts



The role of media and communication in enhancing belonging

Media and communication's role is fundamental to a successful multicultural Australia. Inclusive media and representation has an immense influence on shaping national narratives.

In other chapters, on belonging and language services, we draw attention to the relationship between belonging and the media. Done well, inclusive media and representation (see Figure 6):

- reflects the multicultural nature of Australian society through diverse representation in media, including television, film and online platforms
- promotes accurate and positive portrayals of various cultures to combat stereotypes and prejudices.

Done poorly, media and representation that is exclusionary has an adverse effect (Figure 6). It can result in misinformation, miscommunication, tension between communities, discrimination and bias (conscious or unconscious). The presence of negative narratives through media and the lack of diverse representation is damaging and impacts belonging.

Public media Commercial media Media and culture Community media Social media Misinformation Conflicts overseas Adverse Discrimination and Tension between factors prejudice communities Conscious and Miscommunication unconscious bias

Figure 6: Inclusive media and representation versus adverse factors

Some progress towards inclusive media — but more is needed

To gain a deeper understanding of the current media landscape in Australia, the Panel consulted with media organisations and reviewed various diversity, equity and inclusion strategies applied across mainstream commercial media and government media organisations. We also received numerous submissions from regional and community media and broadcasting sectors.

From our review of the policies made available to the Panel, is clear that there is a wide divergence among policies and practices, with some more advanced than others, and that, while there is progress, more needs to be done.

Non-profit organisation Media Diversity Australia (MDA) is at the forefront in setting a new direction. In its submission to the Review. MDA:

- · highlights the limited diversity in Australian media: the 'Non-European Australian audiences have least trust in news and most concerned about representation'
- refers to a study noting media workers from diverse backgrounds including those living with disability received more discrimination and abuse and were more likely to 'self-censor, feel isolated and ultimately want to leave the industry'
- cites the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute's Australian Cohesion Index report that references falling profits as a reason why 'sections of the mainstream media shore up their customer base by becoming more partisan, offering loyal audiences what they want to hear, rather than telling them what they need to know. This is reinforced by the echo chamber of social media run by algorithms that feed into assumptions and prejudices'
- · cites an SBS finding that multilingual audiences who feel represented in the news are more likely to feel a sense of belonging
- · notes that lack of uniform content-moderation standards around race and culture means hate speech continues to thrive in comments sections of large media platforms.⁶¹

Based on the key evidence-based issues identified above, MDA suggests the following, to strengthen media best practice:

- commissioning and funding of further research on how media reporting on marginalised communities impacts social cohesion
- conducting a review of the piecemeal media content moderation standards, with a view to implementing uniform standards
- · commissioning the creation of practical journalism handbooks and related training to deliver to member companies, providing customised, accessible products designed for busy journalists and media professionals
- · developing a Media Inclusion Index and Audience and Diversity Index
- scaling and delivering community capacity-building programs nationally, which will increase the media, political and racial literacy of marginalised communities
- · creating and delivering bespoke cultural competency and racial literacy training programs designed with media professionals in mind.

In July 2023, hosted by SBS, MDA facilitated the inaugural industry roundtable bringing together Australia's media leadership and the Minister for Communications, Michelle Rowland, to commit to a path towards industry-wide improvement around diversity, equity and inclusion. Comprising the CEOs, managing directors and other senior representatives from MDA member organisations AAP, the ABC, Private Media Group, News Corp Australia, Nine, SBS, Seven, Ten, The Daily Aus, The Conversation Group and The Guardian, the roundtable provided a platform for a robust discussion about barriers to equity and inclusion and opportunities for industry collaboration. The group also discussed a talent pipeline and debated the merits of uniform measurement and tracking of progress across all parts of the industry to ensure greater accountability.

For the first time, we have brought together our members for an authentic and frank conversation about what needs to be done to make real inroads in diversity, inclusion and equity. As individual media organisations, each member has the power to have a meaningful impact, but as a collective, this group's ability to move the dial cannot be underestimated. The pace of industry-wide change is slow and inconsistent. This roundtable was a call to action to the industry — together we have started the journey towards agreeing to collective commitments.62

MDA was proud to be facilitating a conversation with industry heads about what we can be doing as a collective to improve representation in mainstream media that truly reflects Australia, one that supports and empowers journalists from all walks of life so that they can report on vital issues in the public interest.⁶³

It is promising to see such roundtables occurring and leadership coming together.

Independent multicultural media

The Panel also consulted with and reviewed submissions from key pillars within Australia's multicultural media landscape, Independent Multicultural Media Australia, SBS, ABC and the CBAA, to seek their views on the relationship between the media and multiculturalism and point to ways in which progress could be made.

The media alliance Independent Multicultural Media Australia (IMMA) has deep relationships with its communities but minimal collaboration with government, mainstream media and institutions. IMMA represents multicultural media outlets not funded by the government and includes print, radio, television, and digital media. The IMMA membership consists of small-to-medium private enterprises with diverse and divergent levels of digital capacity, including established publishers and broadcasters producing print newspapers, digital papers, websites, radio, streaming TV, podcasts, and video, some of which are dynamic digital-only outlets. IMMA members also provide for ethnic communities' language needs.

IMMA was formed in 2020 as a direct response to the extensive COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria and, later, in NSW. During the pandemic, the Australian Government funded advertising campaigns for mainstream and government-funded media and foreign-owned digital businesses such as Google and Facebook. Yet independent multicultural media was barely considered in the national campaigns, with 'multicultural' budgets spent on translating media releases and public relations; this was a significant omission. The pandemic experience exemplified a failure to communicate with culturally diverse communities. IMMA states:

Independent multicultural media, with its income gutted by COVID lockdowns, became a bulwark against fake news and conspiracy theories.

We spoke to and for Australia's diverse communities in heritage languages and English. It is recognised that the government engaged with SBS and FECCA, but they need to have the reach into multicultural communities that IMMA members do.64

IMMA, through their submission to the Panel, also raised the following challenges faced by independent multicultural media:

Social media's rise has made it easier for governments to limit their spending on independent multicultural press at the expense of effective communications with multicultural communities. The impact of COVID-19 on migrant communities and the ineffectiveness of government ads on social media, in competing with conspiracies and fake news, was the most evident and catastrophic example of ignoring independent multicultural press.⁶⁵

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

Describing itself as Australia's and the world's most diverse broadcaster, SBS holds a key place in the Australian media landscape, inspiring Australians to explore, respect and celebrate our diverse world. In doing so, it contributes to an inclusive and cohesive society.

Diversity and inclusion are part of the very fabric of SBS: 'they are at the core of our Charter, at the centre of our purpose and strategy, and at the heart of how we tell stories, connect with audiences, and recruit and engage our people.'66

SBS has an ongoing key role to play in the future of multicultural Australia; its culturally and linguistically diverse cross-platform media and digital services are Australia's unique asset and advantage. SBS is also vitally important at a time of pervasive misinformation and disinformation, and prevalent Al-generated content of varying quality and credibility, including in-language.

As with independent multicultural media, SBS's deep experience, and connection to community and reach, were evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, an event which demonstrated that federal, state and territory governments may not always have the capacity to communicate effectively at scale with multicultural and multilingual communities. SBS was able to swiftly assist governments in communicating health messages while maintaining strict editorial independence.

Without compromising its editorial independence in relation to content, there is benefit in SBS expanding its role beyond the current portfolio boundaries to being a key partner in service delivery and other activities — for example, supporting agencies across governments in their work for multicultural communities and multicultural Australia.

In its submission to the review, SBS articulated the quantifiable economic benefit of social inclusion, citing the finding from the 2019 Deloitte Access Economics report The economic benefits of improving social inclusion, which was produced in collaboration with SBS, that the economic dividend from Australia having a more inclusive society is estimated at \$12.7 billion annually — deriving from higher productivity and improved employment and health outcomes.

SBS also flagged that every five years, after each Australian Census, it reassesses through its Language Services Review (LSR) process the languages it serves, and recalibrates its services — including SBS Audio's dedicated and cross-platform in-language news and information services — to reflect Australia's changing diversity. The latest LSR results, announced on 1 March 2023, saw SBS welcoming Bislama, Malay, Oromo, Tetum and Telugu language services to its audio offering, reflecting the evolving ethnolinguistic communities in Australia. Notably, the majority of these new additions represent cultures from the Indo-Pacific region, demonstrating that SBS's work aligns with government efforts to enhance Australia's engagement with the region.

The SBS Inclusion training program can support government and other entities by fostering cultural awareness and understanding in a way relevant to all who work with Australia's multicultural communities or relevant programs. The online training module can assist stakeholders to navigate and maximise the benefits of cultural diversity by exploring topics including cross-cultural communication, addressing stereotypes and unconscious bias. The service is currently used by many entities, including those within government, and the program can help raise awareness of cultural and other diversity topics such as gender, disability, and age, and those relevant to First Nations peoples and LGBTIQ+ people.

SBS is impartial and independent pursuant to the legislated provisions in the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 (SBS Act), and advocates for specific policy outcomes only as relevant to its operations — as distinct from some peak and community organisations who specifically include advocacy and policy influence as part of their remit. This contributes to the potential utility of SBS as a partner for government in terms of service delivery and collaboration on other policy-related activities.

There is therefore a real opportunity for an explicitly recognised cross-government approach that leverages existing taxpayer investment, including in SBS, rather than relying on agencies to find ad hoc opportunities to collaborate on, which could unnecessarily duplicate resources or lead to inferior outcomes. Existing examples of a framework for collaboration include those within the SBS Act — which contains a number of provisions for SBS to take into account the work and circumstances of, and seek to cooperate closely with, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

It is clear that SBS is well advanced in the production and reach of inclusive media representation and that there is a role for SBS within institutional arrangements — this being to safeguard and promote social cohesion in Australia, elevate the importance of multiculturalism in Australia, and generate benefits for all Australians.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)

As another organisation focused on inclusive media and representation, the ABC's role is enshrined in legislation: as its charter states, it is a media service for all Australians. Part of this role can be described as contributing to representing Australia and people living here. The ABC does this through storytelling, including on every facet of who we are in Australia.

The ABC Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan 2023—26 contains five foundational pillars:

- inclusion in practice
- a diverse workforce
- · inclusive content, products and services
- · connection with Indigenous and diverse communities
- · accountability and transparency.

Worth noting is the annual ABC program Heywire, which actively seeks to provide young people in regional Australia with a platform to share their stories.

The ABC commits to continuing benchmarking through key indices and will implement initiatives to address any identified gaps in inclusion, aiming to do this in collaboration with:

- Reconciliation Australia
- Australian Network on Disability
- Pride in Diversity
- Champions of Change Coalition
- · Diversity Council of Australia
- Screen Diversity Inclusion Network The Everyone Project.

In terms of its reach, with respect to access to services, the ABC reaches 80% of the community every month through:

- AM radio
- · digital platforms
- children-specific content on television and online
- · drama comedy.

Within its plan, the ABC explains diversity in the workplace as follows:

An individual is not in themselves 'diverse'. When the ABC refers to diversity, we are describing a workforce drawn from all corners of the community, where different histories, beliefs, talents and perspectives not only reflect the wider world but inspire creativity and changes for the better. Diversity cannot thrive without an inclusive culture. The ABC is working to create a culture that values the experiences and knowledge of all employees, and a respectful environment where everyone can be their authentic self.

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

Community radio is essential to delivering culturally safe messaging. The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) is the peak body for all community broadcasters, including all ethnic and in-language broadcasting. It represents the majority of broadcasters, not just the ethnic sector. CBAA has identified that community radio not only speaks to 25% of the Australian population but also advances community interests, broadcasts diverse stories, delivers broadcasting stations in-language, and provides an alternative to adverse narratives perpetuated by mainstream broadcasting stations.

Multicultural community broadcasters are a core and critical part of the sector. They broadcast in more than 110 languages, have 17,000 volunteers — with around one quarter speaking another language — and, 1000 employees.

Even with those numbers, though, there are regional areas that community broadcasters do not reach. The CBAA's strategic plan, the Roadmap 2033,67 designed by the whole sector, was discussed with the Panel through consultation with CBAA as an important step forward and so too were the following:

- · recognition of the input that community broadcasting provides in crisis development and support
- · more collaboration to deliver content to audiences who are not within the mainstream core, and work together with MDA, SBS and the ABC
- community broadcasting is still predominantly language based. It is a real point of difference, particularly when ABC is the official emergency broadcaster. How to work better together to access communities during emergencies and what messaging and communication is needed are all really important considerations
- · people living in regional locations have expressed to the Panel that they are feeling isolated from in-language communication, especially as not all of our public broadcasters are able to reach regional areas in-language. Furthering the availability of community language services in regional Australia is crucial for fostering belonging and inclusion.

Online and social media communication

Staying connected through social media can be a positive experience. Online and social media communication is also the way many people source entertainment or receive news. It can, though, be a channel that falls out of the regulatory scope established to deal with traditional media, and be a place where misinformation or disinformation can flourish.

Online social media, with its reach broad and complicated, presents a number of challenges in terms of its effects on modern multiculturalism in Australia. For example, the role of social media in spreading hatred against groups and conspiracy theories regarding vaccines severely undermined the public response to COVID-19. Notably, in a consultation held in rural town, the Panel heard from one police officer who remarked that they did not have a crime problem in the town, but a social media problem: the real issue was not the prevalence of crime but the spread of online disinformation to generate social tensions.

In interpersonal relationships, social media can be weaponised as a tool of harassment, especially against women, young girls and other marginalised groups.

Australia's independent online safety regulator, the eSafety Commissioner, leads, coordinates, educates and advises on online safety issues, aiming to empower all Australians to have safer, more positive online experiences. Most members of the community know little or nothing about the functions of the eSafety Commissioner, or how to navigate their way online, due to low digital literacy. For example, as a step before activating an eSafety Commissioner response, a victim of cyberbullying or adult cyber abuse is required to report the matter to the relevant social media company. For Australian adults, this could be about hate speech or abuse where this targets an Australian individual and meets the threshold of serious harm under the Adult Cyber Abuse Scheme. However, often, the social media companies are unable to recognise with consistency hate speech that is submitted in languages other than English.

Finally, even where the above process barriers do not exist, limited digital literacy can leave people vulnerable to exploitation and abuse of their privacy or diminishment of their dignity in regard to privacy.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities have a broad range of digital literacy skills and young people are often highly digitally connected. But there is also evidence of a digital divide between some migrant parents and their children. These parents may rely on their children for help using the internet because of insufficient digital knowledge or English proficiency. This process can be disempowering and concerning; for example, in the context of medical information that a parent might not want others to see.



Photo: MFR consultation in Mount Gambier, South Australia — September 2023.

The eSafety Commissioner's research program demonstrates online harms can disproportionately impact at-risk and diverse groups. The eSafety Commissioner offers the following examples:

- · People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can be at increased risk of online hate targeting their race, ethnicity or religion, and of adult cyber abuse.
- · Women from diverse backgrounds experience image-based abuse as part of domestic and family violence at higher levels than the national average in Australia.
- Children and young people from diverse backgrounds are at increased risk of cyberbullying, making contact with strangers online, and sharing information with people they have not met in person.
- Low digital literacy skills and lack of digital access are among many factors that may place and individual at greater risk of experiencing, or being seriously impacted by, harmful online content or behaviour.
- The factors can also be intersectional, meaning the layering of factors can increase a person's risk. There is also strong link between the inequality, discrimination and disrespect that underpins harms experienced online and harms experienced offline.

The eSafety Commissioner places a strong emphasis on capacity building to help prevent these negative impacts of online and social media communication. Such capacity building in turn contributes to realising the positive benefits that social media can bring to connectedness, representation and creativity.

The arts

In a 2018 article about the soft power of screen narratives to affect social change and foster social cohesion, Australian filmmaker Tony Ayres writes 'By using our skill as storytellers, we are trying to transcend people's fixed ideologies. We try to make people feel the emotional lives of the characters in our stories.' Ayres explains that story telling is a form of 'norm engineering' — if carefully crafted stories show the point of view of marginalised people, the prejudices and expectations of the audience can be subverted and diversity of ideas and ways of being can be normalised.⁶⁸

Whether creating or experiencing art, art can be an authentic, personal expression of culture or something that whole communities can enjoy together. Creative Australia, the Australian Government's principal arts investment and advisory body, aptly explains the benefits of art and creativity as 'a powerful resource to strengthen multiculturalism in Australia. It offers an expression of our humanity and of the many perspectives, cultures and identities that make up our Australian community'.

There is significant opportunity to harness the power of arts and culture and the talents of culturally diverse practitioners to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing, and build a modern shared Australian identity.

But for creative work to be its best and be relevant to contemporary Australia, Creative Australia in their submission to the Panel explains that 'we need it to be accessible, and for Australians of all backgrounds and experiences to participate as audiences, creators, workers and leaders. There is strong evidence that while diverse communities are highly engaged in arts and culture, many are under-represented within cultural institutions and leadership.'69

The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, Revive, contributes to whole-of-government outcomes of multiculturalism, social cohesion and inclusion. It provides a pathway to centre culture and creativity in the Multicultural Framework by harnessing culture's impact on Australia's resilience and wellbeing.

A renewed Multicultural Framework can and should amplify the existing federal cultural policy and associated programs by recognising the fundamental role of culture to multicultural societies and centring the National Cultural Policy within the Multicultural Framework.

To strengthen multiculturalism through the arts, Creative Australia has put forward a set of recommendations. These are, for the most part, supported in principle, as outlined below. It is worth noting, however, that other submissions we received highlighted a gap in funding for screen between Creative Australia and Screen Australia, which does not fund community initiatives in respect to accessing core multi-year funding.

4.1.1. Recommendations 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

Recommendation 5: Ensure a formalised and expanded role for SBS, ABC and CBAA

A formalised and expanded role for SBS, ABC and CBAA in the institutional, legislative and policy framework to further deliver outcomes for multicultural Australia. Their trusted position and unprecedented reach and connection in multilingual communities should be further leveraged to improve outcomes for policy development and service delivery initiatives, both domestically and internationally. To ensure this expanded role, we recommend SBS, ABC and CBAA be recognised as having a formalised advisory role in an official capacity across relevant federal government departments. In particular, this role should assist mainstream commercial media and the arts to steer away from token representation of global and cosmopolitan diversity to actual community representation and engagement.

Recommendation 6: Improve access to government funding for independent multicultural media

Improve access to government funding for independent multicultural media through amending grant eligibility criteria, and allow for a more equitable process. Multicultural media is currently not eligible to apply for media grants, while established mainstream media entities, with significant financial resources, continue to receive funding and support from the government. We recommend that the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts work in partnership with a Multicultural Australia Commission to improve access to media grants and digital transformation grants, thereby reducing the reliance on multicultural program—related grants to maintain funding. By increasing the scope of grants available to businesses like IMMA, this would enable continued capacity building for future generations of journalists from diverse backgrounds and ensure that communications reach multicultural communities.

Recommendation 7: Use more diverse sources for government advertising for multicultural campaigns

That the Department of Finance take steps to ensure all government departmental advertising for multicultural campaigns is directed to independent multicultural media outlets, not just big digital private sector business or public relations firms.

Recommendation 8: Creative Australia to undertake a whole-of-government review of investment in community cultural programs

That Creative Australia, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, undertake a whole-of-government review of current investment in community cultural programs and lead the development and implementation of funding and grants programs to target support for:

- · community cultural projects (such as exhibitions, public art installations, screenings, workshops) and community-engaged festivals that support the cultural expression of culturally diverse communities
- skills and leadership development to amplify and deepen the professional and community benefits of staging cultural programs, events and festivals
- · capacity development, networking and infrastructure that enables effective cultural engagement as a stimulus for more sustained relationships and community development
- more professional development opportunities for diverse cultural leaders, creatives and creative workers. Research shows culturally diverse artists and creative workers experience barriers to workforce participation and leadership, including feeling excluded from cultural venues and organisations, educational institutions, government and funding bodies.

The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts.

Recommendation 9: Creative Australia to lead development of a pilot multi-year seed fund community-driven creative solutions to social challenges

That Creative Australia, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, lead the development of a pilot multi-year seed fund for community-driven creative solutions to social challenges (including, for example, social isolation and disengagement). This pilot could be co-designed with target communities and delivered by Creative Australia and would involve collaboration with local, state and federal government, industry and philanthropic stakeholders.

The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts.

Recommendation 10: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts to establish a program for community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation

That the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts establish a program for multicultural community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation, enabling communities to participate in arts and culture, in recognition of the known benefits of arts and cultural participation for social cohesion. The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts.

Connection: getting the architecture and institutional settings right



Getting the foundations and institutional settings right for Australia to be a truly successful multicultural nation is paramount because it will set the tone and direction for everything that follows.

Our conceptualisation of the institutional settings to implement a successful and impactful multi-decade Multicultural Framework for Australia will require commitment and collaboration among government bodies, civil society, community organisations and individuals across Australia. The vision is to create a stronger and more inclusive nation that embraces diversity as a source of strength and unity. The Panel has reviewed the structure and capability of current functions related to multicultural affairs in order to understand current workforce numbers and budgets, as well as the capability, consistency and leadership commitment of Australian Government departments.

In doing so, the Panel had regard to other recent and related reviews, in particular the 2023 *Review of the Migration System* report, which set the direction for foundational change that impact on building a successful multicultural future for Australia.

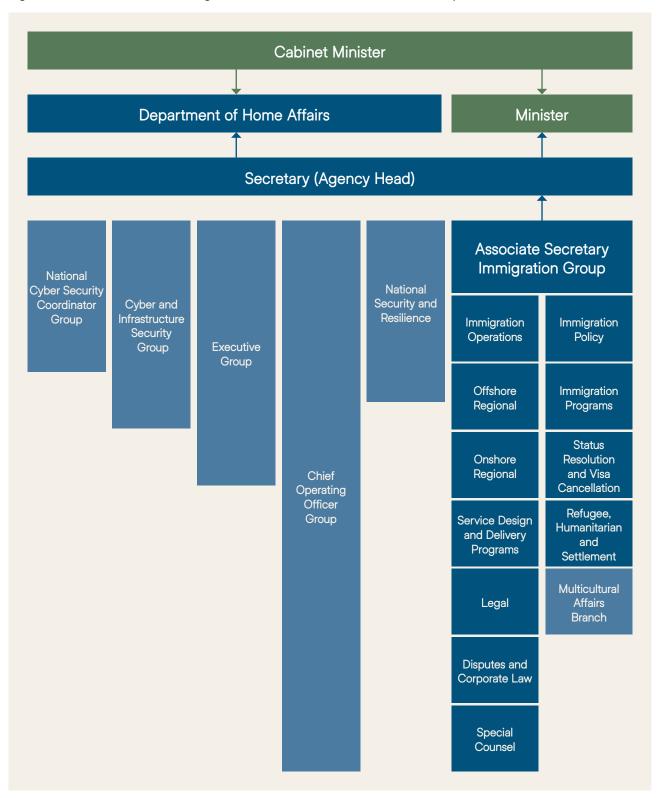
This section of the report sets out how the Australian Government, together with states and territories, through to grassroots communities, can get the settings right for a successful multicultural Australia of the future.

Current arrangements — strengths, gaps, weaknesses

Multicultural Affairs, in its current home in the Department of Home Affairs ... is sidelined, peripheral, and exerts too little influence on government policy and decision-making. Likewise, the Australian Multicultural Council has little influence and is obscured in [Home Affairs].⁷⁰

In the Department of Home Affairs, the federal government agency responsible for national, multicultural policy, the function is managed through a branch (Multicultural Affairs Branch) situated within a division (Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs) of the Immigration Group (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Current institutional setting of the Multicultural Affairs Branch in the Department of Home Affairs



In October 2022, leadership of the newly formed Immigration Group was elevated to Associate Secretary level. Prior to this change, immigration and settlement services were under the leadership of a Deputy Secretary, and citizenship, along with the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Programs Branch (Social Cohesion Division), was located within a Deputy Secretary's remit for social cohesion, citizenship, counter-terrorism and countering foreign interference.

Current responsibility for the department is best described through Home Affairs' most recent Corporate Plan, which states, 'The Department is responsible for central coordination and strategy policy leadership in relation to cyber and critical infrastructure resilience and security, immigration, border security and management, counter-terrorism and the protection of our sovereignty, citizenship and social cohesion.'

This remit has not been without criticism; the following quote from Foundation House, a refugee support organisation, encapsulates the views expressed by many in the community with the Panel:

One of the arguments put to me about keeping multicultural affairs in a large department is that it will have greater influence with government when inside a super department. That this would benefit when going to cabinet because you have the weight of a powerful portfolio. I say the reverse has happened in a mega department with a crucial focus on a different set of issues. Resources are stripped to reinforce other important activities. Those decisions happen internally within the department, not at the government level because they have been absorbed within the larger portfolio.⁷¹

As a result of the Multicultural Affairs portfolio being positioned on such a micro scale within the Department of Home Affairs, there has been an inability by the multicultural affairs portfolio to influence public policy and government decisions. And the focus of policy and program approaches to culturally and racially marginalised communities has become one of being monitored and managed rather than inclusive and celebratory. It became increasingly clear to the Panel that strategic policy direction to realise the social and economic benefits of multiculturalism for Australia has been consistently overshadowed by a singular security focus, mainly on border security, foreign interference, and countering violent extremism.



Photo: MFR consultation with Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria — August 2023.

The Panel appreciates that multicultural policy has a broader application than immigration policy. However, in the course of our deliberations and consultations we were repeatedly struck by the interplay of migration policy and planning in shaping our success as a multicultural nation. Strong planning and coordination between immigration policy and the provision of the physical and social infrastructure and services — including housing, health, education and transport is fundamental if we are to fully realise the benefits of a national migration program for our country. The importance of the responsibility the Australian Government carries in this space cannot be overstated and, in the Panel's view, justifies the establishment of a standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship.

The Panel's view has been reinforced by views expressed in other related reviews, in particular the Review of Australia's Migration System, which notes the need for Australia to focus on maintaining our socially cohesive, multicultural society, which will be highly dependent on Australians maintaining trust and confidence in the migration system. Migration 'has been a longstanding contributor to Australia's national identity and the makeup of its people', which, if supported by clear settlement outcomes and a high take-up of citizenship in the community, plays a critical role in building a strong and inclusive community.⁷² A dedicated capability within the Australian Public Service, with clear stewardship for multiculturalism, migration and citizenship, will reap significant benefits for Australia socially and economically.

Despite the more recent realignment of functions and structures within the Department of Home Affairs, including the movement of the Multicultural Affairs Branch from the Social Cohesion, Citizenship, Counter Terrorism and Countering Foreign Interference Group to the Immigration Group, many submissions and consultations indicated that more needs to be done if Australia is to truly realise the benefits of multiculturalism and demonstrate government commitment to building a successful nation. The status quo needs to change.

Deep dives

As part of its review of existing institutional arrangements on issues related to multicultural functions within the Department of Home Affairs, the Panel undertook a series of deep dives into key areas within the department.

The initial deep dive highlighted the closely interrelated components of government settlement services and multicultural policy, including the Access and Equity Policy that sits under multicultural policy. Settlement programs are key to delivering accessible and equitable services for people living in Australia. We note the settlement reform work underway, such as service redesign aimed at a more personalised and tailored approach to services, the Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework, and the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot.

A key mechanism used to engage across the Australian Government and state and territory governments on settlement issues is the Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group (SOSOG). Other stakeholder engagement is at the international level, such as the Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migrations, Asylum and Refugees.

Multicultural Affairs Branch deep dive

A number of issues were raised with the Panel around the current model, including social cohesion work. Feedback through the department's Community Liaison Officer (CLO) network has indicated that while there is a growing understanding within the community that there has been a shift regarding the department's approach to multiculturalism, there remains a need for much more responsive, inclusive and transparent engagement to further build trust. Below is a breakdown of the current Multicultural Affairs functions and challenges identified through the deep dive.

CLO network and community engagement capability

An initial deep dive with the department highlighted the importance of the CLO role in supporting the community and the government. In doing so, one challenge is the department's status as a security agency and consequent, at times, lack of trust within communities in engaging with it.

There are, of course, still security-related issues for communities, particularly foreign interference, and the CLO network has an important role in assisting communities where they raise concerns - referring them and connecting them to the right supports when needed.

As we travelled across the country, the Panel repeatedly heard of and witnessed the effectiveness of the CLO network's essential role in promoting the government's multicultural agenda. In essence, the CLO network:

- reports to Regional Directors for each state and territory office within the Home Affairs department
- · has around 50 CLOs, in five state-based teams, including 10 specialist language/Pasifika officers
- · has a broad range of stakeholders and responds to whole-of-government issues, including supporting the Minister through briefs on topical issues in community and providing an important 'feeder' for policy development
- · provides an interface within the community where issues related to Commonwealth, state and territory, and local government functions often intersect
- provides a feedback loop to and from government with communities and stakeholders on multicultural and settlement issues.

The Panel's view is that the CLO Network is a valuable resource that should be enhanced to strengthen transparency and connection between government and the community. So far, its engagement capability has not been fully realised or recognised, with regular confusion around boundaries and lines of reporting, especially regarding cross-jurisdictional matters.

Community Events and Messages

The community Events and Messages team within Home Affairs supports ministerial engagement, cultural and religious event messaging and facilitates open dialogue with community organisations and leaders, including organising community event briefs and ministerial roundtables with communities. It has recently gained responsibility for the delivery of Harmony Week and has responsibility for community information summaries and maintaining a calendar of significant events.

Grants

The Grants section:

- · shares services with the Department of Social Services regarding technology, expertise, cost recovery and paying
- supports grassroots organisations, larger organisations, church/religious groups, large diasporas, connections to local governments and peak bodies such as the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA)
- is responsible for the administration of the following grant programs:
 - Community Languages Schools
 - Fostering Integrations Grants (FIGS)
 - Local Multicultural Projects (LMP)
 - FECCA.

The Panel notes the following issues with the current grants and funding model and improvements needed:

- · There is a need to build community capability in the grants process and in enabling multicultural communities to come together in an application, and in partnering with each other and other sectors.
- Reporting is mostly quantitative, which does not lend itself to identifying appropriate value for money and best possible outcomes, given that the benefits of multicultural programs and events are often qualitative and not easily measured.
- · Better branding and targeting for desired outcomes for grants funding, with clear and transparent program design, would yield better outcomes.
- The current ratio for grants approved is one out of 10 applications; an increased ratio would improve the success of grants programs. There is a need to be more targeted in the types of grants approved; for example, grants focused on events and capacity building for smaller businesses and grassroots community organisations.
- · Multi-year funding allocations would yield significant impact, benefit and value for money, as well as lifting the capability and capacity of the multicultural sector.

Partnerships and review

The Partnerships team:

- has secretariat responsibility for the Australian Multicultural Council, Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs, and the Multicultural Framework Review
- manages the departmental relationship with FECCA, as a key stakeholder
- · builds and leverages relationships with key stakeholders of mutual strategic interest to support the government's strengths-based approach to Australia's multicultural society.

The Panel notes that there is a greater need for a revised governance structure that starts with the Ministerial Forum and then maps advisory groups and functions to sit within the portfolio. Clear articulation of functions and the institutional framework is also needed to ensure all representatives are aware of where they fit, across all levels of government, and can contribute to co-designed, co-produced initiatives focused on building a stronger and more inclusive nation.

Research

The Research section conducts community-based research and engages with partners such as the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute to collect, analyse and use data to support areas of research that influence policy and support multiculturalism.

The Panel notes that more needs to be done with the data available. And there is a need to build research capability. To better understand capability gaps, data and the research landscape, the Panel commissioned Emeritus Professor Andrew Jakubowicz to provide suggestions on how to improve reporting on the current state of research capability into multicultural Australia. (See Chapter 8 of this report for more detail, and Appendix D for a full copy of this submission.)

Multicultural policy

The Multicultural Policy section is responsible for developing and communicating the government's position on multicultural affairs. It is responsible for 'mainstreaming' multiculturalism across government, provides support for cabinet processes — including submissions, new policy proposals and briefings, and engaging stakeholders to build multicultural capacity across government — and monitors the whole-of-government multicultural access and equity reporting.

The Panel notes that there is a need to update or renew the existing Access and Equity policy through an overarching Multicultural Framework. The Panel also notes that, currently, the Multicultural Policy section is an underdeveloped capability, which is primarily focused on reactive functions. While there has been a recent small increase in the number of staff, capability remains limited — it had, until early 2023, only comprised one full-time dedicated employee.

Federal multicultural access and equity policy

The Access and Equity policy was established in 2013 and updated in 2016. The policy seeks to ensure that Australian Government programs and services meet the needs of all Australians, regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Home Affairs is responsible for managing the policy and coordinating its reporting cycle in order to compile a triennial whole-of-government performance summary report to the Australian Government. As of November 2023, the last published report of government departments' performance against Access and Equity objectives was for the 2013-15 period. A judgement can therefore be made that without a clear framework outlining responsibility for commitment to advancing a multicultural Australia, accountability will continue to be weak, unclear and unfocused.

A more robust and contemporary Multicultural Access and Equity policy, within a renewed national Multicultural Framework, is an opportunity to mainstream multiculturalism across government programs and services, and to hold departments and agencies to account. Under current arrangements, the reporting process relies heavily on the active cooperation and collaboration of government departments and agencies, but without strict levers for compliance. As such, the process is vulnerable to delays due to prioritisation and resourcing constraints.

It is also important to note that the current policy does not include First Nations peoples or people with disability. The distinct needs of these and other groups are addressed through separate initiatives.

State and territory legislation and policy and settings

Each state and territory has its own policies and settings regarding multiculturalism. Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have legislation governing multicultural affairs. The Australian Capital Territory now has in force the Multiculturalism Act 2023. Tasmania has a Multicultural Action plan, and Western Australia has a Multicultural Charter.

Multicultural Grant programs are also administered by state and territory governments. A list of the state and territory legislation and policy settings is at Appendix H.

It is important that a national Multicultural Framework defines the way forward and is an opportunity for federal, state and territory governments to come together to ensure consistency of practice for the various legislation and policy settings currently in place across jurisdictions.

Consultation with Commonwealth agencies

To further consider the effectiveness of existing federal legislative and regulatory frameworks, legal settings, relevant policy settings and program strategies to promote multiculturalism, social cohesion and inclusion — along with services designed to support multicultural Australia — the Panel met with Commonwealth agencies. The Minister, the Hon Andrew Giles MP, also wrote to 41 federal ministers, inviting their respective departments to make a submission to the Multicultural Framework Review. Given the importance of the MFR in achieving a coordinated whole-of-government service, it is disappointing that the Panel only received eight submissions from Commonwealth departments.

Submissions and consultations: the view on institutional arrangements

The Multicultural Affairs portfolio currently sits under the Australian Department of Home Affairs. This is inappropriate given the expression 'Home Affairs' connotes national security and defence objectives. Multiculturalism policy should be a national social policy priority, encouraging the celebration of the current and real culturally diverse population and perspectives Australians hold. The transfer of the Multicultural Affairs portfolio to the central government, specifically to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, will represent a pivotal step in signalling the Australian Government's unequivocal commitment to advancing multiculturalism as a national priority.

By placing the Multicultural Affairs portfolio under the remit of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Government will demonstrate its dedication to mainstreaming multiculturalism into all aspects of governance and policy-making. This would be beyond a symbolic gesture, where the Department will report to the Prime Minister, have oversight over line agencies' contributions to multicultural policy programs with a whole-of-Government lens and continue enhancing Australia's multiculturalism, harmony and inclusivity, recognised as a core part of the Australian identity.73

As previously mentioned, the submissions we received and consultations we conducted strongly advocated for a change in the current institutional arrangements. The points below summarise this view:

- Multicultural Affairs must sit closer to the centre of Australian Government decision-making.
- · Elevating the minister responsible for the multicultural portfolio to cabinet would allow the responsible minister to have greater influence over decision-making across government rather than just within their own portfolio.
- A standalone federal multicultural agency should be established (variously described in submissions as an independent Multicultural Commission and Commissioner or an Office for Multicultural Australia).
- · A renewed commitment to multiculturalism through the establishment of a standalone agency would reaffirm the government's genuine commitment to building a successful nation where everyone can contribute to and benefit from the social and economic wealth of the nation and safeguard Australia's future social cohesion and prosperity.
- · Ongoing funding should be provided to the standalone agency to lead Australia's efforts to build a stronger, more inclusive nation by working across government to provide a cohesive, effective and efficient approach to implementing the Multicultural Framework.

- The standalone agency should have research capacity and executive authority, or at least a legislative base for developing multicultural policy at the federal level.
- The standalone agency must effectively work inter-governmentally and lead Commonwealth, state, and local government dialogue with regard to multicultural policy development.
- The principles of multiculturalism should be enshrined in a new federal Multicultural Act which would provide an overarching national legal framework for multiculturalism that would deliver a nationally consistent approach to multicultural Australia.
- · A new Multicultural Framework should be implemented through Action Plans, with their effectiveness optimised by coordinating and aligning them with existing frameworks at the Commonwealth and state and territory levels to build synergies and to avoid duplication.

Options for institutional settings

The key design principles and criteria that we have considered in framing our options are:

- organisational structure with sufficient authority to maximise whole-of-government impact, enabling strong leadership in advancing multiculturalism
- institutional integration to ensure a 'core business' approach to embedding diversity and inclusion across whole of government and to enable credible engagement across all sectors
- clarity and visibility of purpose, outcomes and goals to ensure a properly articulated institutional model to achieve thriving multiculturalism in Australia, with clarity of roles and functions
- transparency and integrity of purpose to engender public trust by ensuring institutional arrangements that are fit for purpose, responsive and able to adapt to evolving needs and changing demographics.

The Panel outlines two options for setting up this authority, outlined below. Both options propose a straight divide of the Department of Home Affairs, with the existing Immigration Group elevating to a standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship. Option 1 proposes a standalone Multicultural Australia Commission established as an executive agency under a statutory instrument, designed to ensure ongoing stability and independence. Option 2 proposes an Office of Multicultural Australia as an office within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) as an administrative unit that would still remain within the constraints of a departmental structure. Both entities would report to the one minister, preferably a Cabinet Minister, responsible for the Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship portfolios.

Option 1

Option 1 proposes a straight divide of the current Home Affairs department with the existing Immigration Group elevating to a standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship. A standalone Multicultural Australia Commission, established as an executive agency by statutory instrument, is also proposed as part of Option 1. Both entities would report to the one minister, preferably a Cabinet Minister, responsible for the Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship portfolio (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Option 1 for institutional setting



Multicultural Australia Commission and Commissioner

The Panel proposes that a Multicultural Australia Commission and Commissioner be implemented through enacting section 65 of the Public Service Act 1999 and has given serious consideration to the pros and cons of a commission structure. A legislative basis would be a preferred option, to ensure additional stability.

A Multicultural Australia Commission and Commissioner would be responsible for:

- strategic issues, challenges and advice to government
- setting strategic outcomes nationally, undertaking high-level strategic policy and reporting
- setting and supporting advising arrangements for priorities and issues, inclusive of:
 - rural, regional, remote
 - media and communications
 - youth
 - whole-of-government multicultural responsibility
- research, evaluation and data for whole-of-government response to multicultural outcomes
- grants and leading on responsibility for funding programs
- · using feedback from communities and staff/contacts on the ground and conducting monthly community-of-practice forums with the CLO network, to improve issues and multicultural services and policy
- national performance and accountability overseeing areas for action and improvement across whole of government, setting key performance indicators for departments to report against annually to then be tabled to Parliament by the Commission
- · conducting annual consultations with state and territories for the annual reporting and enabling states and territories to link community and local government feedback/input for the annual report
- · bringing together representation across Australia from all levels of government and community to be a part of decision-making processes, to co-design and co-produce with government and all key sectors, to share responsibility, for transparency of outcomes and promote shared accountability. This could occur annually through a summit or meeting as part of the annual reporting process and should also progress development of the following initiatives:
 - a participative and policy-oriented research agenda to promote a successful Multicultural Australia through a proposed National Research Capacity
 - explore a Commonwealth Act to underpin the framework for a Multicultural Australia, taking into account existing state and territory legislation, whether an Act is needed, consistency of legislation across layers of government, and what an Act should deliver
 - work with the AHRC on key inter-dependencies of the multicultural framework and anti-discrimination framework to address the experience of racism, and how it undermines belonging, inclusion, equity and social cohesion
- · providing advice to government on all matters such as Cabinet submissions, including development and implementation of a requirement for a multicultural impact analysis for all new policy proposals and Cabinet submissions, with supporting resources to support policymakers to meet this requirement
- · developing annual Multicultural Budget statements for publication as part of the Australian Government's annual budget process
- · working through PM&C to strengthen and have oversight of the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy and ensure mandatory government implementation across all service delivery
- funding and supporting a community-led Multicultural Community Advisory Council, including secretariat function
- supporting, including through a secretariat function, regular Australian Government—led Multicultural Ministerial Forum Meetings comprising state and territory ministers
- ensuring consistency and coherence of the implementation of Australia's Multicultural Framework and Action Plans (MAPs) across all government portfolios through coordination across the design and implementation of polices, programs, laws and regulations
- · developing Cabinet submission impact statements to be used for all Cabinet submissions
- identifying emerging issues to foster and promote a stronger nation
- serving as a connection point for state and territory commissions and peak bodies

- · providing a national role to champion and supporting connection across federal, state and territory, local governments and grass roots community, with a strong focus on collaboration, co-design, co-production and shared responsibility
- serving as a coordinating steward for the system
- aligning to the role of the Multicultural Affairs, Settlement and Languages Division
- conducting quarterly meetings between PM&C Deputy Secretary and Commissioner
- · maintaining a network of key stakeholders consisting of all tiers of government, advisory bodies, media and communities, such as: the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), the Office for Women, SBS and the ABC
- · having a role in the anti-racism strategy with the AHRC
- having a role in the CALD employment strategy with the APSC.

Thought would also need to be given to the required corporate and enabling functions, such as human resources, payroll, ITC, legal services, media and communications, capability, planning and risk, procurement, property, executive and ministerial support.

Commissioner

A Multicultural Commissioner would provide leadership, boost awareness and understanding, raise the profile of challenges and strengths, and facilitate coordination and cooperation across sectors and governments to achieve better outcomes. The Commissioner would liaise between the public and government, as well as across government, to progress the issues and perspectives of multicultural communities. They would lead the coordination and implementation of advisory bodies and whole-of-government strategic outcomes.

Multicultural Affairs, Settlement and Languages Division

In this model, the Multicultural Affairs, Settlement and Languages Division would be responsible for priority strategic outcomes for the department, instead of the current model that positions Multicultural Affairs as an underfunded, under-resourced micro branch, with minimal priority status given to strategic outcomes.

A resourcing and role-to-function mapping exercise should be conducted in order to ensure the proposed roles and functions for the division are enabled and allow for the successful delivery of outcomes against the Multicultural Framework, policy and legislative settings.

Within the division, the following functions would be delivered for the Australian public and government:

- · Enhanced existing functions, bringing planning and strategy together to strengthen multicultural policy capability, research and evaluation, grants and contract management, partnerships, CLOs, settlement policy and operations, performance and accountability (reporting, data and governance function), project management, strategic communications, community and ministerial messaging, and events management.
- · An enhanced CLO network, with greater capacity to engage with the community, inform policy development and provide a feedback loop continuum. It is recommended that the CLO network comprise at least 70 officers, a third of whom should be language specialists for the regions they serve. The network should report to a dedicated Director (smaller states or territories) and to an Assistant Secretary (larger states or territories). A strong link to Regional Directors should also be maintained.
- Language services and language policy, to be brought into the Multicultural Affairs division within the new department. This should include the Adult Migrant English Program, the national Translating and Interpreting Service, and Community Language policy.
- Settlement policy, program and operations, including secretariats for SOSOG, the Refugee Health Network of Australia, Provider Advisory Group and other settlement-related engagement.

The departmental multicultural affairs function would oversee broad grants for community connection and supporting the peak bodies. Furthermore:

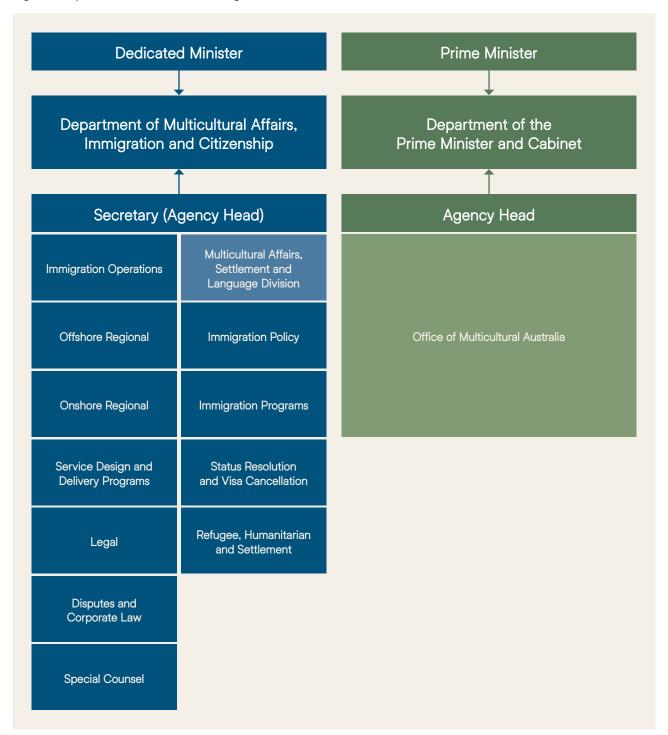
· All departments should have grants functions for multicultural-related initiatives, to include specific grants relevant to the individual department's portfolio responsibilities; for example, multicultural educational grant initiatives would be the Department of Education's responsibility.

A systemic guide would be developed and embedded into all grants programs across government.

Option 2

Option 2 proposes a straight divide of the current Home Affairs department, with the existing Immigration Group elevating to a standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship. An Office of Multicultural Australia is also proposed as an office within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The constraints of the Office being located within a departmental structure would be balanced by the location of the Office in the key Australian Government central agency. Both entities would report to the one minister, preferably a Cabinet Minister, responsible for the Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship portfolio (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Option 2 for institutional setting



Office of Multicultural Australia

A standalone Office for Multicultural Australia (without a Commission), within PM&C, would:

- be responsible for the national Multicultural Framework
- ensure consistency and coherence of the implementation of Australia's Multicultural Framework and Action Plans across all government portfolios through coordination across the design and implementation of polices, programs, laws and regulations
- · work across government to mainstream consideration of the needs and perspectives of multicultural Australia into decision-making
- provide advice to government on all matters such as Cabinet submissions, including development and implementation of a requirement for a multicultural impact analysis for all new policy proposals and Cabinet submissions, with supporting resources to support policymakers to meet this requirement
- develop annual Multicultural Budget statements for publication as part of the Australian Government's annual budget process fund and support a community-led Multicultural Community Advisory Council, including secretariat function
- support regular Australian Government—led Multicultural Ministerial Meetings consisting of state and territory ministers, led by the Commonwealth, including secretariat function
- strengthen the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy and ensure mandatory government implementation across all service delivery
- · design and implement consistent and accurate measures of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity across data collection.

Existing functions should be enhanced through an OMA and include bringing planning and strategy together to strengthen multicultural policy capability, research and evaluation, grants and contract management, partnerships, CLOs, settlement policy and operations, performance and accountability (reporting, data and governance function), project management, strategic communications, community and ministerial messaging, and events management.

An enhanced CLO network with greater capacity would engage with community, inform policy development and provide a feedback loop continuum. It is recommended that the CLO network comprise at least 70 CLO officers, a third of whom should be language specialists for the regions they serve. The CLO network should report to a dedicated Director (smaller states or territories) and to an Assistant Secretary (larger states or territories). A strong link to Regional Directors should also be maintained.

Language services and language policy should be brought into the multicultural affairs division within the new department. This should include the Adult Migrant English Program, the national Translating and Interpreting Service, and Community Language policy.

The departmental multicultural affairs function would oversee broad grants concerning community connection and supporting the peak bodies. Furthermore:

· All departments should have grants functions for multicultural-related initiatives, to include specific, multicultural grants relevant to the individual department's portfolio responsibilities; for example, multicultural educational grant initiatives would be the Department of Education's responsibility.

A systemic guide would be developed and embedded into all grants programs across government.

Thought would also need to be given to the required corporate and enabling functions, such as human resources, payroll, ITC, legal services, media and communications, capability, planning and risk, procurement, property, executive and ministerial support.

Table 3 outlines the relative pros and cons of Options 1 and 2.

Table 3: Summary analysis of options against design principles/criteria

(noting that both options propose a standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship)

Design principle/ criteria	Option 1 Multicultural Commission	Option 2 Office of Multicultural Affairs in PM&C
Organisational structure with stability and authority	High degree of stability: clearly defined and separate function established under a legislative instrument, with a dedicated CEO with authority to lead the achievement of separately articulated functions and outcomes across the whole of government	Low degree of stability: established by administrative arrangement within department, with less external visibility and more prone to changes in structure
Institutional integration — to embed diversity and inclusion across whole of government and enable credible engagement across all sectors	Medium degree of institutional integration: balance between integration and independence, as it is a standalone entity established under the Public Service Act, with a direct line of reporting to responsible minister	High degree of institutional integration: would have imprimatur of prime minister's department in seeking engagement across government
Clarity and visibility of purpose, outcomes and goals	High degree of clarity and visibility: standalone statutory entity with public visibility of purpose, role and functions	Low degree of clarity and visibility: less clarity and visibility given placement within department structure
Transparency and integrity of purpose	High degree of transparency and integrity of purpose: standalone structure allows for design that can adapt to evolving demographic needs and priorities and transparency of purpose that will facilitate trust building with the Australian community	Low to medium degree of transparency and integrity of purpose: some scope for design to ensure transparency and integrity within separate office, but subject to and limited by broader departmental structure and priorities

Multicultural Ministerial Forum

Ministerial forums provide opportunity for cross-jurisdictional information — sharing and relationship building. Engaging in regular dialogue between governments advances cooperation and collaboration to strengthen cohesion and inclusion across Australia's multicultural society.

Currently, the Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs is a twice-yearly meeting of all state and territory multicultural affairs ministers, chaired by the Australian Government minister responsible for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.

To gain greater traction and connectivity on multicultural issues, policy and strategy through all layers of government, it is proposed that the minister use the forum to seek and reach an agreed annual agenda for multicultural issues nationally for endorsement by National Cabinet.

The secretariat function for the Multicultural Ministerial Forum should be placed within the Commission. And the recently reinstated practice of reporting on meeting outcomes through published communiques should be continued, as an important public statement of shared national commitment.

Multicultural Community Advisory Council

In the course of consultations, stakeholders expressed doubt or limited awareness of the existing Ministerial advisory body, the Australian Multicultural Council. The general perception was that the current advisory group has limited influence on multicultural policy directions under Home Affairs.

The Multicultural Community Advisory Council would keep the minister informed of current and emerging issues along with offering independent advice from a community perspective on multicultural affairs, policy and programs.

A Multicultural Community Advisory Council would:

- Replace the current Australian Multicultural Council, Review of AMC
- · Be established as a strategic, advisory body to advise the Minister and the Commissioner on current and emerging issues
- · Be attended by the Minister, but co-chaired by the Commissioner and a community representative, and with the secretariat function provided through the Commission
- Comprise 12-15 members, including representation from each state and territory with the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience, and including members with government experience, lived experience of multicultural issues, and including multi-faith representation
- Appointment to the Council would be transparent and by merit, advertised through an Expression of Interest process
- · Council members would be remunerated, in recognition of their time, capability and commitment
- The work of the Council should be transparent, with consideration to be given to issuing communiques on outcomes of meetings and/or an annual report on the Council's work to be provided to the Minister and subsequently published.

5.1.1. Recommendation 11

Recommendation 11: Establish a Multicultural Affairs Commission and Commissioner. and standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship, with a dedicated minister

In the course of our deliberations and consultations the Panel was struck by the interplay between migration policy and planning in shaping our success as a multicultural nation. It was also clear that strategic policy direction to realise the social and economic benefits of multiculturalism has been overshadowed by a singular security focus, including border security, foreign interference and countering violent extremism. The importance of the responsibility the Australian Government carries in this space cannot be overstated; it justifies, in the Panel's view, the establishment of a standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship.

Additionally, the Panel received and agrees with many submissions on the need for a standalone federal multicultural agency: a Multicultural Affairs Commission and Commissioner, to lead efforts to build a stronger, more inclusive nation by working across government and to implement an effective and comprehensive Multicultural Framework.

The Review recommends as a priority the enactment, under section 65, Part 9 — Executive Agencies of the Public Service Act 1999, of an Order to Establish the Multicultural Australia Commission as an Executive Agency, to:

- a. establish the Multicultural Australia Commission as an Executive Agency
- b. allocate the name Multicultural Australia Commission to the Executive Agency
- c. allocate the name Commissioner to the Head of the Executive Agency
- d. identify the dedicated Minister responsible for the Executive Agency.

The review also recommends, under section 72 — Machinery of government changes, Part 10 — Administrative arrangements and reorganisation of the Public Service Act 1999, that the Immigration Group within the Department of Home Affairs be elevated to a standalone department, reporting to a dedicated minister responsible for the multicultural affairs, immigration and citizenship functions.



Photo: Together For Humanity Youth Summit in Sydney, New South Wales - October 2023. Photography: Melody Heart Photography.

Language: supporting Australians to communicate



English remains Australia's common language. However, the diversity of languages that are spoken in Australia today is an asset with unrealised potential, both for individuals and society. The human ability to communicate in different languages carries meaning, value and understanding, which technology, for all its benefits, cannot replicate.

Many members of Australia's diverse communities continue to speak in their preferred languages. In doing so, they create not only their sense of immediate belonging and understanding, but economic value through business connections with their countries of origin.

Individuals who speak more than one language bring different perspectives and insights and open up opportunities for their workplaces.

Most new migrants to Australia today speak English — a requirement for their visa. Humanitarian entrants and refugees, though, most likely arrive with limited or no English. And some people arriving as dependants of the main visa holder do not have an English requirement. Australia also has an aging population cohort who have limited English.

People with limited English require professional and accessible language services — interpreting and translation. Government information should be available in community languages to the widest extent possible. The Panel received many submissions on the importance of language services (110 substantive references), the need to maintain community languages (36 references) and the importance of learning English (40 references). These will be drawn on in the following sections.

The Panel acknowledges the contribution to understanding and promoting the diversity of languages spoken in Australia of Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, who developed Australia's first national language policy in 1987, which states:

Language policies should be developed and co-ordinated at the national level on the basis of four guiding principles, namely:

- · competence in English
- maintenance and development of languages other than English
- provision of services in languages other than English
- opportunities for learning second languages.⁷⁴

A renewed effort is required to give ongoing effect to these principles.

A comprehensive national languages policy for Australia is essential, not only to deliver on a successful multicultural agenda, but also to contribute to a more inclusive, prosperous and globally engaged Australia. The policy should promote multilingualism, support language education in schools and in community, provide resources for the preservation of key languages spoken in Australia, facilitate language access in government services, foster cultural exchange programs, and provide language learning opportunities for all Australians. This will require significant investment and commitment if we are to fully realise the social and economic benefits of such a policy.

In deliberating on how to best achieve this, the Panel formed the view that a Productivity Commission inquiry on languages policy would provide a thorough, evidence-based analysis of the social and economic impacts of language policies in Australia. This inquiry could assess the current state of language education, the economic benefits of multilingualism, the potential for improved international relations and the cultural significance of diverse linguistic communities. It would offer valuable insights and recommendations to promote the country's productivity and social cohesion.

Australia's diversity of languages

Prior to British colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples spoke over 250 languages and 800 dialects. 75 Today, more languages are spoken in Australia than at any time since the arrival of the British. According to data from the 2021 Census, over 400 languages are spoken in Australia including 167 actively spoken Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.⁷⁶

This diversity of languages is a rich part of contemporary Australia, as much as it was a part of ancient Australia. Language, culture and identity are inseparable 77 — and vital to an individual and a community's sense of connection, belonging and wellbeing.

The ways that people in Australia communicate within their families, with the broader community, and with governments, and how governments in turn communicate with residents of Australia, are core to the success of multiculturalism here.

Shortly after the initial language services were put in place in the early 1970s, the Australian Government began to fund media broadcasts in community languages — firstly via radio (2EA and 3EA), and then via television, with the establishment of SBS. Prior to public funding for broadcasting in community languages, migrant communities were already publishing newspapers in their own languages.⁷⁸ Traditional in-language community media continues to serve their communities, while people now also derive their information from and communicate with each other via social media. These are considered in more detail in Chapter 4.

An ability to speak English, as our common language, connects people from different language backgrounds. However, an inability to speak English well or at all should not been seen as a deficit; nor should it be seen as a risk to Australia's national unity.

Australia's linguistic diversity offers advantages to individuals, society and the economy. This too has been long recognised; Australia once had an active national language policy. The panel repeatedly heard that the multilingual capabilities of people living in Australia are not sufficiently recognised, despite the potential for these capabilities to be a significant national asset.

A coherent communication strategy for a multicultural Australia would not only address information and communication needs across our diverse community, but it will also recognise the benefits of a multi-lingual nation a global outreach and voice for Australia in its engagement with other nations through trade, diplomacy, and people to people connections.⁷⁹

Australia's historic reliance on only English limits our capability in trade, tourism, inbound and outward investment, diplomacy and, not least, national security. This risk is heightened by our failure to tap into the linguistic diversity found in Australia.

There have been sporadic efforts to more fully realise the benefits of the many languages spoken in Australia, but a strategic, coordinated and sustained effort to promote and preserve linguistic diversity has been lacking. This has led to lost opportunities in fostering inclusion, inter-communal understanding and leveraging language skills for social and economic benefits. Becoming a community with a greater appreciation of, and respect for, the family of languages spoken in Australia, and the world views they convey, will lead to a more vibrant and inclusive shared identity.

How we communicate today

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2021, 5.8 million people (22.8%) reported using a language other than English at home — an increase from 4.9 million people (21.6%) in 2016.80

The national figure only tells part of the story. There are great differences in the proportion of people speaking other languages at home across different metropolitan areas and even more so between metropolitan and regional areas. For example, a submission from the Multilingualism Research Centre at Macquarie University detailed that in Sydney the proportion of people who use another language at home rises to 42% and is above 80% in many western Sydney suburbs. Australia's multilingual population doubled in size in the first two decades of the 21st century, and Australia's young multilingual population is growing especially rapidly — 56% of pupils in Sydney schools now have a language background other than English. And, although many Indigenous languages are endangered, the overall number of speakers also increased by 56% between 2001 and 2021.81

Recent migrants now come from a wide range of new countries of origin. The large number of migrants from India, for example, means that different languages spoken there now have significant populations of speakers in Australia. The cohorts of arrivals in Australia through humanitarian programs have created many smaller language communities — which in itself presents unique challenges and opportunities as it adds to the diversity of cultures and languages in this country.

While some languages have a strong cohort of younger speakers, others are facing a decline with the aging of migrants who arrived in the post-war period. This has led to some calling Australia a 'graveyard of languages', ⁸² reflecting how people in previous decades were not encouraged to pass on their language to their children.



Photo: Multicultural Community Meeting in Tasmania — September 2023.

The benefits of speaking more than one language

Linguistic and cultural diversity brings with it a range of social and economic benefits.83

Yet, as Ms Karras, Chief Executive Officer, Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, noted during consultation with the Panel, Australia is not adequately servicing or harnessing language education. Languages, she stated, should be a policy priority.

Multilingual Australia, a WA-based community organisation, encourages and supports people to maintain use of their languages. According to Multilingual Australia:

Australia's policy landscape is heavily slanted towards promoting multiculturalism through the narrow prism of an English-speaking society. This monolingual focus is even linked to notions of 'Australian Values,' creating a paradox that muddies the waters of cultural, ethnic, and religious inclusion. ... [T]his limited approach inevitably undermines the effectiveness of any policy aiming to represent and support Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity genuinely.⁸⁴

Community language programs have a long tradition in Australia, dating back to the mid-1800s, according to one submission from a researcher. This submission notes that now there are more than 700 community language schools operating nationwide, educating over 100,000 students in more than 85 languages. Community language schools connect young learners with their families and develop Australia's multilingual and intercultural capabilities for global communication. The submission states that strategic funding initiatives that strengthen collaboration between community language schools, mainstream educational institutions, multilingual media organisations and local government agencies would maintain and improve linguistic capability and social cohesion.85

Multilingual Australia's submission lists the benefits of speaking other languages, drawing on views from members of the community:

- Social inclusion: 'I feel included when my language is acknowledged'.
- Economic gain: One business owner mentioned, 'Having multilingual staff has opened new markets for us.'
- Cultural enrichment: 'Understanding multiple languages gives me a richer view of the world,' noted another respondent.
- · Better healthcare: 'When the doctor speaks my language, I feel more comfortable discussing my health,' shared one participant.
- · Crisis management: 'During the bushfires, I got my info from a community radio in my language,' one person reported.
- Preservation of heritage: I want my kids to speak my native language so they understand their roots, a parent expressed.
- · Educational advantages and cognitive skills: 'Since my kids started bilingual education, their grades in other subjects have also improved,' reported a family. Bilingual education has a ripple effect, improving skills in areas like maths and science as well.
- · Global citizenship and national security: 'Speaking different languages helps me understand global issues better'; 'Multilingual community members can act as bridges in times of conflict.'86

At a roundtable it held in February 2023, Multilingual Australia identified three concerns:

- · the personal cost of language loss
- the impact of inadequate language policies on families
- that Australia's English-only language systems are out of step with the rest of the world.

Multilingual Australia's submission quotes an Arabic-speaking primary carer from North Africa who laments that parents avoid speaking their heritage language with their children, as they do not realise their children can be 'successful as bilinguals'.87

The Panel received information from the Community Language Schools of South Australia about a program running from 2023 to 2026 to improve the professional development of teachers in the community language learning sector across Australia, which will establish communities of practice for the teachers and is drawing on collaborative research with the University of South Australia. Students engaged in the program shared their experience on a YouTube video.88

Individuals, including people writing in their first language, have expressed the importance of their languages to their sense of identity, their desire to maintain their languages, the value of learning other languages and the importance of learning languages spoken by First Nations peoples.⁸⁹

Several submissions noted the need to engage youth in learning heritage languages, including those spoken by earlier generations of migrants (such as Macedonian)90 and major world languages (such as Arabic).91

Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM discusses the importance of community language tuition and identifies some challenges facing the sector, including funding streams, as well as practical considerations such as suitable accommodation to enable delivery of these programs. The loss of languages and cultural capital among migrant children and next-generation students widens the intergenerational gaps as children, parents and grandparents cannot communicate effectively.92

Australia is truly a multilingual society. In the past consideration has been given to the benefits this delivers, but these are still not well appreciated or being realised. The Panel recommends that this should be addressed and agrees with Multilingual Australia's call for 'national leadership on language policies that foster social cohesion, cultural understanding, and linguistic diversity. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure a more inclusive and harmonious future for all Australians.'

Community languages, identity and language service provision

The topic of community languages can generate complex issues. This is not surprising given that languages are intimately connected to identity.93 Speakers of some languages have also raised concerns regarding the linguistic status of their language and made the case that their language should be considered as distinct from other languages. This question relates not just to the deep connection between a person's language and identity, but to practical issues of the language services delivery.

Though the Panel received detailed submissions on particular examples, we do not have the expertise or competence to address particular cases. The Panel accepts that the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) gives careful consideration to all requests it receives as to how it categorises languages spoken in the community for the purpose of its assessment of credentialed interpreters and translators.

In response to concerns, NAATI has explained that its recognition of a language is specifically for the purpose of assessing and credentialing interpreting and translating professionals based on community needs; NAATI does not confer any official status of a language beyond this purpose. When determining if a language should be included in its credentialing system, NAATI considers:

- the total number of speakers in Australia
- the language's international status
- community demand (for interpreters)
- access to training in that language at Australian training institutions
- the existence of another dominant language in the community.

NAATI only considers a further division of a language group where there is sufficient evidence that the languages under consideration are not mutually intelligible.

The Panel has received submissions on this last point that indeed members of one community have found that they cannot understand the interpreter assigned to their communication interaction. This results in significant stress for the individual and can lead to serious consequences.

Understanding issues within community languages is an important part of listening to people's experiences. It may not be possible for Australia's language credentialing system, which NAATI delivers, to resolve some people's concerns. Still, listening carefully and responding clearly are critical to informed engagement. Regular review of current service provision should occur, especially when it is difficult to meet a community's expectations.

The benefits of supporting people to learn English

English is a door to improved inclusion but can also be a barrier for those who have limited English ability. Migrants who have limited English skills face challenges settling into Australia, such as being limited in their choice of job, and the ability to engage with other members of the Australian community.

The Australian Government has for over 75 years provided English language tuition for people with no English, enabling people to participate more fully in the social and economic life of Australia; since 1948, the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) has helped over 2 million migrants in Australia with free English language lessons. AMEP is the largest settlement program in Australia, supporting around 60,000 eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants to improve their English language skills and settle into Australia each year. AMEP is administered by the Department of Home Affairs and is delivered at around 300 locations across Australia in major cities as well as regional and remote areas.

The Panel acknowledges the major reforms to AMEP in 2021, including removing both the previous 510-hour limit on eligible migrants' access to free English tuition and the time limit for participation of people who arrived before 1 October 2020. This has led to more people in the program and an increase in the average hours of tuition clients are undertaking each year.

AMEP has conducted various reviews, evaluations and public consultations, which have contributed to further reform. Stakeholders identified a need to improve the flexibility, accessibility and outcomes achieved in AMEP.

AMEP client surveys conducted in 2022 and 2023 have shown high levels of satisfaction with the program including its flexibility, and clients' self-assessed improvement in English, understanding of Australian culture and ability to achieve their goals — with scores well over 80% and 90%. Importantly, the 2023 survey was available in nine languages, to better capture the experience of students at lower English levels. In addition, a 2023 impact study (based on a sample of 400,000 AMEP client records) found that AMEP improved their clients' English skills, especially when they studied for longer periods. The study also found that participation in AMEP was associated with better labour market outcomes, higher income levels, lower rates of public housing tenancy, and reduced reliance on income support.

Noting the current work on the AMEP model and recent stakeholder surveys and evaluation of the program, the Panel does not have specific recommendations for this successful, longstanding government program.

Nevertheless, individuals and some organisations shared their varied experiences of learning English in Australia. Some of the views are provided below.

Multicultural Communities Council of Australia Inc (MCCA) calls for 'strong and consistent Commonwealth leadership', including through AMEP and the Skills for Education and Education (SEE) program. This remains a priority, according to MCCA, given what it sees as a significant decrease over the past 15 years in specific multicultural education programs and specialist staff within government departments and agencies.

Wellsprings for Women, a specialist women's service based in Dandenong, Melbourne, suggests the recipients of AMEP funding should include smaller agencies such as Neighbourhood Houses, which offer more personal, inclusive, flexible and less intimidating classes, especially for some women. 94 Other submissions share the view that a portion of the money for AMEP should go to conversational English classes in neighbourhood locations.

A community-based agency supporting migrants and refugees continues to receive feedback from individuals taking part in AMEP that the English taught is too formal and difficult to apply to real-life scenarios, class sizes are too big, the program does not cater well to people with low literacy, and materials provided are difficult to understand.95

One AMEP provider is concerned that young people between 16 and 18 years of age are being steered towards AMEP youth programs rather than mainstream secondary school, despite these students aspiring to pursue higher education; the provider suggests that some young people are not receiving the necessary support to make adequately informed decisions. This suggests a failure to make the right connections for young people.

On a positive note, Fitzroy House, a Neighbourhood House and Learn Local Registered Training Organisation operating in inner Melbourne, said that the recent AMEP reforms have allowed people, particularly women, to re-engage with AMEP to improve their English skills.96

Wyndham Community and Education Centre Inc., a community-based provider delivering AMEP, SEE and the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support program, noted that the AMEP program's flexibility during the pandemic was welcomed and should be continued.97

In decades past, migrants came with lower skill and education levels and found work in industries established after the Second World War. They would often have access to learn English in their places of work. Such arrangements remain valuable, particularly for people who have come through Australia's humanitarian and refugee program. AMEP providers are actively working with local employers to give their students experience of Australian workplaces while they are studying English.

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) noted a poor connection between AMEP and Commonwealth-funded job service providers; SCOA's member organisations are frustrated that they constantly need to explain to job service providers the various programs such as AMEP, and the considerable time and patience needed to learn English. People are struggling to comply with the Workforce Australia 100-point activity test, and are being pressured to do more activities outside the 16 hours of English and required to miss their AMEP classes to attend Workforce Australia appointments, hindering their learning journey.98

The value of learning English in the workplace was highlighted in an inspiring submission from the owner of a labour hire company specialising in placing people from refugee backgrounds into construction industry jobs. The business owner found that employees' English ability significantly improves while they are working.99

The sense of belonging that participation in English classes provides should not be underestimated, even if a person continues to prefer to use their first language, as a submission received in Vietnamese illustrates:

I love the multicultural life of Australia. I learned many Australian customs and customs of many immigrants I met in English classes. I expect the Australian government to expand its multicultural programme. And free English classes for immigrants like us to understand the laws of Australia and other cultures that ethnic people bring.¹⁰⁰

Ensuring people feel comfortable when they communicate in their preferred language and, importantly, that they have been heard is a positive feature of a truly successful multicultural society.

Overcoming the language barrier

The Australian Government has supported language services — interpreting and translation — for people with limited English since the early days of multicultural Australia. Indeed, the growing awareness that people who had limited English ability needed interpreters to help them communicate with essential services contributed to the formation of multiculturalism as a policy. Language services remain a vital support for many in our communities who have limited English ability.

TIS (Translating and Interpreting Services) National, a unit now within the Department of Home Affairs, began as the world's first telephone interpreting service in 1973. Also in the 1970s, governments created the institutional framework for the delivery of professional language services with the establishment of NAATI, a company jointly owned by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. At the same time, the Australian Government provided funding for the initial courses in interpreting and translation qualifications.

The government also provides the Free Interpreting Service to eligible health and allied health providers and other community services, including real estate agencies, pharmacies and community organisations which do not receive substantial government funding to deliver their services (organisations which receive government funding are expected to budget for language services as part of their delivery model). In addition, the Free Translation Service is offered to eligible migrants during a set initial period after their arrival to enable them to have key personal documents translated into English, such as driver licences, and education and other qualification certification.

As an individual NAATI-certified practitioner notes, the translating and interpreting industry plays an essential role in promoting multiculturalism in Australia by breaking down language barriers, enhancing cultural tolerance and collaboration, enabling businesses to operate internationally, and ensuring that all individuals, their families and their communities, regardless of their language and cultural background, have equal access to services and participation in Australian society.¹⁰¹

Demand for language services

In the 2021 Census, almost 740,000 people self-reported they had limited English ability (or proficiency), based on the number of people who responded yes to either of the following two statements:

- Uses other language and speaks English: Not well
- Uses other language and speaks English: Not at all.

People with limited English skills may need professional and reliable language services. At almost 5% of Australia's population, this includes recently arrived humanitarian and refugee entrants and secondary visa holders, who are not required to undergo an English assessment, and longer-term residents who never acquired functional fluency or whose English has declined with age.

Language services involve both interpreting — real-time spoken support to convey meaning between two languages — and translation — the rendering of information, either written or audio/visual, from one language to another. It is also important to note that language services support everyone in the communication exchange to understand and be understood — both English speakers and those with limited English ability. 102

NAATI certification is the industry standard for working as a translator or interpreter in Australia and a critical risk management and quality assurance system. It gives consumers confidence that the professional they are relying on has the appropriate skillset and qualifications, involving:

- formal training, most likely a formal qualification
- proven language skills
- demonstrated intercultural and ethical competency
- robust, independent assessment
- ongoing professional development.¹⁰³

Critical need for language services, highlighted during COVID-19

Language services are a critical pillar of an equitable multicultural society enabling people to engage confidently with government services and other essential services, particularly in legal and healthcare settings. 104 Limited or no English should never be a barrier to accessing or receiving high-quality and effective services.¹⁰⁵ However, many communities struggle to find a translator or interpreter in their language. The use of non-professionals (such as family, friends or other bilingual but not NAATI-credentialed persons) for interpreting presents serious risks to accurate information exchange, as well as around coercion, consent and agency for clients of services.

The pandemic highlighted the critical role of language services. According to the Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health, consistent and timely information was not always available, and the government-generated content was not responsive or targeted to many communities.¹⁰⁶

There are different views about how information was disseminated to linguistically diverse communities during the pandemic. One language service provider notes that translation and interpretation through word-of-mouth strategies during COVID-19, and other recent emergencies such as bushfires, has been found to be unsuccessful in distributing accurate information.¹⁰⁷ In contrast, during the height of the pandemic in May 2021, a Victorian Government committee heard that the development and support for grassroots communication strategies via telephone trees was very effective, particularly in reaching isolated elderly people.¹⁰⁸

In its submission, the City of Melbourne states that the pandemic exposed gaps in the government's ability to effectively communicate with linguistically diverse communities. Sporadic government engagement meant that migrants were less likely to receive public health information, increasing their risk of contracting COVID-19 and transmitting it unwittingly.¹⁰⁹

While not the only factor, poor information may have contributed to the higher — by 2.5 times — COVID-19 death rate for Australian residents who were born overseas compared to those born in Australia. An independent review into Australia's response to COVID-19 found that 'clear, accurate and timely messaging is central to effective crisis communication. During the pandemic, daily press conferences were held in English, but there was a lack of timely interpreters or translation into other languages.'110 This meant that people with limited English often relied on information from international news sources that did not necessarily align with Australian Government information.

The government must enhance its language services policies and programs, to ensure people whose preferred language is not English receive reliable and timely government information in crisis situations, with priority given to high-quality and readily accessible translated content.

During the pandemic, critical government advice and information was at times poorly translated into community languages. Learning from this experience, the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) and FECCA developed the 'Recommended Protocols for the Translation of Community Communications' as a guide for all organisations preparing information for translation, and the associated 'Guidelines for Community Review Panels'. Both documents emphasise a co-design and user-centred approach and suggest, prior to translation, consulting with bilingual community members or workers, particularly for the languages of new and emerging communities, as well as members of the target community. The guidelines stress the need to obtain feedback on the draft translated product from a representative sample of a target community to check how the translated messages will be understood and received and be culturally appropriate. This approach should set the standard for the preparation of fit-for-purpose public messaging in community languages.¹¹¹

Challenges facing the language service sector

Since the 1990s, as governments increasingly began to outsource service delivery, private language service providers have proliferated. These providers assign interpreters and translators to facilitate the communication exchange between individuals and organisations. Government-owned TIS National and other state-government-owned providers operate in the same way, assigning work to interpreters and translators from a panel of contracted individuals, on a case-by-case basis.

There are, though, serious issues impacting the quality and sustainability of the language services sector. The Panel heard this from the government directly, as well as from individual language professionals, people relying on their services, academics specialising in interpreting and translation training and research, and some language service providers. The Panel fully endorses the need to address these issues as a priority.

In June 2023 the Department of Home Affairs surveyed Australian interpreters and translators to better understand their experiences and work satisfaction. Survey findings provided to the Panel indicate the sector is majority female (69% of respondents) and older (32% of respondents were over 60 years of age; only 23% were 39 years or younger). Many respondents stated they did not hold a NAATI credential (28%) or have any interpreting training qualifications (24%).

The survey asked respondents to provide examples of the serious consequences of poor interpreting practice. One example was of an uncertified bilingual person whose unfamiliarity with medical terminology resulted in the doctor misunderstanding the patient's symptoms and so making an incorrect diagnosis and prescribing the wrong medication; the patient's condition worsened and they required emergency hospitalisation. In another case, a jury was dismissed and the trial abandoned because the first interpreter engaged had not been able to fully convey a witness's testimony.

Numerous other reports and studies indicate inadequate provision and use of professional language services across critical settings. Those interacting with government services may encounter significant delays in accessing the language services they need, if they receive them at all. The failure to meet the most basic language accessibility requirements of many vulnerable populations is resulting in poorer life and societal outcomes — and increased costs to Commonwealth, state and territory governments, due to consequences such as extended hospital stays and deferred court cases.

A June 2023 study by Deloitte, commissioned by Home Affairs and provided to the Panel, found that current market conditions associated with limited access to interpreters or working with low-quality interpreters is resulting in an enormous cost to the Australian economy and society: Deloitte estimates the costs to governments, individuals and societies associated with language services erosion as between \$326 million and \$859 million per year. (As these costs are based on modelling across a limited set of service settings, actual costs associated with all language groups and translating and whole-of-government service delivery may be significantly higher.)

Of greater concern for individuals are misdiagnosed health conditions, incorrect medical procedures and potential miscarriages of justice in courts arising from poor communication exchanges stemming from a failure to engage formally qualified and NAATI-credentialed interpreters.

NAATI, along with other submissions, details the issues facing the sector:

- a lack of industry regulation: there is no statutory requirement to engage NAATI-certified professionals
- · availability of adequate training, especially for languages of new communities
- low pay rates and inadequate employment conditions, involving a 'race to the bottom' for pay, exacerbated by the casualisation and fragmentation of the profession over many years
- insufficient retention of practitioners
- · low levels of awareness among the community about the importance of properly trained and certified translators and interpreters, and of people's right to request an interpreter, especially in vital areas such as health and legal settings
- · availability of practitioners in all languages: this is linked with the above challenges as well as NAATI's ability to provide testing or credential across the full range of languages spoken in Australia.

A brief comment in an anonymous submission also calls out the 'ludicrously low rates' being paid to NAATI-certified translators by the company that the government had procured to deliver its free translation service. 112

The language services workforce is also aging and failing to attract younger people, given the poor conditions. A holistic strategy is required to stem the loss of skills and expertise as people retire or find higher-paying work.

Another significant issue is that some language service providers now engage untrained and uncertified bilingual workers, who are willing to work for much lower pay; such workers lack the requisite expectations of professionalism, ethical practice and quality improvement. Even though translators and interpreters work in highly specialised areas, the importance of sound training and tertiary education is often overlooked — to the detriment of the individuals and organisations who depend on these translators and interpreters.¹¹³ This points to the lack of regulation to monitor and enforce NAATI-credential compliance and other quality assurance mechanisms.

Some individual Commonwealth agencies also prioritise their own departmental policy and service delivery objectives and fail to consider the impact on the sector as a whole or even the ethics associated with preserving the integrity of a communication exchange, instead awarding contracts to language service providers based on 'better value for money', which the provider invariably achieves by cutting the pay and conditions of the language professionals. The value-formoney proposition for the individual agency comes at a cost to the sector and service standards. This approach has been described as a 'race to the bottom'. Highly skilled credentialed interpreters are leaving the sector to pursue better paying work, resulting in poorer outcomes for individuals receiving a lower quality of service.

Language services are essential, yet the industry is akin to a gig economy in which the language service professionals operate in a highly casualised manner and are compelled to accept contracts and pay rates that vary widely among providers. The current 'laissez-faire' models¹¹⁴ of competitive procurement and poor workforce planning need reform to ensure the capacity of governments to meet access and equity requirements.

Guidelines and good-practice protocols exist but are often not mandatory and rely instead on the good faith of those who are supposed to follow them. This pertains not just to government agencies but other institutions. For example, the 'Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Australian Courts and Tribunals', published by the Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity, are an important resource, but interpreters continue to face challenges because the standards are not applied consistently across Australia's courts.

There is also evidence of interpreters being dismissed from court for requesting briefing materials to prepare for a case. And judicial officers may also display a lack of intercultural communication skills. As a result, the rights of clients who require interpreting services are breached, as they are unable to access quality interpreting services that ensure the fair administration of justice.¹¹⁵

Addressing the issues in language services

NAATI's suggestions to address these challenges include:

- · improving government procurement policies: governments, at all levels, are the largest 'consumers, and therefore funders, of translating and interpreting services, they have significant leverage and capacity to influence the sector'
- improving regulation and compliance: there is significant opportunity to improve both contract compliance and compliance with existing government guidelines that recommend prioritising engagement of NAATI-certified professionals. NAATI also suggests a form of accreditation for language service providers to recognise those which implement sustainability measures and comply with relevant guidelines.

Other suggestions NAATI makes include: educating communities directly about the role of — and right to request interpreters; subsidised training and professional development for interpreters; and targeted support for languages spoken in new and emerging communities.

Several language service providers have also made suggestions, including greater collaboration between policymakers, the language service sector and other sectors involved in settlement planning to address the availability of interpreters in particular languages. One provider notes it recently collaborated with NAATI and the Australian Red Cross to pilot a response to interpreter training requirements to support people who have settled in Australia from Afghanistan and Ukraine to gain a NAATI credential as an interpreter. 116

Commonwealth, state and territory governments are the largest purchasers of language services and are therefore indirectly driving the current environment for interpreters and translators. Governments thus have significant leverage and capacity to influence change and improve access and equity outcomes for vulnerable communities. The lessons following the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme highlight the need for Commonwealth agencies to design policies and processes with an emphasis on the people they are meant to serve. Language services is one such area that would strongly benefit from an entity taking a coordinated and centralised policy responsibility. This would include a focus on the consistency of services and conditions afforded to all interpreters and translators, including in the high-risk settings of health, aging, law and justice.

The risks facing the provision of adequate language services can be addressed through coordinated policy oversight to guide and monitor agencies' procurement of these services. The Commonwealth should adopt a stewardship approach towards language services for the benefit of individuals who will rely on these services into the future.



Photo: MFR consultation with Women's Reference Group in Perth, Western Australia — August 2023.

6.1.1. Recommendations 12, 13, 14 and 15

Recommendation 12: Leverage Australia's diversity of languages to support our economic prosperity through a revitalised language policy led by the Australian Government

While English is our common language, the number of people who speak at least one other language has never been greater; to harness the immense potential of the diversity of languages used in Australia, we recommend a funded and sustainable national language policy.

This recommendation builds on previous attempts to establish such a policy, but with a renewed vigour and contemporary focus, including incorporating technology. A revitalised language policy would benefit not only individuals but also the broader community and our economy. Ensuring languages other than English are passed down through generations is vital.

To harness the immense potential of diverse languages used in Australia, we recommend that the Australian Government commit to developing a language strategy as part of the 2024-25 Budget allocation, factoring in the following considerations:

- The formation of a comprehensive national language policy would benefit from the government's referring an inquiry to the Productivity Commission, to be concluded by the end of 2024, to quantify and recommend intra- and inter-government action to realise the social and economic benefits of Australia's diversity of languages.
- The policy would also benefit from Australian Government collaboration with state and territory governments to establish a unified approach to the national language services strategy - this would occur in parallel with, and build on, the Productivity Commission inquiry.
- The Panel acknowledges the government's recent investment in community language schools; this must be sustained and more widely promoted. Encouraging and funding the learning of other languages at all levels of education is essential.
- Even if individuals learning another language do not achieve fluency, the effort necessarily offers a greater awareness, appreciation and understanding of other cultures.
- Language policy should recognise that people in the community may have a preferred language; all points of service delivery and information should accommodate their preferred language.
- The strategy could build on past efforts to create a national language policy that emphasised multilingual Australians' contribution to our international trade and economic prosperity — this capability and contribution should be quantified, acknowledged and supported.

Recommendation 13: Ensure the sustainability and quality of language services (interpreting and translating)

The Review recommends that the Australian Government and the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs:

- establish, as a priority and part of a language strategy budget allocation, a dedicated entity to achieve a coordinated Commonwealth-level approach to language services policy, procurement and delivery of functions, to encapsulate the communication and language needs of individuals whose preferred language is not English. This includes not only migrants but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and members of the Deaf and hard-ofhearing communities who use AUSLAN
- ensure all individuals irrespective of their background or reason for limited English-language proficiency can engage in a timely fashion with high-quality interpreting and translation services
- set consistent baselines across the Australian Government for the remuneration of interpreters and translators and uniform quality assurance of service delivery. Over time, this would address the shortfalls in interpreter and translator availability and quality of services, both of which can have serious adverse consequences for individuals and organisations.

Recommendation 14: Establish a fully funded TIS National capacity within the existing business unit

At a service delivery level, the Australian Government should establish a fully funded capacity within the existing TIS National business unit, to deliver general interpreting and translation services. A dedicated in-house arrangement, with a core workforce of NAATI-credentialed APS staff, would enable all Commonwealth agencies and Commonwealth-funded services to access interpreters and translators in a range of languages to be determined by an analysis of community demand and interpreter and translator supply. This capacity would help to set a remuneration and quality standard for the whole sector.

Recommendation 15: Boost National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) funding

The Australian Government, with state and territory government contributions, should provide additional funding to the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), to address critical workforce quality and gaps. Funding should also be provided to NAATI to promote the expanded communications and engagement capacity available to Commonwealth entities, essential services, community organisations, businesses (as appropriate) and, crucially, to individuals, ensuring greater awareness and uptake of language services.

Inclusion: how we work together to get services right



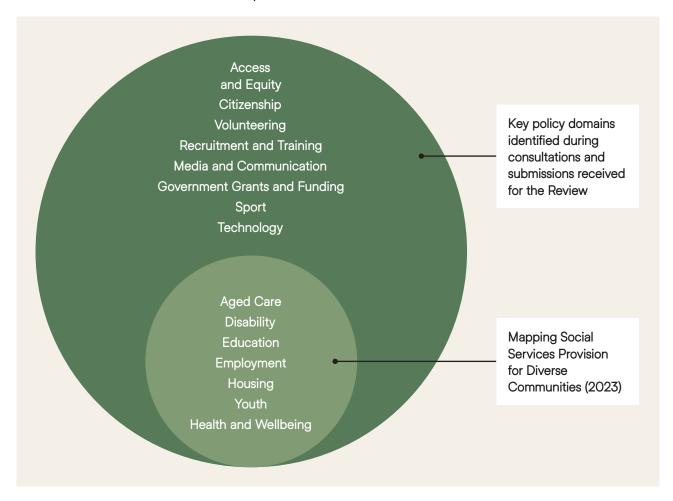
We strongly believe in the need for a Multicultural Framework that will drive equality, diversity as a resource and remove existing barriers for a full societal and economic participation; a Framework that would deliver policy and program initiatives that are relevant and responsive today and over the coming decade.¹¹⁷

Australia's vibrant culture is a source of strength. To harness its full potential, we must create systems and services in partnership with communities to ensure timely, equitable and fair access. This chapter is not just about acknowledging the challenges we face; it is about illuminating the opportunities before us. It is a call to action for every corner of Australian society — government, communities and individuals — to mobilise and co-create a future where multiculturalism is not just tolerated but celebrated, empowered and leveraged as the driving force of a prosperous and inclusive Australia. This is the Australia we can build together.

A pivotal research project, the Mapping Social Services Provision for Diverse Communities¹¹⁸ delves into how service delivery has shifted from community-specific to mainstream organisations, meticulously analysing the perceived impact and ideological currents driving a shift towards mainstreaming of services, as informed by state and federal government policies. The project found that the degree of multicultural service capacity is determined by various factors, such as funding models, commitment to serving diverse communities, leadership and staff diversity, and language support. It found that discourses on mainstreaming can be categorised into exclusionary and inclusive approaches: exclusionary discourses prioritise a unified Australian identity and view diversity with caution; inclusive discourses acknowledge and celebrate diversity, recognising that some groups require more support. These findings imply the need for a bipartisan agreement on the need for a mainstream approach to meet the growing needs of a diverse population.

The project identified key services and policy domains as central to supporting multicultural diversity, increasing inclusion and harnessing the talents of all Australians. We found those policy domains intersecting with key topics highlighted to us through the Review's submissions and consultations (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Intersection of key topics between mapping social services provision for diverse communities and consultations and submissions received as part of the Review



Designing a multicultural future in partnership with youth

Despite youth programs demonstrating that they foster cultural connection and identity, a glaring disconnect remains: young people's voices are largely under-represented in policymaking and systemic reform. This stands in stark contrast to their demographic reality — 24% of Australians are under 19,119 highlighting the urgent need to empower them as active architects of a future shaped by their aspirations and lived experiences. The Panel acknowledges the significant progress made by the Australian Government through the establishment of The Office for Youth, the Youth Steering Committee and the Youth Advisory Groups.

Meeting 'the current and future needs of multicultural Australia' and 'achieving social cohesion' depends on how well our systems and services empower people of all ages and backgrounds to understand and exercise their rights. It also depends on ensuring that decision makers and service providers are aware of their obligations and accountable for decisions and outcomes that affect children and young people's lives.¹²⁰

Kids want to be included, the government and world leaders hold our future, yet exclude us from shaping it. If we are to trust others, they should trust us and include us in what may very well shape our lives.¹²¹

Students from Barker College Junior School, NSW, expressed similar sentiments in their video submission to the review. 122

While existing multicultural policies aim for access and equity, they fall short in addressing the dynamic needs and diverse realities of young people across all stages of development. The clear need for youth-specific policy has emerged, emphasising accountability for the multifaceted nature of their identities and experiences. Co-designing solutions with young people at the core, tailoring interventions to age groups and development phases, and providing specialised responses for those facing additional barriers are crucial. Recognising the opportunity deficits faced by youth in regional Australia is vital, as is enhancing data collection and research to inform age-appropriate programs and refine the measurement of impacts and outcomes. Furthermore, cultivating cultural competency within systems and services, including education, fosters intercultural understanding and respect for diversity.

South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People, in a submission to the Panel suggests, that the Australian Government must consider targeted strategies to address structural barriers to employment for young people by:

- bridging the gap: By recognising migrant pre-arrival qualifications; providing career guidance and targeted training programs like traineeships and apprenticeships — equipping young people with employment readiness programs, workplace rights/laws awareness, transport options and learner driver programs; tailoring English language programs that are culturally sensitive; and developing specialised support to address challenges associated with disrupted or minimal formal education, especially for older teenagers who have no schooling experience in Australia
- investing in overall wellbeing: By promoting sport participation, sex education and access to sexual health services, financial literacy and essential life skills — implement family-aware approaches that acknowledge young people's diverse family structures and needs
- dismantling systemic barriers: By tackling the impact of poverty on access to opportunities ensure adequate transport, language, disability, health and mental health support services — and actively combat racism and discrimination across all spheres
- amplifying youth voices: Centre the lived experiences of children and young people in informing anti-racism policies and practices across schools, workplaces, media and communities, empowering them as agents of positive change, while fostering a more inclusive future. 123

Young people are the only people with the knowledge and experience necessary to address:

- the unique set of challenges they face as young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds including navigating unfamiliar education and employment paths, adapting to shifting family dynamics, and managing multicultural identities
- · compounding cross cutting issues of intersectionality including gender, sexuality, disability, geography, cultural context, as well as the developmental complexities of adolescence. 124

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) is the national peak body representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia (12 to 24 year olds). The MYAN submission states the following:

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, alongside their First Nations peers and more recently arrived young people will experience and actively influence and drive the dynamics and narratives of multiculturalism over the next 10 to 20 years.

Young people's inclusion in the development of multicultural policies is critical to creating a society that is cohesive, inclusive, and celebrates cultural diversity.

Australia's modern and evolving multicultural identity must resonate with the intersectionality of multicultural youth identity. This extends beyond mere recognition; it demands a definition of multiculturalism that fosters connection and belonging. Notably, young people increasingly identify as global citizens, connecting through shared values that transcend traditional barriers associated with religion, ethnicity, and location.

Youth in Australia caution against multiculturalism becoming 'tokenistic' and highlight the need for genuine commitment from government to respond to issues around inequity, racism, and discrimination within the context of multicultural policy; and a need for the diversity of the Australian community to be reflected across all levels of government institutions. This includes increasing leadership and decision-making roles and opportunities for young people that are reflective of all their diversities. 125

Operationalising the National Youth Settlement Framework, developed by MYAN, has significant potential to empower young people as active citizens, shaping a brighter future for the youth.

Settlement Services International convened a series of roundtables culminating in the August 2023 report Meeting the needs of children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in the context of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV).¹²⁶ The roundtables aimed to achieve sustained and committed dialogue with the sector and government stakeholders on embedding the voices of multicultural children in the design and delivery of public policies and programs that impact them, with a specific focus on DFV. The roundtables highlighted the need for strength-based co-design approaches and policy considerations to help remove systemic barriers faced by youth, including:

- · acknowledging that children within ethno-specific and/or faith communities hold diverse beliefs, values and attitudes, and have different life experiences that inform their sense of identity and belonging. Simplistic assumptions or 'one-size-fits-all' solutions are detrimental in that they undermine the effectiveness of programs by ignoring the diversity of complexity
- the unique voices of children from diverse backgrounds must be amplified, lucid and central to debates and discussions about issues that affect them.

The needs of youth from diverse backgrounds who are in out-of-home care were also conveyed to the Panel, though the scope of such issues is not sufficiently understood. MacKillop Family Services notes in its submission that, according to an audit of its services in Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT, 14% of young people in care were from multicultural backgrounds, including 16 different backgrounds. MacKillop believes this data likely under-reports the proportion of youth from diverse backgrounds as people may be reluctant to disclose their cultural background when engaging with community services due to fear of unconscious bias and discrimination.

Some families' cultural structures allow extended family members to take on considerable caring responsibilities. Children who would otherwise be in out-of-home care might not come to a welfare organisation's or state's attention due to these informal systems. Often older women, mothers, aunts and sisters assume this caring role. These groups form informal structures that keep many children out of the foster care systems.

It is therefore essential to understand these practices to better support these carers and implement measures that consider these cultural systems — even though such informal systems may decline as families become more settled, which may lead to more young people from migrant backgrounds ending up in out-of-home care. These latter points emphasise the need to begin working to create more diversity in the foster care system.

The 2021 MacKillop study, done in partnership with other service providers and academic institutions, identified practices and resourcing gaps across jurisdictions to support cultural connections, demonstrating that more needs to be done to better understand and support youth from diverse backgrounds in out-of-home care.

The Panel endorses MacKillop's submission that consideration needs to be given to the intersecting experiences and identities of children and their families. As MacKillop notes, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (2023) found that questions remained about the implementation of practice standards and principles relating to culturally and linguistically diverse parents, including those with disability.

7.1.1. Recommendation 16

Recommendation 16: Leverage the potential and strength of Australia's multicultural youth

Engage youth to incorporate their perspectives and to ensure approaches that will be relevant to them and their immediate communities. This would be achieved through:

- the Office of Youth within the Department of Education, in partnership with relevant departments, to take the lead and develop a strategic/coordinated approach to multicultural youth engagement between all levels of government and educational stakeholders, including consistent policies across states and consistent programs and policies across schools and sectors
- the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in consultation with the Office of Youth (Department of Education) and in partnership with relevant departments as appropriate — to develop and invest in a National Multicultural Youth Employment Strategy. This would aim to create pathways and support for sustainable employment for newcomers to Australia, providing opportunities for skills development and training and ensuring the progression of reforms to qualification, accreditation and skills recognition processes, including cost and timeliness, to acknowledge overseas qualifications and experiences during job-seeking, through bridging courses and programs.

A stronger workforce for a thriving economy

The recognition of overseas qualification is still a big barrier, and it is sad to note that when one takes a taxi or Uber, the driver is often someone with an engineering degree but cannot get a job because they are asked for local experience.¹²⁷

Despite substantial benefits of multiculturalism, Australian workplaces remain plagued by significant barriers to the inclusion of skilled migrants. The significant underemployment of highly skilled migrants, fuelled by prejudice, bias and unreasonable barriers, represents a missed opportunity for employees, employers, and the Australian economy. It is imperative that Australia overcome these barriers and unlock the immense potential of multiculturalism in our workforce.

Our consultations and the submissions we received affirmed the stark reality that qualified migrants often find themselves underemployed, their skills under-utilised. Submissions point to issues with employment, stating that many highly qualified people end up driving taxis or working as support workers for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Panel heard through the Review that migrants notice prejudice against them when seeking employment; for example, migrants shared that if they use their real names on job applications, they do not get an interview, but if they use an assumed local-sounding name, they do.

The impact is not just felt by migrant employees. Employers also express concerns about the lack of financial resources and support to understand and leverage the potential of the multicultural population. This results in missed opportunities for building trust and understanding with diverse client bases and delivering high-quality services to multicultural communities.

Highly skilled migrants face significant employment barriers. From prejudice against foreign names on resumes to the overemphasis on 'Australian work experience', migrants are often relegated to jobs below their skill level. Moreover, the recognition of overseas qualifications remains an obstacle, with what is perceived as unreasonable English language requirements and expensive validation processes hindering their entry into relevant professions.

Migrants are not just job seekers; they are an asset to the Australian economy. Their strong labour market participation, exceeding the national average, underscores their contribution to the economy; 81.2 % of permanent skilled migrants over the age of 15 are employed, significantly higher than 61.5% for the Australian population.¹²⁸ The share of skilled migrants not in the labour force is also much lower (15.1% vs 35.2%). Skilled migrants add a staggering \$198,000 per person to the fiscal position of Australian governments over their lifetime, demonstrating their positive impact on public finances (Figure 11).²⁹ Through their robust workforce participation and lower reliance on transfer payments, skilled migrants contribute significantly to Australia's long-term fiscal health.

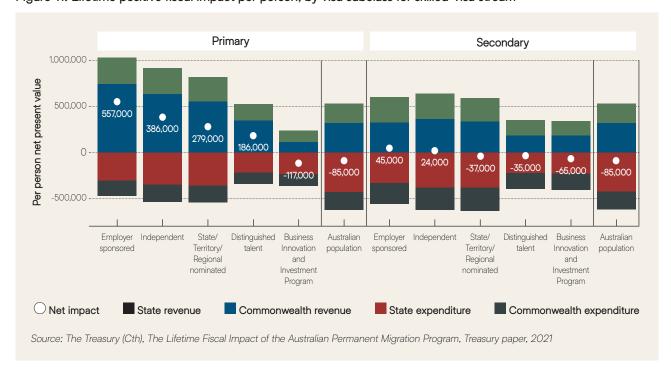


Figure 11: Lifetime positive fiscal impact per person, by visa subclass for skilled-visa stream

My wife completed her nursing here in Queensland and finished top of her class. But when she finished her course, AHPRA wants her to do an English test because she did not finish school here in Australia. She is still waiting for [an] appointment for the test while her classmates who just passed the classes are now working in hospitals. Our hospital needs more nurses and my wife is working in Coles with a nursing degree. Why can't the government do something about it?130

Further, a culturally diverse workforce offers a competitive advantage. Workers with expert knowledge of diverse communities can empower organisations to expand into new markets and connect with customers in culturally sensitive ways. This translates to increased revenue, enhanced employer image, and a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

Australia's current language testing requirements for migrants is demonstrably outdated, discriminatory and exclusionary, hindering the full integration and contribution of skilled individuals. This outdated system hinges on a discriminatory list of countries, exempting citizens of certain 'English-speaking' countries from language testing while demanding it of all others, regardless of their actual English proficiency. This practice ignores the diverse realities of language acquisition and unfairly disadvantages migrants who may have attained fluency through education.

The current policy also suffers from unreasonably high testing standards, forcing well-educated individuals with significant English exposure to demonstrate levels that may not reflect their actual capabilities. This creates a significant barrier to entry for skilled migrants, often leading to underemployment and frustration — not only disregarding their educational qualifications and skills but undermining the very purpose of the Skilled Migration program, which aims to attract and retain valuable talent.

Through our consultations and the submissions we received it became evident that the imposition of language requirements by various institutions is both inconsistent and arbitrary. Often, the language requirements imposed by regulatory authorities are not in alignment with the migration regulations and policy.

The consequences of this discriminatory system are far-reaching. Skilled individuals are forced to accept jobs below their qualifications, leading to underemployment, economic loss, and personal distress. This not only diminishes their individual wellbeing but also deprives Australia of the full potential economic benefit these skilled individuals could contribute.

Furthermore, bilingual workers deliver a high level of skill and professionalism, yet they are not compensated for the additional skills they bring. The payment of a community languages allowance remains an outstanding issue in recognising equity between government and community sector workers who have the same skill and perform the same role, in many instances with the same clients and in the same communities.

A highly skilled, qualified, professional and sustainable workforce is essential to delivering high-quality services to multicultural communities and consumers. Government must address funding issues, through implementation of a 'floor price' to ensure that workers in not-for-profit social and community services are paid at appropriate classifications and in accordance with Award provisions.

The need for cultural safety in the workplace has never been more crucial. While diversity and representation are vital first steps, true inclusivity requires a deeper commitment to fostering a work environment where individuals from all backgrounds feel valued, respected and heard. Achieving this goal demands a multifaceted approach that goes beyond mere platitudes.

A reporter in the Sydney newsroom who wears a Hijab is spoken to or questioned every time there is a story on an Islamic issue. This is not her role, nor should it be. The advisory group manages this.¹³¹

Through the Review's consultations and submissions, multiple suggestions were made for promoting successful multicultural workspaces, distilled in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Matrix on implementing measures for cultural safety at work suggested through consultations and submissions to the Review



Towards a more inclusive APS: building on strengths and addressing challenges

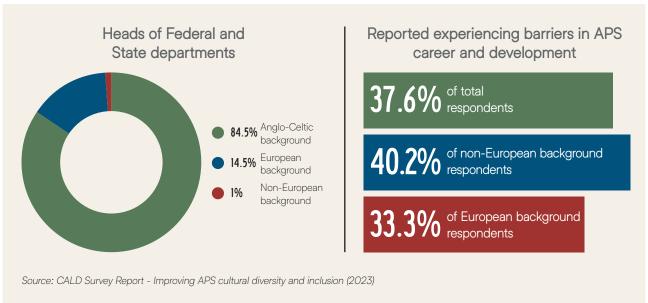
There are significant barriers to workplace advancement in the public sector, as evidenced by the submission we received from the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU).132

The submission acknowledges that recent Australian governments have taken a positive approach to multiculturalism, emphasising its benefits for the nation. However, this focus on strengths often overlooks structural barriers that hinder multicultural communities from realising their full potential. Addressing these challenges requires an APS that serves as a model of inclusion, creating a foundation for broader societal progress.

Despite significant contributions, public servants from non-English-speaking backgrounds face a stark disadvantage when it comes to career advancement (Figure 13). Compared to their counterparts from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, they are 30% less likely to become senior analysts, 40% less likely to reach management positions, and 60% less likely to enter the Senior Executive Service (SES).¹³³ This disparity is particularly pronounced for individuals of Asian descent, highlighting a potential bias beyond mere language proficiency. The study reveals a disturbing trend: promotion prospects for staff from non-English-speaking backgrounds have not only remained stagnant over the past two decades but appear to have worsened, demanding urgent attention and reform within the APS.

Currently, multicultural employees are under-represented in senior leadership positions across various sectors, including academia, government, and business. Cultural diversity often remains concentrated in specific roles within organisations, highlighting the need for broader representation across job families and geographic areas.

Figure 13: Key findings of CALD Survey Report conducted by the CPSU



To create a truly inclusive APS, existing diversity and inclusion strategies need to be significantly strengthened. Through their submission, CPSU members have expressed concerns that current efforts fail to address the root causes of under-representation, lack enforcement and accountability mechanisms, and are seen as tokenistic gestures. Additionally, strategies and design interventions must acknowledge the reality that most multicultural APS employees grew up in Australia.

Promoting cultural diversity within the APS is not just the right thing to do; it is a strategic imperative for a thriving future. By harnessing the cultural competency of its employees, the APS can deliver services that are responsive, inclusive, and genuinely meet the needs of Australia's diverse population. This builds trust and confidence in government, empowering communities and fostering a more cohesive society. A diverse multicultural workforce also brings cultural intelligence — a critical asset in the increasingly competitive global space. By fostering a diverse workforce, the APS offers a competitive advantage to Australian interests, tradecraft and diplomacy, not only enhancing our standing on the world stage but opening new opportunities for collaboration and economic growth.

In today's competitive labour market, a diverse APS can become a magnet for talent. By attracting and retaining individuals from diverse backgrounds, the APS gains access to a wider pool of skills, perspectives, and experiences. This diversity of thought fuels creativity, fosters agility, and ensures the APS remains at the forefront of public service excellence.

Further, a diverse APS fosters a more engaged and productive workforce in the service of the Australian community. A diverse workforce offers the APS enhanced understanding to cater to the needs of a diverse public. Public servants with diverse backgrounds can better connect with the communities they serve, leading to more responsive, inclusive and culturally sensitive service delivery.

In essence, promoting cultural diversity is not simply about ticking a box; it is about investing in the future of Australia. By embracing this commitment, the APS can build a stronger, more inclusive society while simultaneously securing its own place as a leader in responsive and effective public service delivery.

Moving forward, strategies must be ambitious, practical and resource-backed, with measurable progress and public accountability. Specific actions should be taken in areas such as setting clear targets, issuing APS Commissioner Directives on diversity, addressing workplace racism, and improving security clearance processes. The APS can thus pave the way for a more inclusive public service that reflects and meets the needs of a modern and multicultural Australia, and also demonstrates best practice as a model employer.



Photo: MFR consultation in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales — October 2023.

7.1.2. Recommendation 17

Recommendation 17: Promote national diversity and inclusion standards in the Australian Public Service and for government-funded organisations and public institutions

The APS should model best practice, actively promoted and informed by APSC evidence-based and industry-wide research, for diversity and inclusion standards for government-funded organisations and public institutions to ensure that culturally safe and inclusive workplaces become the norm.

Reimagining citizenship as a more inclusive and welcoming pathway

The current process of acquiring Australian citizenship presents several challenges that hinder its ability to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging. The Panel repeatedly heard how the high English language requirement of the existing citizenship test creates a significant barrier for many potential applicants. This barrier undermines the program's effectiveness in fostering a truly inclusive and cohesive society. Evidence suggests that certain groups, particularly women in refugee communities with limited literacy opportunities, find the current test excessively difficult. An attendee provided anecdotes where parents struggle to pass the test while their children are already citizens, exposing systemic inequities.

Moving forward, a national conversation about Australia's identity and the values it espouses is essential. This conversation should inform the reframing of pathways to citizenship, ensuring that they are inclusive, accessible, and reflect the nation's commitment to welcoming newcomers into its fabric.

Framing citizenship as a 'privilege' can contribute to a sense of division within the community. Such language reinforces the 'othering' of migrants and hinders their sense of belonging. Requiring migrants to prove their identity despite having done so during the migration process is counter-intuitive and unnecessary. The Panel heard that this can be particularly challenging for individuals from countries experiencing instability or lacking reliable documentation systems.

Our citizenship system is, if you don't fit, you are on the outside. Often forever.¹³⁴

A key criticism of the 'citizenship test' is its underlying principle of 'conditional inclusion'. This approach discourages potential applicants and lays the basis for a less welcoming environment for newcomers. The focus on factual knowledge in the test fails to adequately assess an individual's commitment to Australia's values and principles. This approach can be perceived as a mere 'memory test', overlooking the deeper aspects of citizenship and potentially creating a sense of exclusion. The requirement to complete the test in English, despite the availability of translated learning materials, creates a significant barrier for many migrants who are still developing their English language skills. Allowing the test to be taken in other languages would significantly increase accessibility and promote inclusivity.

A comprehensive review of the citizenship process is urgently required to identify and address the barriers that prevent individuals from participating fully. This should involve collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including refugee communities, to develop a more inclusive and streamlined pathway to citizenship.

Acquiring citizenship should be a positive and empowering experience that promotes a sense of inclusion and belonging. Citizenship should be seen as an invitation to join a collective endeavour of nation-building. Examining and removing barriers to participation allows individuals to contribute their unique skills and perspectives to the betterment of Australian society.

Cultivating culturally competent workplaces

Inclusive recruitment

Diversifying the Australian workforce through inclusive recruitment practices is crucial for fostering a thriving and competitive economy. Recruiting talent from multicultural backgrounds unlocks a wealth of skills, knowledge and perspectives that could lead to enhanced innovation, problem-solving and service delivery. This report outlines recommendations APS employers could implement to attract and select the best candidates for their roles, regardless of their cultural background.

Traditionally, recruitment processes focused primarily on the merit principle or finding 'the best person for the job', often overlooking the unconscious biases that create barriers. This narrow approach limited opportunities for individuals from multicultural backgrounds, leading to under-representation and hindering organisational performance. As highlighted in the above section on employment, discriminatory recruitment processes reduce an employer's opportunity to find the best person.

By actively seeking to recruit from diverse talent pools (Figure 14), employers gain access to a wider range of skills, knowledge and experiences, leading to a number of benefits. Diverse teams, enriched with varied perspectives and approaches, are more likely to spark innovative ideas and generate novel solutions, propelling organisations forward with a competitive edge. Additionally, incorporating diverse viewpoints into decision-making processes leads to more informed and inclusive choices, benefiting a wider range of stakeholders. Furthermore, when employees feel valued and respected for their individual cultural backgrounds, a positive and engaging work environment flourishes, promoting increased retention and employee commitment.

Finally, by reflecting the diversity of the Australian community, organisations gain a deeper understanding of their customer base, enabling them to deliver superior service and garner greater satisfaction. In short, embracing diversity isn't just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

7.1.3. Recommendation 18

Recommendation 18: Cast a wider net to improve diversity of recruitment in the Australian Public Service

1. Cast a wider net:

The APSC must encourage federal government departments to use diverse recruitment channels, such as multicultural community organisations, professional networks, and online platforms that cater to specific cultural groups. Departments must be encouraged to consider partnering with universities and educational institutions that have strong connections to multicultural communities. Through attending job fairs and events that specifically target diverse talent pools, they will strongly enhance recruitment.

2. Review selection criteria and job advertisements:

Departments must ensure job advertisements are inclusive and do not contain discriminatory language or requirements. Clearly define the essential skills and experience needed for the job and avoid soliciting irrelevant personal information. Tailor selection criteria to assess skills and competencies relevant to the role, rather than making assumptions based on cultural background.

3. Accommodate individual needs:

Departments should provide reasonable adjustments for candidates with disability or those who require additional support during the recruitment process. Offer flexible interview formats or alternative ways for candidates to demonstrate their skills and experience.

4. Educate and train staff involved in recruitment:

Departments should conduct regular training for all staff involved in recruitment on unconscious bias, cultural competency, and inclusive recruitment practices. Provide resources and support to help staff identify and overcome biases during the selection process.

5. Monitor and evaluate progress:

The APSC should regularly track and analyse recruitment data to identify areas of improvement and ensure progress towards diversity goals, including holding senior leadership of departments accountable. Conduct surveys and focus groups to gather feedback from employees from multicultural backgrounds.

Mitigating unconscious bias in APS recruitment

Unconscious bias can greatly hinder efforts to build a diverse and inclusive workforce within the APS. To overcome this challenge and ensure fair and equitable recruitment practices, several key measures should be considered for existing and future APS recruitment. This is inclusive of APSC recruitment guidelines which have been under review at the time of writing this report.

The composition of recruitment panels is crucial. By including diverse panel members who represent a spectrum of backgrounds, including cultural, gender, ability, age and sexual orientation, unconscious bias can be minimised. This diverse representation fosters a more inclusive assessment environment and ensures a wider range of perspectives are considered when evaluating candidates.

Adopting capability-based assessment methods plays a vital role in mitigating bias. This involves focusing on the specific skills and competencies required for the role, rather than relying on subjective judgments or assumptions about a candidate's background. By using objective assessment tools and structured interview formats, the likelihood of unconscious bias influencing the selection process is significantly reduced.

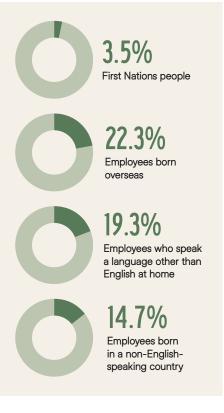
Figure 14: Information on the APSC's Special Measures Recruitment

Special Measures Recruitment

Promoting equality and inclusivity within the Australian Public Service (APS) requires proactive measures to address systemic barriers faced by certain groups. Special Measures Recruitment plays a critical role in this endeavour, fostering greater access to opportunities for individuals who have historically faced entrenched discrimination. These targeted initiatives, sometimes referred to as "positive discrimination" or "affirmative action," are explicitly permitted under federal anti-discrimination laws, including the Racial Discrimination Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act, and Age Discrimination Act.

Special measures in the APS can take various forms, such as targeted recruitment campaigns, skills development programs, and mentorship opportunities. By actively seeking out and supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds, the APS creates a more equitable and representative workforce. This not only benefits individuals by providing them with fair access to opportunities but also strengthens the APS. A diverse workforce fosters a richer pool of talent, promotes innovation and problem-solving, and ultimately leads to better service delivery for all Australians.

Source: APSC (Cth.), Diversity and Inclusion Report (2022)



Regular unconscious bias training for recruitment panel members is essential. This training equips participants with the knowledge and skills to identify and address their own implicit biases, enabling them to make fairer and more objective assessments of candidates.

Finally, collecting and analysing diversity data throughout the recruitment process is a valuable practice. This data provides valuable insights into potential areas of bias and allows organisations to track their progress towards building a more inclusive workforce. By actively monitoring diversity data and implementing corrective measures where necessary, the APS can ensure that its recruitment practices are truly fair and equitable for all candidates.

Training for cultural competency

Senior leaders need to stop patting themselves on the back for a job well done in promoting diversity just because they celebrated 'special days' for CALD people. Concrete steps are needed to really make a difference, starting with setting cultural diversity targets across the APS at the SES levels and statutory boards.¹³⁵

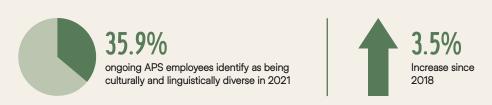
The overwhelming consensus from consultations and submissions underscores the critical role of cultural competency training in the workplace. This training must encompass not only cultural understanding but also awareness of discrimination and harassment and their impact on individuals and organisations. Equipping staff with the knowledge and skills to identify, prevent and address such issues is essential for creating a safe and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, empowered, and able to contribute their full potential.

Beyond its ethical imperative, cultural competency training offers tangible benefits for organisations. By fostering a culture of respect and understanding, it mitigates potential risks such as reputational damage, weakened employee value propositions, and difficulties attracting and retaining talent.

APS CALD employment strategy (consultation paper)

The Australian Government has asked the APSC to develop a culturally and linguistically diverse employment strategy for the APS (Figure 15). The consultation process is currently underway at the time of writing the Multicultural Framework Review report and future consideration will need to be given to the findings and recommendations made by the APSC, especially as there will be links and synergies across both reports.

Figure 15: Summary of APS CALD Employment Strategy consultation paper



While the Australian Public Service (APS) reflects the broader Australian population in terms of CALD representation, this diversity diminishes significantly within senior leadership ranks. Despite high engagement and a strong desire to contribute, CALD employees face significant limitations and challenges in their career advancement, often due to the detrimental effects of structural discrimination and racism. This underutilisation of their valuable knowledge, experiences, and diverse perspectives represents a missed opportunity for the APS to optimise its effectiveness and reach its full potential.

The APSC, through the consultation process, proposes actions that will:

- Create a safe, fair, equitable and inclusive workplace for all employees, free of discrimination and racism.
 - We want to enable people from all cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds to feel they are able to bring their whole selves to work, have their diverse views valued and progress their careers.
- · Create an environment that fosters individual and collective learning and reflection about our cultural diversity.
 - We need to understand and reflect on how our cultural and racial differences impact on our worldviews, our attitudes and behaviours.
 - We need to build our cultural and racial literacy so we encourage robust debate, cognitive diversity and a contestation of views.
- Support the development of a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community which we serve, at all levels.
 - We need to open up the institutional processes and systems that currently take a narrow view of existing norms, especially with regard to recruitment, promotion and recognition processes.
 - We need to utilise the many strengths of cultural, linguistic and racial diversity to inform our thinking and our work for the benefit of all Australians.

Revitalising regional Australia through multicultural diversity

Effectively implemented, multiculturalism can help to revitalise regional and rural Australia, addressing critical challenges like demographic decline and labour shortages. However, harnessing this potential requires a reimagining of policies and services to ensure inclusivity and support for diverse communities.

Most Muslim people who migrate to Cairns are skilled migrants and professionals. They work as doctors, teachers, engineers etc ... However, after 2 to 4 years in Cairns, young Muslim families move to metropolitan regions for better life. When they move to metropolitan cities, they stick to their religious or cultural group and are not exposed to multicultural experiences as they live in silos. This movement is not beneficial for Cairns as there is a brain drain, but also not beneficial to Australia as a whole as there is no integration. On paper, we tick the multicultural box. But in practical, this is not the case.

What are the advantages that our skilled labour is getting in metropolitan that they are not getting in Cairns? They all love living here ... but there is no halal food here, there is no connection to religion here as we do not have an imam.¹³⁶

The sentiments expressed in this quote resonate across regional and rural Australia as evidenced through our consultations and the submissions we received. Many residents of regional areas feel unheard and under-represented in national multicultural frameworks. This sense of exclusion contributes to disengagement, lack of trust in government, and a lack of services tailored to the particular needs of multicultural communities. As a consequence, migrants often move to urban centres seeking employment, housing and support networks that are absent in their regional locations.

This trend is exacerbated by high youth unemployment in regional areas. Even when families settle in regional communities, their children often face limited opportunities for employment, forcing them to relocate to cities. This lack of connection and infrastructure leaves new migrants feeling isolated and yearning for spaces to connect, worship and celebrate their cultural heritage.

The absence of a culturally trained workforce further hinders integration and service delivery. Employment barriers for multicultural individuals in regional areas are compounded by discrimination, and a lack of recognition of their skills and experience.

Furthermore, migrant communities in regional areas often remain invisible. Limited funding restricts access to places of worship, community hubs, and culturally appropriate aged care support. This leads to social isolation and a lack of engagement with the broader community. Integrating into a predominantly aging Anglo-Celtic population becomes challenging, hindering cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

To effectively address these challenges, a paradigm shift is necessary. Instead of focusing solely on service provision, government agencies at all levels must empower communities to build structures and systems that cater to their specific needs. This can be achieved through online training programs like those used in health services, equipping government employees with cultural competency and awareness.

Regionally based Centrelink services provide an excellent example of an effective service model. They demonstrate the power of localised, accessible and culturally sensitive service delivery. Building upon this success, it is crucial to move beyond mere service provision and invest in capacity building, empowering community organisations to serve their members effectively.

Don Smallgoods serves as an example of successful regional employment practices. By employing over 1,500 individuals at their Castlemaine site, primarily migrant workers from Myanmar, Don Smallgoods demonstrates the significant contribution that multicultural communities can make to regional economies. Their commitment to ongoing support for their workers highlights the importance of fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. Figure 16 also outlines other successful approaches.

Figure 16: Information on the 'show, not tell' recruitment and training approach in Townsville



Photo: Information on the 'show, not tell' recruitment and training approach in Townsville, Queensland.

Show, not tell

Our consultations revealed innovative practices like Lamberts Fresh Produce's 'show, not tell' recruitment approach in Townsville. This initiative assesses skills through practical tasks, bypassing potential biases in traditional interview formats. This benefits employers, who gain access to a broader pool of skilled individuals, and employees, who secure meaningful employment and opportunities for ongoing development.

Similarly, in their submission, Integrate Workforce notes a successful implementation of the same approach in the construction sector in Tasmania, offering further evidence of its efficacy in facilitating positive outcomes for both employers and migrant multicultural employees.

By addressing the challenges faced by multicultural communities in regional areas through policy reform, culturally sensitive service delivery, and community empowerment, we can unlock the full potential of multiculturalism. This will pave the way for vibrant, inclusive regional communities that thrive on diversity and contribute to a more prosperous and dynamic Australia.

Embedding multicultural education in Australia

Australia's vibrant multicultural landscape is a cornerstone of its national identity. Currently, the education system often falls short in accommodating the diverse needs and perspectives of its students. This neglect fosters a sense of disenfranchisement, hindering academic success and social integration. Witnessing this shortcoming firsthand, community representatives conveyed to us the urgent need to transform education into a truly inclusive space.

Achieving social cohesion requires more than simply acknowledging this diversity. We must actively nurture an environment where cultural understanding, appreciation and respect flourish. This approach ensures that young people are supported to grow and thrive in one of the most important locations were their sense of identity and belonging is shaped.

One of the most demoralising things is in the role of education. Witnessing the failure of state education systems to accommodate and adapt to the educational needs of these communities and who we are welcoming as refugees and asylum seekers. We are now seeing the fruits of that with the younger generation who are struggling.¹³⁷

One critical step is integrating multicultural education into the national curriculum. This means starting young, exposing students from an early age to the rich diversity of cultures that make-up our nation. Through age-appropriate learning activities and programs, we can cultivate empathy, understanding, and a genuine appreciation for different customs and traditions.

A powerful tool for fostering intercultural dialogue has included facilitating cultural exchange programs within schools, creating opportunities for students to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, provide opportunities to break down barriers and build bridges of understanding. These shared experiences can nurture a sense of belonging and equip students with the skills useful in navigating our increasingly interconnected world.

Beyond the classroom, we must also address the under-representation of diversity in leadership roles within the education system. Supporting the upskilling and professional development of educators from multicultural backgrounds is crucial. By empowering these individuals, we create role models that inspire and guide younger generations, ensuring a more equitable and representative education environment.

This transformation extends beyond the formal education system. Building social connections and understanding between communities plays a key role in supporting multiculturalism and social cohesion. Many communities have mentioned opening their doors and events to all members of their communities because of a desire to connect and learn from each other. Examples of such events include open mosque events and community festivals. This community-driven approach fosters mutual understanding and collaboration, laying the groundwork for a more cohesive and inclusive society.

Educating migrant and cultural support services

Currently, many migrant and cultural support services face significant challenges. Ensuring the seamless integration of newcomers and fostering a truly inclusive society requires a fundamental shift in how we approach migrant and cultural support services. We must move beyond mere tolerance and actively embrace intercultural understanding and appreciation, particularly within our education and support systems.

A major concern is the lack of tailored support for teenage migrants who arrive in their adolescence. As noted in Chapter 6, the Panel has heard that AMEP fails to cater to older youth. Thrust into a new environment, with limited English skills and often placed alongside peers who have years of Australian education, these new Australians can experience disengagement and disenfranchisement. This vulnerability increases the risk of negative outcomes, including crime, suicide and social isolation.

Additionally, cultural stereotypes and unconscious biases held by educators can further hinder the integration of migrant communities. Limiting career options, or discouraging further education based on preconceived notions, stifles individuals' potential and can perpetuate harmful societal narratives. Training and sensitising educators on cultural awareness and unconscious bias are crucial to dismantling attitudes that can have lasting effects on students. In Mildura we witnessed a positive example where young Pasifika people are connected to different options (not just stereotypical careers assumed for their cohort). An intersection exists between First Nations communities and multicultural communities in the prevalent view that only certain career pathways exist for certain groups.

The transition to Australian schools can be challenging for new students, particularly those facing language barriers. Limited English proficiency can impede communication with teachers and peers, creating a sense of isolation and hindering academic progress. Implementing programs that cater to these specific needs, such as dedicated language support and culturally sensitive communication strategies, are essential for ensuring a successful transition.

As discussed in the chapter on belonging, the focus should not solely be on academic success. Educating migrant and cultural support services requires a broader commitment to fostering cultural appreciation and understanding. Celebrating diverse languages and traditions, promoting intercultural and interfaith education, and incorporating cultural awareness into the curriculum from a young age are all vital steps towards building a truly inclusive and cohesive society.

While concerns about curriculum overload are valid, the benefits of promoting social cohesion and multiculturalism through education far outweigh the challenges. Initiatives like diversity days and cultural events provide engaging and enriching learning experiences without overburdening the curriculum.

Addressing the lack of understanding about non-Anglo and non-European cultures is also crucial. Australian education systems often focus on Western norms, overlooking the rich knowledge and educational systems of other cultures. This oversight creates a sense of marginalisation and hinders the integration of diverse communities. Recognising and valuing the cultural heritage of all Australians is essential for fostering an engaging learning environment. Throughout consultations and also the submissions the Panel received, we also heard from communities that they wanted to know more about the history of Australia's First Nations peoples, through pre-arrival education or orientation and other educational experiences.

While some faith-based schools can offer a safe haven from discrimination, they can also create barriers to integration into mainstream society. Finding a balance between celebrating cultural identities and fostering inclusion in the broader community is essential. The Panel notes that the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has mandated cultural awareness education throughout primary schools, including exposure to cultural diversity. It is vital that this component of the curriculum is strengthened and made more robust to educate Australians about the value that others around them bring through their diversity and multiculturalism.

Finally, we must address the issue of age restrictions in schools. Refusing to accept students over the age of 18 limits the opportunities for young adult migrants to pursue further education and career options. Recognising the unique needs of this group and offering flexible learning pathways is crucial to ensuring their successful integration into the Australian workforce. At St. James College in Brisbane, a student told us:

I can be whatever I want to be though I arrived in Australia as a young adult. It's because I get to go to school. A lot of people told me that I should go to TAFE, but I wanted to go to school and learn.

Educating and sensitising migrant and cultural support services is not simply a matter of policy; it is a shift in mindset. We must cultivate a culture of collaboration where government agencies, educational institutions, community leaders, and individual citizens all work together to create an inclusive society.

7.1.4. Recommendation 19, 20 and 21

Recommendation 19: The Department of Education and the Department of Home Affairs (through AMEP), in collaboration with state and territory governments, to increase investment for programs to support language acquisition courses at all learning levels, which is complementary to relevant curriculum cycles

This should include adult migrant language programs, EAL/D course facilitation and support, and be complementary to relevant curriculum cycles.

Recommendation 20: The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations revise the Australian Curriculum Literacy and Numeracy Continuum and L&N Vocational Education competencies to promote and advance cultural literacies. The Department of Education to adjust assessment instruments such as NAPLAN to reflect this priority.

Recommendation 21: The Multicultural Australia Commissioner, together with the Department of Home Affairs Citizenship and Settlement sections, in consultation with the NIAA and across government as appropriate, to improve understanding of First Nations history in Australia as the first peoples. Develop initiatives to deepen Australia-wide understanding, such as the history presented through citizenship processes, civic participation, pathways to permanent residency, education and for older generations.

Education and understanding faith-based diversity

Faith groups represent many different cultural groups across Australia, and faith often acts to bring cultures together. As part of the review, the Panel met with faith leaders and multi-faith groups, and listened to the ideas and concerns of faith-based communities. What we heard is how multi-faith dialogue can help communities to embrace world views and understand the different beliefs in society between religious and the secular groups, and use this understanding as a vehicle to move beyond traditional boundaries: to engage with difference and the challenges, helping to build a more cohesive society.

The faith leaders and multi-faith groups we met spoke of the need for government to provide a structure or body where they could contribute insight to faith-based multiculturalism across policy at the Commonwealth level. In these discussions they also spoke about an opportunity for the Australian Government to support national interfaith representation through peak bodies or through an advisory function, for more ongoing engagement - not just being called together to help in times of crisis.

Faith leaders and multi-faith groups raised with the Panel that they seek support to create shared multi-faith spaces for people through government investment, sharing examples such as multi-faith centres and prayer spaces at airports and universities as working really well.

The Panel received a range of submissions that commented on the complexity of communicating matters of cultural awareness with law enforcement agencies. While the Panel acknowledges the exemplary co-production and co-design approach adopted by the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency to 'provide police with a greater understanding of religious and spiritual diversity [to] enhance services and interactions with the community', it notes that there is an appetite for further engagement and support in developing community and agency relationships.¹³⁸

Educational institutions featured frequently through our consultations as places that are best placed to foster inclusive environments and deepen an understanding of faith so as to strengthen social cohesion.

The Multifaith Education Collaboration (MFEC) and Faith Communities Council of Victoria (FCCV) submission expands on the role of education, especially in developing greater understanding of cultural and religious diversity. MFEC recommended that:

investing in religious literacy through general religious education (GRE) in schools would ensure the next generation of Australians respect rather than fear the religious diversity embedded within our multicultural communities.

the development and provision of GRE resources that support the National Curriculum to enable GRE modules to be taught to primary school students by their classroom teacher as a religious literacy pathway for students to raise their respect and understanding of faith based multiculturalism and assist their fellow students who come from such lived multifaith experience to feel better understood and connected to their school, fellow students and broader community.

the development of a well-founded understanding of world religions, which will help combat current hate-filled racial and religious bullying and vilification. This will contribute to social cohesion and is a prerequisite to respect for religious practise.139

MFEC also argues that curriculum (in Victoria) does not provide a coherent understanding across multicultural faith traditions of how faith is expressed in community settings, and that this has led to the unintended consequence of students from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds feeling less included due teachers' lack of confidence and access to in-class resources to enable an open and inclusive discussion across the GRE continuum.

The Panel supports GRE being updated in curriculums across the board. This should be inclusive of a GRE that teaches students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first spiritual peoples of Australia, about Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim other religions, and about the views of atheist, humanist, rationalist and secular groups.

Dismantling barriers to advancing healthcare and mental health support

Services need to better understand the health literacy needs and improve services to ensure equity of access. Individuals need to develop their health literacy capacity to better understand when and how to access health services. Our health services throughout the continuum of care are NOT adequately culturally responsive. In training of health workforce more attention needs to be applied to unconscious bias and how it impacts the service provided. Systems such as translation and interpreter service needs to be embedded in primary health care not an add-on. Bi-cultural workers need to be renumerated appropriately and vital for all health service delivery when need for interpreters is consistent and demanding. Community organisations need to be equal partners in government led health service delivery not 'nice to have' support. We have very limited data to work with in understanding access issues in health services. We need to get better at capturing data that can improve service delivery. 140

Achieving true health equity in Australia requires dismantling systemic barriers that disproportionately impact communities from diverse backgrounds. Addressing these challenges necessitates a collaborative effort between government, healthcare providers and community organisations, with a focus on culturally sensitive solutions and improved access to services (Figure 17).

The Panel received numerous insightful submissions highlighting the systemic barriers faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds within the healthcare and mental health systems. These submissions, rich with constructive suggestions, have informed our recommendations aimed at dismantling the most significant obstacles hindering social and economic inclusion.

Several submissions emphasised the urgent need for improved mental health services tailored to meet the unique needs of multicultural communities. This includes fostering greater understanding and awareness among mental health professionals regarding faith-based counselling approaches and integrating these practices with evidence-based therapeutic interventions. Additionally, enhancing the ability of clinicians to communicate effectively and engage with culturally and linguistically diverse youth in therapy is identified as crucial. Submissions suggest that this can be achieved through collaborative community engagement initiatives involving diverse youth groups and targeted outreach programs, especially in regional and rural Australia.

A significant concern highlighted in submissions is the impact of complex visa and citizenship processes on mental wellbeing. Delays, rejections, and language limitations can create significant stress and anxiety, particularly for vulnerable cohorts such as refugees and humanitarian entrants. Streamlining these processes and providing adequate language support are crucial steps towards promoting mental health and social integration.

Figure 17: Key findings from the Mapping Social Services Provision for Diverse Communities project



Multicultural service providers, or those with strong multicultural capacity, are in greater demand by migrants



Source: Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, 'Mapping Social Services Provision for Diverse Communities', An Australian Research Council Linkage Project: Executive Summary for Key Findings (2023)

Navigating the healthcare system can be a daunting task, especially for those with limited English proficiency but even for educated migrants. This complexity hinders access to essential services and exacerbates health disparities. Simplifying procedures, offering in-language information, and providing culturally competent staff and access to interpreters are essential for ensuring equitable access to healthcare for all Australians.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought existing health inequities into stark relief, with diverse communities disproportionately affected by both health and social consequences. This experience underscores the need for effective community mobilisation strategies. Empowering community leaders, organisations and local governments to collaborate with the health sector is crucial for ensuring effective communication, outreach and service delivery.

The high suicide rate among young people from African communities¹⁴¹ demands urgent action and national recognition. These tragic deaths highlight the inadequacy of current mental health systems, which often fail to address the specific cultural and social needs of diverse communities. Investing in culturally sensitive mental health support services, reducing stigma surrounding mental illness, and actively engaging young people are critical steps towards preventing future tragedies.

Additionally, cultural barriers within communities themselves can impede access to mental health services. Recognising these barriers and working with community leaders to address them is essential. Breaking down taboos and promoting open dialogue about mental health are critical for encouraging individuals to seek help and receive effective treatment.

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are currently ill-equipped to cater to the unique needs of humanitarian entrants. Language barriers and the lack of culturally appropriate information impede access to essential healthcare services for this vulnerable population. Implementing targeted programs with interpreters and in-language content is crucial for improving health outcomes within this group. This is especially critical in regional and rural Australia where large sections of the population rely on PHNs for their wellbeing.

This shift requires not only policy changes but a fundamental shift in mindset. Addressing these systemic barriers requires a multipronged approach. Government investment in culturally sensitive healthcare services, training for providers, and community engagement initiatives are essential components of a comprehensive solution.

7.1.5. Recommendation 22 and 23

Recommendation 22: The Department of Health and Aged Care to provide funds to maintain evidence-based resources in refugee health to support practitioners

Recommendation 23: Establishment of a formalised partnership between NDIS and the Department of Home Affairs to support newly arrived refugees with disability

Cultivating sensitive and inclusive aged care

Based on the recent ABS 2021 Census Data, the current population of those aged over 65 years old is 4,377,903. Thirty five per cent, 1,520,097 of this population, is made up of people who identify as being of diverse ethnic background. The Centre for Population projects that by 2031, the population of 65+ year olds will increase by 26%, an estimated 1,152,497 people. Given this, the Multicultural Framework must include a focus on elders from diverse backgrounds.¹⁴²

In their submission, Fronditha Care, a provider of culturally centred aged care for Australians of Greek heritage, emphasises the critical need for a nuanced approach to supporting diverse communities. While existing frameworks, like the Aged Care Diversity Framework, provide valuable guidance, they often fall short in reflecting the evolving needs of older Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Fronditha Care highlights the importance of acknowledging the unique experiences and perspectives of First Nations people and migrant communities. Fostering a collective understanding of what it means to live in an inclusive and cohesive Australia necessitates recognising and respecting the specific needs and preferences of our elders. This extends beyond adherence to guidelines and requires a proactive commitment to service design that caters to diverse cultural values and traditions, including the capability and capacity building of a diverse workforce.

One crucial aspect of culturally sensitive care is recognising the central role of family in decision-making and care delivery. Many cultures, like the Greek community served by Fronditha, emphasise intergenerational support networks and shared responsibility for the wellbeing of elders. Aged care services must be designed with this cultural context in mind, ensuring families are actively involved and empowered to contribute to their loved ones' care.

The sector must move beyond generic frameworks and develop a robust, dynamic approach to culturally sensitive aged care. This requires ongoing collaboration and dialogue with diverse communities, ensuring their voices are heard and their unique needs are reflected in service design, policy and practice. Only by embracing an inclusive philosophy and actively tailoring care to individual cultural preferences can we truly create a system that ensures the dignity and wellbeing of all older Australians.

7.1.6. Recommendation 24

Recommendation 24: Establish a dedicated Multicultural Aged Care Unit within the Department of Health and Aged Care to engage and collaborate with multicultural communities to develop a robust, dynamic approach to culturally sensitive aged care

Towards inclusive multicultural disability support in Australia

The classes I attended were held on level 3, then one day someone saw my struggle to climb the stairs to level 3. I was told to speak to the administration team to request a key to use the lift. The lift was dedicated to the teachers regardless of whether they had accessibility needs or not. That was a life changing moment for me as I was given a key to use the lift but on the condition of returning it at the end of each year. If I was born in Australia, I would have known what support I could request and how to navigate the systems that was not designed to support refugees or migrants with disabilities.143

While services across Australia espouse the vision for a nation where all individuals, regardless of background, feel valued and empowered to participate fully in society, the reality for many Australians with disability from multicultural backgrounds is very different.

In submissions and consultation, disability advocacy organisations criticised and questioned the exclusion of immigration visa issues from the Review, noting that multicultural issues were not independent of migration-related issues. This highlights an important first step in understanding the voices of disability advocates: recognising the inherent connection between immigration policies and the wellbeing of people with disability from multicultural backgrounds. Submissions received from disability advocacy organisations explicitly called for the removing the exemption to the Migration Act 1958 from the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, highlighting it as a vital step towards ensuring equal access to opportunities and protections.

Research indicates that children from immigrant backgrounds with autism are more likely to receive diagnoses later in life and present with more pronounced symptoms. This delay in diagnosis significantly impacts their access to early intervention and support services, further hindering their development and wellbeing. Addressing cultural barriers and distrust surrounding disability within multicultural communities is crucial to ensuring timely access to diagnosis and support.144

The NDIS aims to empower individuals with disabilities to live independent and fulfilling lives. However, for individuals from multicultural backgrounds, navigating the complexities of the NDIS can be particularly daunting. Limited understanding of the framework and language barriers can lead to under-utilisation of support packages and missed opportunities for improved quality of life. 145 Implementing culturally sensitive support systems and ensuring access to language services are essential to bridging this gap.

In their submission, 146 Kin Disability Advocacy noted that due to cultural and linguistic barriers individuals with disability from multicultural communities often face difficulty accessing essential healthcare services. This lack of access can exacerbate existing health conditions and hinder their overall wellbeing. Promoting cultural competency among healthcare providers and improving communication and language access are crucial to closing this gap and ensuring equitable access to healthcare.

Applying a gender-equality lens

The Panel received submissions and feedback through consultations highlighting that migrant and refugee women are less likely to report the violence they experience due to language barriers, limited knowledge of their rights and existing laws, cultural stigma, and concerns as to - and misinformation about - their visa and residency status. This can result in gendered forms of prejudice and discrimination that may compound barriers to social and economic inclusion. This intersection of gender equality, gender-based violence and multiculturalism indicates that government, along with non-government organisations, should play a key role in strengthening multiculturalism and gender equality in society.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, and the Department of the Treasury also raised:

- the importance of considering gendered experiences when applying multicultural policy, government systems and services, and the need for alignment with government priorities including development of a National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality
- that migrant and refugee women are 7% less likely to be employed than those born in Australia, and also have a significantly lower rate of workforce participation than migrant and refugee men (47.3% and 69.5% respectively)
- that migrant and refugee women are over-represented in non-professional care occupations, including child care, personal care assistants, and aged and disability carers
- that migrant and refugee women experience poorer health outcomes, including in maternal and reproductive health, compared with Australia-born women.

To further understand the gender issues experienced, longitudinal studies such as Building a New Life in Australia provide datasets and findings on a range of topics related to the socio-economic needs of humanitarian migrant women and the barriers they face in their settlement journey; however, there are still significant knowledge and research gaps on a number of issues, including:

- · how intersecting forms of inequality and disadvantage, including culture-specific gender norms and relationships, interact with humanitarian migrant women's settlement experience and outcomes
- the impact of domestic and family-based violence on humanitarian migrant women and the economic potential of recently arrived humanitarian migrant women
- the influence of geographic location, particularly in relation to settlement in regional areas, on humanitarian migrant women's settlement outcomes
- · humanitarian migrant women's experiences in accessing mainstream support services and programs in Australia and the impact on their socio-economic and health outcomes.¹⁴⁷

Through continuously applying an intersectional, gender-equality lens to multicultural policy and services, these compounding barriers can be lifted and a more inclusive, gender-equal multicultural Australia realised.

Empowering multicultural LGBTIQ+ voices

It's hard to inhabit the two worlds at once: migrant and lesbian. Usually the ethnic communities are too conservative and the anglo world does welcome me as a queer woman but doesn't want to know about my migrant side unless is about holidays and fun stuff. 148

The need for belonging and inclusion in Australia extends to all its citizens, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural background or migration status. For LGBTIQ+ people from multicultural backgrounds, the reality is very different — often shaped by multifaceted, structural marginalisation.

People who identify as LGBTIQ+ and who are from multicultural or faith communities often encounter prejudice based on their sexual orientation and their gender identity. While experiencing discrimination for their cultural background, migration status, and even disability, they can also be 'robbed' of their place and belonging within their cultural and faith communities due to their gender and sexual identity. These intersecting factors create a complex web of disadvantage, with experiences of racism, homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination in employment, housing, healthcare and other services.

Inhabiting Two Worlds at Once, a study featured in the submission by Forcibly Displaced People Network, reveals the depth and extent of exclusion and its harmful consequences. The study shows nearly 56% of respondents suffered negative mental and physical health impacts due to discrimination emerging from their LGBTIQ+ identity. And that, alarmingly, violence against LGBTIQ+ displaced individuals exceeds national averages. These findings underscore the need for tailored support and interventions to address the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ people from multicultural backgrounds.149

A paradigm shift in service provision across all sectors is crucial. Any approach must address barriers in the settlement sector and the additional layers of marginalisation experienced by LGBTIQ+ people from multicultural backgrounds within multicultural and faith communities.

Support services in Australia often fail LGBTIQ+ displaced individuals and compound their experiences of marginalisation. Settlement services are under-resourced to cater to specific needs and often lack the cultural sensitivity to provide appropriate services. To address some of the challenges, there should be adequate training for service providers, tailored support and programs, and careful consideration of housing and other arrangements.

Within the settlement sectors, there is a need to review existing funding models and policies that present additional barriers. A confidential submission we received pointed to how existing LGBTIQ+ policies and funding streams often fail to address specific challenges, inadvertently privileging established, predominantly white-led organisations. This systemic bias must be addressed to ensure equitable support for all LGBTIQ+ communities.

Finally, addressing discriminatory attitudes and practices within multicultural and faith communities is paramount. LGBTIQ+ people of faith and colour are often ostracised and treated with prejudice, exacerbating their marginalisation and isolation. Initiatives that promote cultural sensitivity and inclusivity within these communities are vital to foster a more welcoming environment for LGBTIQ+ individuals from diverse backgrounds.

7.1.7. Recommendation 25

Recommendation 25: Empower LGBTIQ+ intersectionality within multicultural communities

Recognition: It is necessary to start by recognising that LGBTIQ+ people from multicultural backgrounds face more barriers at all levels of society; they are often not safe at home or in society. Levels of discrimination remain entrenched, despite some progress, within the broader society, multicultural sector, faith communities, and even at the family level. This deep-seated marginalisation means any proposal for addressing the issues must consider the power dynamic between those who belong and those excluded. It is, therefore, necessary to evaluate the safety of the environments in which LGBTIQ+ people are being invited to participate and to ensure these places remove or minimise the possibilities for re-traumatisation. For those reasons:

 LGBTIQ+ organisations need independent funding to develop solutions that address their experiences and activate their agency as change makers. These solutions should be supplemented by encouraging broader dialogue and additional services that help break down stigma and discrimination.

The Panel recommends that:

• Dedicated funding is allocated through multicultural grants to support and recognise the crucial role organisations play in providing culturally sensitive and relevant assistance for LGBTIQ+ communities. Such funding will support and empower organisations, enabling them to build capacity and effectively address the needs of their communities.

Dialogue and Collaboration: There is a need to foster collaboration between LGBTIQ+ communities, faith communities, and other cultural groups that promote understanding, empathy and solidarity. The partnership should aim to:

- integrate LGBTIQ+ issues into migration (especially settlement-related) and multicultural practices, recognising their unique experiences and intersections with other factors
- embed the principles of intersectionality and gender equality in all spheres of policy and practice, and use a network of key stakeholders consisting of all tiers of government, advisory bodies, media and communities, such as: APSC, AHRC, NDIA, NIAA, the Office for Women, SBS and the ABC, as touch points to foster inclusion, collaboration and promote understanding, empathy and solidarity through community partnership.

Sports as a catalyst for inclusion

As the AFL's first devout Muslim player and Ambassador for the game, Bachar Houli, said:

It was an honour to be an AFL Ambassador, not only did it give me an opportunity to educate Australia about my faith, it also showed me how the work I am doing in the community is having a huge impact and is going places.¹⁵⁰

Sport has long been hailed as a powerful tool for fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion. There are recent moments of sport bringing Australian together including the performance of Peter Bol at the Olympics and Usman Khawaja's performance on the cricket field. Locally, the presence of Australian football players in the AFL have also shown the power and reach of sport. These moments display the potential for sport to bridge cultural divides and integrate newcomers into the fabric of the nation in significant ways.

[S]upport is provided for participation by people from CaLD backgrounds in sport and recreation at all levels, including as players, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and spectators. This requires the environment within clubs, associations, State and national bodies to be inclusive and to foster participation. 151

Sport can be a good place to start because it provides community connection and the ability to share common interests. People can connect, whether over a game, a team or a player. In a market segmentation study, 152 the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) found that multicultural communities hold positive attitudes towards sports participation; they are more likely to engage in organised physical activity, demonstrating their willingness to embrace its benefits. This engagement often extends beyond traditional club sports, with participation in fitness centres, leisure activities and community programs, indicating a desire to be active in diverse ways.

Despite this enthusiasm, the study noted barriers that hinder full participation by multicultural communities in community sport activities, such as lack of information about available programs, a lack of cultural sensitivities within sport clubs, and costs of participation.

The cost of membership fees, equipment, and transportation may create a significant financial burden. This economic barrier effectively excludes many young people from accessing the benefits of sports and exacerbates the inequalities that already exist within society.

The lack of understanding and sensitivity towards diverse cultures within sports clubs can further deter participation. Cultural insensitivity can manifest in various ways, from insensitive jokes and comments to scheduling practices and events that clash with religious or cultural observances. And cultural insensitivity can be displayed beyond club members to wider support staff at events or members of the general public (Figure 18). This creates an unwelcoming environment where young people from minority communities feel excluded.

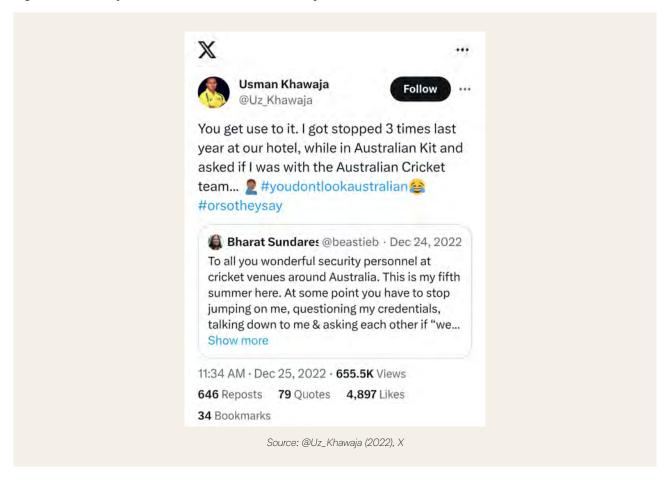
Further, during consultations, attendees highlighted how some sporting leadership positions fail to adequately address issues of diversity and under-representation. This creates an environment where inclusivity remains an aspiration rather than a lived reality. Addressing this leadership gap is crucial to fostering a more inclusive and diverse sporting culture.

The lack of representation or understanding and sensitivity can drive the sense that sporting clubs are not welcoming environments for socialising or making friends. Concerns about feeling unwelcome, intimidated and potentially discriminated against deter participation. These perceptions run counter to the ideals of inclusion and community building that sports should strive for.

More structurally, the limited funding opportunity for community sporting clubs hinders their ability to deliver sustained programs. This remains the case despite community sporting clubs playing a crucial role in engaging multicultural communities. Lack of access to funding and grants impedes their potential to cater to the specific needs and interests of diverse populations.

There are also cultural expectations within communities that prioritise academic success, which can limit young people's engagement in sports — though the most significant barrier to participation remains the fear of discrimination and bullying.

Figure 18: Tweet by Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja



While sport can be an important tool for social inclusion, high-profile cases of racism and prejudice or unfair treatment within sporting circles create a chilling effect exacerbating exclusion. There is a sense that elevation of sport stars often occur when they are succeeding; there, they become 'Australian', but risk being cast off from this status by any failure, or inability to be 'exceptional', returning to their status as migrants who 'should go back to where they come from'.

To be acceptable only when you are exceptional or performing at an elite level is a bar most human beings could never attain. Yet it is a confronting dilemma for young migrants, who recognise it as an impossible standard for admission into belonging, highlighting the precariousness of their identity and belonging and reinforcing the impression that acceptance can be revoked at any time — as was the case in a recent event where Peter Bol experienced a false positive drug test that was leaked to the media¹⁵³ and also for Usman Khawaja, who has shared his story openly, stating 'at that high-performance level, you don't realise it but a lot of the coaches [and] selectors are white,' he says. 'There's subconscious bias. If you have two cricketers, one brown, one white, both the same, the white coach is going to pick the white cricketer just because he has a son that might look similar to him. It's what's familiar to him. 154 These examples demonstrate that this treatment can be discouraging to young people and their families, not only depriving them of the physical and social benefits of participation, but undermining the core values of respect and dignity that sport is supposed to uphold. We need to pay as much attention to the narratives of sport and belonging, as to the funding model adopted for sports activities.

The ASC notes that the Australian Government's funding and grants programs need to be reviewed to ensure accessibility and support for grassroots clubs. Currently, large sporting codes with existing financial backing often benefit disproportionately from government support. This neglects the vital role of community clubs in promoting inclusion at the local level.

To harness the potential of sports for social inclusion, a multifaceted approach is necessary, involving:

- increased funding and support for community groups/organisations to partner with community sporting clubs to implement cultural diversity and inclusion initiatives — thereby allowing community clubs to develop long-term, sustainable, culturally sensitive and inclusive programs, hire diverse staff, and provide resources to overcome cost barriers
- cultural competency training for coaches and club officials understanding and respecting cultural differences is crucial for creating welcoming environments where everyone feels valued
- targeted outreach programs engaging with multicultural communities directly through community centres, cultural events, and language-specific communication channels can increase awareness and encourage participation
- promoting positive narratives highlighting stories of successful athletes from diverse backgrounds can challenge stereotypes and inspire young people to pursue their sporting dreams.

By implementing these strategies and fostering a culture of inclusivity, sports can continue to remain a powerful force for positive change in Australia's multicultural society. They can provide a platform for individuals to connect, build relationships, and feel a sense of belonging within their communities.

Housing as a foundation for inclusion and belonging

In this section we focus on housing to display how large trends can have an impact on social cohesion and multiculturalism. These larger trends are not limited to housing but can include rising economic inequality and the rise of casualised work. They often intersect with multiculturalism issues and place significant pressure on social cohesion and community relations.

Housing is an important and ongoing debate. It connects to government policies on relocating communities to regional areas, where housing availability and affordability might be even more pressing. Current challenges in housing policy and program delivery stress the need for treating multiculturalism as a whole-of-nation issue that should influence all levels of government thinking.

For refugees arriving in Australia, housing is more than just bricks and mortar; it's a foundation for belonging, security and integration into the wider community. Yet, the current housing landscape presents significant challenges for these individuals, hindering their ability to thrive and contribute to their new home. The recently developed 'Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework' includes housing as one of the six facilitating outcomes:

Housing, specifically suitable housing, includes the physical size of residences, their quality, availability of facilities and amenities nearby and the safety and security they provide. Key concerns within the housing domain include overcrowding, safety, affordability, home maintenance literacy and access to transport. Housing also includes building entrants' skills to source and secure appropriate accommodation over time, including an understanding of relevant housing and rental laws.¹⁵⁵

The intricate connection between housing and social inclusion cannot be overstated. Refugees, often grappling with past trauma, limited financial resources and language barriers, face an uphill battle in securing affordable and suitable housing. This vulnerability is amplified by systemic inequalities within the housing market, including discrimination, mental health issues, family separations, and limited employment opportunities.

Australia's current housing crisis further exacerbates these challenges. With dwelling completions lagging population growth, the supply and demand imbalance, coupled with low interest rates, creates a market that is increasingly inaccessible for refugees and many others.

The existing federal frameworks for affordable housing need to better reflect the unique needs of refugees and asylum seekers. This requires a nuanced approach that acknowledges their specific cultural and social realities. Failing to address these needs risks perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and marginalisation.

Further, societal and economic pressures can fuel negative attitudes towards migrants, often associating them with housing shortages. This fear-mongering narrative not only fuels social division but also masks the complex realities of the housing crisis. Additionally, migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation within the workforce, exacerbating their economic insecurity and limiting their ability to secure stable housing.

The ongoing housing crisis disproportionately impacts regional communities, where refugees are often settled. Rising house prices and limited rental options leave families struggling to find safe and affordable accommodation. This underscores the need for targeted interventions and support networks in regional areas.

Several structural barriers further impede refugees' access to housing. Their low incomes leave them priced out of many options, while landlords often perceive them as unreliable tenants due to their lack of rental history. These discriminatory practices highlight the urgent need for systemic reforms and awareness campaigns to address both individual prejudices and institutional biases.

Ensuring equitable access to housing is not just a matter of practicality; it's a fundamental human right. While the current outcomes framework for refugee and humanitarian migrants recognises the importance of housing support, it fails to address the broader housing challenges faced by all Australians. This necessitates a more comprehensive and inclusive approach that tackles the root causes of the housing crisis and guarantees access to safe, affordable housing for all.

Improving the government grants and funding frameworks

There must be an overhaul of the funding system which is fundamentally flawed. Small jurisdictions and organisations are at a significant disadvantage to our larger state ... the current system stifles collaboration as we are all competing for the same grant creating inefficiencies, and almost every grant program only funds 'new' initiatives meaning amazing programs are developed to only fall over once funding ends.¹⁵⁶

Commonwealth grants framework

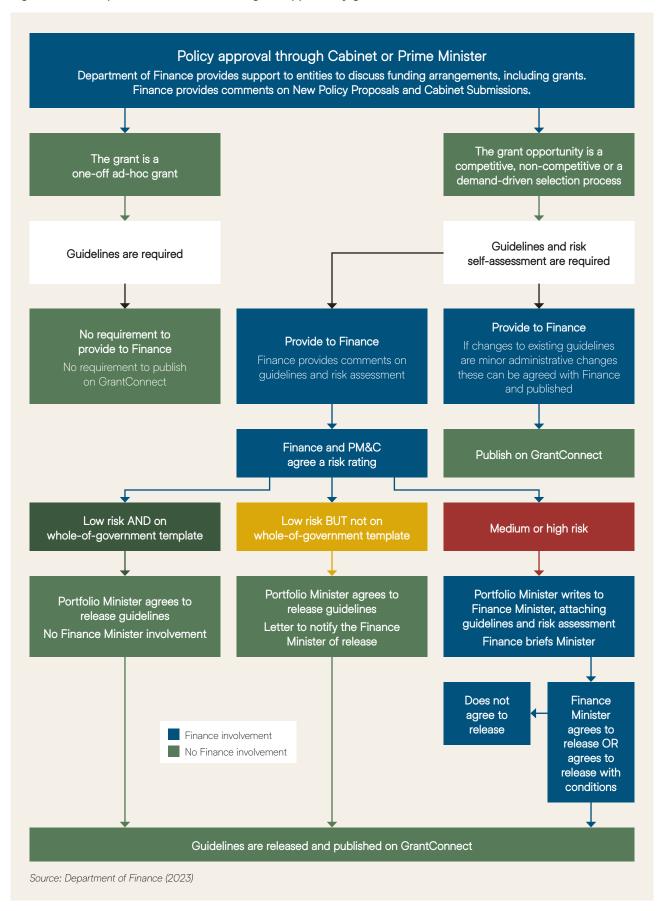
Grants are a vital tool for government to achieve its policy objectives and deliver positive outcomes for the Australian public. Working in partnership with individuals and organisations, these grants fund a wide range of initiatives across various sectors.

The Department of Finance is responsible for maintaining the policy frameworks that support the governance of grants (Figure 19). The approach to Commonwealth grants administration requires that individual entities must meet the requirements of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs). This legislative instrument provides a principles-based framework, outlining the key requirements and best practices for effective grants administration. The CGRGs apply to all non-corporate Commonwealth entities subject to the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act), thus ensuring consistency and accountability in the allocation and management of public funds.

For each grant opportunity, the grant provider develops specific grant opportunity guidelines, which serve as a comprehensive resource for potential grantees, providing information on the purpose of the grant, application procedures, assessment criteria, and anticipated timelines. In an effort to streamline grants administration, the Department of Home Affairs has partnered with the Department of Social Services (DSS) Community Grants Hub, leveraging the expertise of the hub in designing, establishing, managing and executing grant programs, ensuring efficient and effective delivery of funding.

GrantConnect is the government's dedicated website that serves as a central hub for all information related to Commonwealth grants. Here, users can access details of current grant opportunities, awarded grants, and relevant resources.

Figure 19: Development of Commonwealth grant opportunity guidelines



Grants supporting multicultural Australia

Why not find an alternative funding approach that not only encourages but works with this organic strength which is evident across all cultures? Why not place trust at the core of funding opportunities in the multicultural space? In this regard Federal and State funding need to work more closely, and consult more regularly, with Local Governments to ensure funding on all levels has the ability to work side-by-side and deliver better outcomes that move with the needs of the community, are sustainable beyond the life of the grant and enable strength-based capacity building to genuinely flourish.¹⁵⁷

To facilitate their participation and inclusion, the Australian Government provides a range of grant programs that provide financial assistance to multicultural organisations. These grants play a vital role in strengthening social cohesion and fostering thriving communities.

Currently, the Department of Home Affairs administers three non-ongoing grant programs:

- Fostering Integration Grants (FIGs) program
- Local Multicultural Projects (LMP) program
- Community Language Schools Grant (CLSG) program.

Additionally, the department has partnered with the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) through a grant agreement.

During our consultations and through submissions four key issues about the existing grants framework came to light:

- Funding continuity: Grant recipients lack long-term funding security, creating uncertainty and hindering long-term planning. Unlike many social, health and emergency relief programs, multicultural affairs grants often lack sustained funding commitment.
- Limited evaluation: A lack of comprehensive evaluation for multicultural programs restricts evidence-based decisionmaking and understanding of the sector's impact.
- Insufficient data: While data exists on funding allocation and recipients, there is a dearth of information on project outcomes and impact (evaluative data). Additionally, inconsistent data definitions further complicate analysis.
- · Administrative costs: Grant administration, particularly for smaller grants, can be expensive, impacting economies of scale. Attendees at consultations note that despite administrative costs, smaller grants can provide crucial support for fledgling organisations, enhancing their capabilities, fostering belonging, establishing sectoral support and maintaining a line of communication with the CLO network — building trust in the Australian Government.

Participants in consultations and submissions suggest a multi-pronged approach to target these issues:

- · Long-term funding: Exploring mechanisms for sustained funding, such as multi-year funding cycles, could provide greater stability and predictability for community organisations.
- Enhanced evaluation: Implementing robust evaluation frameworks and standardised data-collection methods would provide valuable insights into program effectiveness and inform future strategies.
- Data standardisation: Establishing consistent data definitions and comprehensive reporting requirements would enable more accurate analysis and evaluation of program outcomes.
- Streamlining administration: Exploring innovative administrative models and partnerships could optimise grant management and reduce costs, particularly for smaller grants.

Here we note Recommendation 6.3 of the 2021 Senate inquiry into Issues Facing Diaspora Communities in Australia. The recommendation reads:

The committee recommends that government departments running grant processes ensure that they:

- · do not inadvertently disadvantage or exclude smaller and new and emerging community organisations
- · have sufficient flexibility to meet the specific needs of communities
- use clear language and make generic advice on common issues and questions available in languages other than English; and provide constructive feedback on unsuccessful applications submitted by community organisations.¹⁵⁸

Feedback from community organisations

The CLO network serves as a vital conduit for feedback and concerns from community organisations regarding the Commonwealth Grants Framework. There are several key issues that merit careful consideration and potential reforms.

- Streamlining application processes: Community organisations, often run by volunteers, find grant application processes unnecessarily complex, time-consuming and resource intensive. Simplifying application procedures, including improved online systems and clearer guidance, would reduce these burdens and encourage broader participation.
- Recognising and leveraging local expertise: Prevailing frameworks overlook the valuable skills and contributions of smaller organisations with deep roots in their communities. These organisations possess a wealth of experience and established connections that government agencies can use to achieve greater impact. Recognising and actively involving these smaller players will enhance the effectiveness and reach of grant programs.
- Addressing funding gaps: The reliance on short-term grant funding hinders organisations' ability to implement sustainable programs and build long-term capacity. Providing multi-year funding or alternative funding models would empower organisations to plan strategically and deliver lasting benefits for their communities.
- Fostering collaboration over competition: The competitive nature of the grants environment discourages collaboration between service providers. This fragmentation hinders the ability to comprehensively address community needs and limits long-term planning. Encouraging collaborative partnerships and funding models that support joint initiatives would facilitate a more holistic and sustainable approach to service delivery.
- Empowering smaller organisations: Micro-grant programs designed specifically for smaller organisations would provide needed support and encourage smaller organisations' participation in the grants process. Additionally, offering application materials in 'Easy English' would improve accessibility and empower organisations from diverse backgrounds to engage effectively.

These points underscore the need for co-design and co-production in the grants funding process.

The role of sustainable funding in building inclusive multicultural communities

While well-crafted policies provide a vital framework for fostering inclusive multicultural communities, their true impact hinges on the practical realisation of their ideals, particularly through sustainable funding models. Adequate and ongoing financial support serves as the bridge between policy aspirations and tangible community benefits, transforming ideas into impactful action.

When we try to impose a structure around a naturally occurring, human centred process it typically sucks the life out of it. Why not find an alternative funding approach that not only encourages but works with this organic strength which is evident across all cultures? Why not place trust at the core of funding opportunities in the multicultural space? In this regard Federal and State funding need to work more closely, and consult more regularly, with Local Governments to ensure funding on all levels has the ability to work side-by-side and deliver better outcomes that move with the needs of the community, are sustainable beyond the life of the grant and enable strength-based capacity building to genuinely flourish.¹⁵⁹

Sustainable funding is more than just an add-on to policy development; it is the lifeblood of effective implementation. Without it, even the most visionary initiatives risk falling short, lacking the resources to deliver lasting results. Sustainable funding ensures that programs aimed at fostering belonging and diversity can be launched successfully and sustained over time, generating long-term positive impacts on the communities they serve.

Community programs often serve as the front line in fostering inclusivity and belonging within multicultural settings. These programs require not simply an initial injection of funds, but ongoing financial support to adapt, evolve and continue their crucial work. Adequate resourcing ensures these programs are more than symbolic gestures; they become effective tools for community engagement and development. The resourcing component should be supplemented with innovative frameworks that place grassroots community organisations at their centre.

A submission from Western Australia presents a model where community consultation is a key component of grant program design. Through consultations, the local government developed a common framework and standardised practices for providing information on grants (now rolled out to most council services) to multicultural communities.¹⁶⁰ The framework involves inviting communities to develop and share successful models, fostering collaboration between communities.

Working for Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre was satisfying and made a difference to the lives of new arrivals and existing migrants in that I would call seniors and speak to them in their home language if they preferred giving them information on services available to them through My Aged Care and the Commonwealth Support Programs. But this useful service was stopped after a year due to insufficient funding.¹⁶¹

Sustainable funding plays a pivotal role in harmonising policy development with community initiatives, including volunteer efforts and essential resources like libraries. By providing necessary financial support to community organisations and volunteers, policies can be effectively synchronised with ground-level actions. This creates a synergistic impact that greatly enhances the responsiveness and effectiveness of multicultural community initiatives, ultimately promoting a stronger sense of belonging.

 A comprehensive approach to funding not only supports the practical implementation of policies but also ensures that essential community resources remain robust, accessible and well equipped to address the diverse needs of modern multicultural Australia.

Acknowledging the role of volunteers in building stronger communities

Volunteers are the backbone of our communities, dedicating their time, skills and passion to address a multitude of needs. However, the reliance on their goodwill often masks the underlying challenges faced by volunteer organisations and service providers.

While the term 'volunteering' evokes notions of a generous society, the reality is often more complex. Many community organisations and service providers, particularly those serving diverse communities, face chronic underfunding and lack of resources. This forces them to rely heavily on the unpaid labour of volunteers, creating unsustainable situations and potentially leading to burnout.

The reliance on goodwill becomes particularly evident during major disasters, where communities often depend on spontaneous volunteer efforts for food relief and other forms of support. While this spirit of solidarity is commendable, it highlights the need for more structured and sustainable systems of support. Clear guidelines and established protocols for delivering services during crises are crucial to ensure effective and equitable assistance.

Traditional volunteerism often thrives on the dedication of individuals, many of whom work on weekends due to their wider commitments. Younger generations, though, may not see the same value in volunteerism, requiring a shift in perception and approach. Highlighting the diverse skills and expertise volunteers bring to the table, their ability to amplify the voices of marginalised groups, and their role in integrating newcomers into the wider community can be compelling ways to attract and engage a new generation of volunteers.

The government plays a vital role in recognising and supporting the invaluable contributions of volunteers. This goes beyond mere platitudes and requires tangible actions such as:

- · providing adequate funding and resources to community organisations and service providers, reducing their reliance on volunteer labour
- · developing programs that promote volunteerism and highlight its benefits to individuals, communities and society as a whole
- creating opportunities for volunteers to use their professional skills and contribute to decision-making processes
- investing in research and evaluation to better understand the impact of volunteers and develop effective strategies for supporting their engagement.

7.1.8. Recommendation 26

Recommendation 26: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of multicultural grants and funding programs, with consultation and co-design of guidelines and common standards across the Australian Government, state and territory and local governments and community sectors

As the distribution and accessibility of grants funding was one of the main issues in the Review's findings, we recommend that in parallel to interim grants activity, if practicable, or as activity for the 2025-26 financial year, the minister responsible for multicultural affairs, along with the Minister for Finance and respective departments, oversees a reshape of multicultural grants and funding to improve existing grant programs administered by the Department of Home Affairs and other related grants. This should include analysis of funding models and a proposed new funding model, to be co-designed through consultation with state and territory and local governments and community stakeholders.

The Panel's view is that other multicultural grants should remain with the other relevant departments to ensure whole-of-government commitment to service delivery to the community.

We propose that the wider design of common standards and guidelines across Australian Government departments that administer grants with multicultural-related components be produced as a priority. The Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs should also commission an update of the guidelines for good practice and funding across state and territory governments and identify complementary areas, to avoid duplication, and agree on national benchmarks.

To maximise the efficacy of grants provided to multicultural communities, we propose that improvements to reshape grants and funding arrangements be immediately implemented, focusing on the existing grants process, including the role of multiple agencies such as Community GrantsHub, GrantConnect, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Social Services. The improvements should integrate lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and insights gained from the Review's consultations and submissions. We recommend the following measures be included in the reshape and be used to form the design of common standards and guidelines:

- · extend the duration of the grant program period to foster certainty and sustainability, enabling organisations to implement long-term initiatives and achieve lasting outcomes
- · provide capacity-building opportunities and reserve a dedicated allocation for smaller organisations within the grant application process, to ensure equitable access to funding and empower emerging community associations. The inclusion of micro-grants programs would further support these organisations
- simplify grant application systems and processes to enhance accessibility and encourage broader participation, particularly among smaller associations. This could be achieved by adopting a user-friendly interface, employing clear language, and offering translations of documents in languages other than English. Additionally, providing constructive feedback on unsuccessful applications would guide community organisations in refining their proposals for future funding opportunities
- formally recognise the financial value of volunteer contributions to acknowledge the role of volunteers in community initiatives
- incorporate a diverse range of stakeholders, including grassroots-level organisations, youth services, and peak bodies, into the review and evaluation processes to ensure the co-design of grant programs, fostering flexibility and embedding impact assessment frameworks
- · improve data availability on grant activity to provide a comprehensive understanding of the utilisation and impact of funding. While grant input data exists — indicating who received funding, how much and for how long — there is a paucity of output data detailing the specific activities undertaken and the outcomes. Such evaluative data is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of grant programs and informing future iterations
- · embrace co-design and co-creation methodologies to enable the government to leverage the expertise and knowledge of community organisations, tapping into their established connections to community members. This collaborative approach would foster sectoral support in new areas and lead to more impactful and responsive grant programs.

Bridging the digital divide for a connected Australia

The rapid digitalisation of Australia's service landscape has undoubtedly improved efficiency and accessibility for many, but it has simultaneously created a significant digital divide, particularly impacting multicultural communities with limited English proficiency, access to technology and understanding of digital platforms.

The digital divide is not a singular issue but rather a complex web of interconnected factors. Low digital literacy, lack of access to devices and the internet, and language barriers all contribute to increased vulnerability to online harm, including misinformation, scams and online harassment. For newly arrived migrants and refugees, the reliance on their children for digital assistance further complicates matters, hindering their ability to monitor their children's online activity and protect them from potential risks. 162 This is cultural digital exclusion.

In their submission, South East Community Links (SECL) refers to The Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 163 which reveals a persistent digital divide for multicultural communities. They point to how this disparity is amplified by affordability concerns, limited employment opportunities and the fast-paced shift towards digital-only services. The transition to MyGov for gap payments, SECL highlights, has left many individuals unable to access essential financial assistance due to low digital literacy. They also point to the lack of an immediate interpreter option in the Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) system of Services Australia as another critical point of conclusion.

This digital divide is a reality for the community that we serve at SECL. With the online shift to digital-only services, we see many people fall through the cracks and face exclusion and disadvantage.¹⁶⁴

As Australia increasingly relies on digital technologies across all sectors, ensuring equity in service access for newly arrived migrants and refugees must be a top priority.

The rapid scaling-up of digital services during the pandemic disproportionately impacted multicultural communities. Often, these efforts failed to consider the unique challenges faced by these communities, exacerbating existing inequalities. The move to digital-only services, often justified as 'value for the taxpayer', exposes two crucial issues:

- leadership within the APS often lacks awareness of the specific challenges faced by multicultural communities in accessing digital services. This is not surprising considering the predominantly Anglo-Celtic or European background of most APS leadership
- this approach implicitly 'others' and dismisses migrants and multicultural communities as individuals who are not engaged with Australian Government taxation and services systems.

New technologies can be a double-edged sword for vulnerable members of society, especially when accessing essential health, education and social services. The WA Department of Health's experience with telehealth exemplifies this challenge: while increasingly popular, telehealth has proven inaccessible for many individuals from humanitarian backgrounds and senior members of multicultural communities, due to limited digital literacy and language barriers.¹⁶⁵

7.1.9. Recommendation 27

Recommendation 27: The Digital Transformation Agency's Data and Digital Government Strategy to help bridge the digital divide by prioritising equity and inclusion through integrating culturally responsive digital infrastructure

The Digital Transformation Agency's upcoming Data and Digital Government Strategy must prioritise equity and inclusion by integrating culturally responsive digital infrastructure. This infrastructure should blend accessible technology, robust language support features and culturally sensitive digital architecture. Drawing on the expertise and experience of multicultural communities to co-design and co-produce these platforms would augment their relevance and effectiveness. As the Digital and Data Government Strategy announced in December 2023 proceeds, the application of this strategy and future such strategies should incorporate the voices of multicultural Australia.

Enabling and measuring success: research, evaluation and reporting



Understanding our diverse communities

The Australian Government's capacity to understand the diverse communities it seeks to serve needs to improve if it is to achieve a genuinely fair go for all Australians. This is fundamental to addressing all the themes, issues and concerns presented to the Panel. Without adequate data and research the government cannot be assured that its services and programs are meeting the needs of Australia's diverse communities.

The government can and should do more to support data collection, research and analysis to inform government policies and programs designed to improve outcomes for individuals and communities.

The 2013 parliamentary Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism, by the Joint Committee on Migration, noted that since the 1996 demise of the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (BIMPR), academic institutions have been the main source of research.166 The 2013 inquiry received several submissions which remain pertinent, as do its Recommendations 14, 15 and 16, summarised below:

- · the need for accurate, up-to-date disaggregated data to identify trends, and measure and address disadvantages among culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- the establishment of a government-funded, independent collaborative institute similar to BIMPR, which should engage with local communities, private, business and non-government organisations and provide data for better informed policy
- research on 'secondary migration' (that is when migrants, particularly humanitarian entrants, move from their initial place of settlement) to better align service delivery and community needs.

The failure of the government to adequately implement these recommendations in its belated response in 2017 has not gone unnoticed. The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria makes clear in its submission to this Panel:

A decade later, there been no progress on this front. It is time for the Federal Government to acknowledge the importance of evidence-based policy by creating a new body to commission and/or undertake research to support multicultural policy development.¹⁶⁷

In the absence of concerted government involvement, philanthropically funded independent organisations emerged, such as the Scanlon Foundation, and universities have also set up important centres of research. Some of the larger government-funded service providers have also filled the research gap, working in partnerships with academic institutions.

Peak representative bodies, such as FECCA, have continued to ask the relevant questions, listen to communities' responses, and feed suggestions to government for action. Significantly, though, FECCA describes the current state of research into issues shaping multicultural Australia as 'ad hoc and uncoordinated, and leaving gaps in our evidence and understanding'.168

The need to remember

The Panel commissioned Emeritus Professor Andrew Jakubowicz to provide suggestions on how to improve the current state of research capability into multicultural Australia. Professor Jakubowicz's report, Research Strategies for Multicultural Australia, is at Appendix D.

Professor Jakubowicz begins by noting the importance of institutional memory, which reminds us what 'past research was designed to explore, how the research was developed and undertaken (methodology), the outcomes of the research, and to what extent the results were fed into policy decisions and with what effects.' Recalling these questions about the research undertaken in the past can provide some insurance against new policies or ideologies that might 'sweep clear the comprehension that had existed and guided earlier steps'.

This function of memory also allows us to see more clearly the considerations and assumptions behind the questions government seeks to address. In consultations, many have raised with the Panel a recent example: namely, the focus, while important, on social cohesion in the face of violent extremism and foreign interference, which has displaced other government-supported research.

Beyond institutional memory, Professor Jakubowicz discusses how 'cultural memory' is vital for the community at large, as it

gives a sense of continuity to struggles for human rights, illuminates single events as parts of sequences of political, institutional and social interactions, and helps spread shared understandings of challenges and innovations across society. A nation is defined both by what it chooses to remember, and what it accepts to forget. Research is a healthy antidote to amnesia with its dangerous consequences.

Research: past and present

Professor Jakubowicz acknowledges the important work of eminent researchers who in decades past were not only astute observers of multicultural Australia but actively engaged in the development of multiculturalism as a policy. He also outlines the trajectories of several different approaches to establishing a government research capacity; without bipartisan support, though, either from within the bureaucracy or among researchers themselves, the various approaches could not be sustained.

To gauge the views of the research community today, Professor Jakubowicz sent a survey to over 100 researchers in at least 20 disciplines and received 60 responses; 90% of respondents agreed that 'multicultural perspectives are very important in understanding key issues in my field of research in Australia, and a third felt that 'governments rarely use the research they commission in the multicultural field.'

Respondents described what they saw as the most pressing research issue for multicultural Australia, with a significant minority identifying racism and anti-racism as the most important. Other issues identified included:

- the uniqueness of the Australian experience and situation
- the role of religion as a facilitator or barrier to integration
- the detailed experiences of settlement, the importance of interculturalism as a modifier of the pluralism of multiculturalism
- the challenges of 'superdiversity' (diversity within already diverse groups)
- · making access and equity work more effectively
- · the critical need to improve capacity in health care
- · exploring arts and cultural access and engagement.

In addition to the views of individual researchers, Professor Jakubowicz briefly discusses three key research organisations doing important work today: the Scanlon Foundation and two university centres, the Western Sydney University Challenging Racism Project and the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation.

The Panel notes that the Australian Government partners with the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute to produce the Australia Cohesion Index, as a part of the Foundation's annual Mapping Social Cohesion report. The new Index strengthens the evidence base for social cohesion in Australia and informs government policy and program development and implementation. The foundation is integrating survey data with demographic, population and geographic data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to publish the biennial Index.¹⁶⁹ The Panel endorses this partnership approach.

Both the Challenging Racism Project and the Alfred Deakin Institute (ADI) made submissions to the Panel. Both emphasised the vital need to enhance the research capacity to better understand issues facing contemporary multicultural Australia.

With its focus on inequality, discrimination and racism, the Challenging Racism Project calls for a 'national-level anti-racism and multicultural research agenda' that would include a 'data management plan with a monitoring framework' and would 'feed into national, state and local anti-racism policy and practice'. While acknowledging the important longstanding work of the Scanlon Foundation, the Panel also recognises gaps exist in tracking discrimination and racism, and agrees that the recommendation from the Challenging Racism Project would help to address this.¹⁷⁰

The ADI pointed out the need for empirical evidence for designing policies to ensure the 'successful implementation of migration programs while sustaining social cohesion, noting that the migration system is intimately connected to the settlement and integration of newly arrived migrants. The Panel concurs with this, especially as Australia's migration program continues to help Australia address skills and labour shortages, and 'fuels Australia's knowledge economy and drives innovation and entrepreneurship'. 171

ADI spoke at a consultation session with the Panel about a centralised research body on multiculturalism to ensure effective policy development. ADI also discussed their bid to the Australian Research Council for the establishment of a Centre of Multicultural Excellence and that this centre could have the capacity to conduct comprehensive research, provide expert advice, and facilitate knowledge exchange, ultimately leading to improved government outcomes for all Australians, regardless of their cultural background.



Photo: MFR consultation in Darwin, Northern Territory — August 2023.

Multicultural database no longer maintained

Owing to budgetary constraints, the Department of Home Affairs no longer updates the Multicultural Australia and Immigration Studies (MAIS) database, and departmental staff access to the database has been paused.

Established in 1988, MAIS is a unique record of historical, news and academic research on immigration and multicultural topics. Since 1998 MAIS has been a part of the Informit suite of databases in partnership with RMIT University.

MAIS contains articles and books dating from the 1800s onwards, covering the development of the White Australia Policy and the formation of modern Australia. It indexed publications from the inception of the Department of Immigration in 1945, the former Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the former Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, as well as those by relevant government, non-government and research organisations throughout Australia.

MAIS is used extensively by researchers of migration and multicultural topics in Commonwealth departments, the Parliamentary Library, universities and other educational institutions. This promotes collaborative relationships between Home Affairs, academia and the broader research community. MAIS has provided researchers, policy officers and decision-makers with a quality source of information, curated by professional apolitical government librarians, on citizenship, immigration and multicultural issues, saving researcher time. From January to December 2020 (the most recent data available) almost 300,000 searches were conducted across the MAIS database via Informit.

Start by listening

Community members have called on the government to better understand what is happening in their communities. This starts by listening, as emphasised by, for example, participants at a forum organised by the Australia Day Council of South Australia to discuss this Multicultural Framework review made clear.¹⁷²

In preparing its submission, the service provider Queensland Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT) worked with the Social Research Group, providing an example of how service providers are working collaboratively with research organisations. The submission succinctly describes the principle of data and research in the design of culturally inclusive human services, particularly for humanitarian entrants, though the principle applies more broadly:

Collect information that matters; listen to voice of experience.¹⁷³

FECCA notes that

Australia must meaningfully recognise and integrate lived experiences and expertise within the evidence base to ensure a comprehensive and holistic understanding of Australian multiculturalism.¹⁷⁴

Listening is important not only to understand needs but also to evaluate services and program delivery. QPASTT emphasises that service evaluations prioritise obtaining lived experience feedback in collaboration with peer researchers.

Other submissions also reiterated the fundamental need for governments to listen to people's experience and expertise.¹⁷⁵

Collecting the right data

Listening is essential, and individual and community perspectives must be heard. Data serves to bolster what people's stories convey. It is, as FECCA states, critical for developing and implementing effective policies, programs and practices, and it strengthens evidence-based decision-making that benefits all Australians, regardless of their backgrounds.¹⁷⁶

FECCA submits that, currently, the variables such as country of birth and language spoken at home that the ABS collects can lead to false assumptions and the inadequate allocation of resources.

The Panel notes that ABS consultation on the 2026 Census is still in train.

As is well understood, the power of data is enhanced when different datasets are combined. Professor Jakubowicz refers to the critical role of the ABS in the provision of data linkage services through the 'Personal-level integrated data asset' (formerly known as the Multi Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP)). The ABS Life Course Data Asset, initiated in July 2023, seeks to support what the Australian Statistician has called 'evidence-based policy making at the community level',¹⁷⁷ including data on culture, migration and other demographics.

As FECCA suggests, all

multicultural data should have cross sector, nationally consistent data definitions and be situated within a robust data ecosystem covering data collection, storage, analysis, and dissemination and include concepts of data sovereignty to ensure people have ownership and control over the data that could identify them and a say in how it is used and presented.¹⁷⁸

In addition to this list of data principles, data also needs to be FAIR: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.¹⁷⁹

With particular reference to humanitarian and refugee entrants, QPASTT refers to two important and valuable Australian Government—funded projects focusing on humanitarian entrants: the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare collation of data from several sources on the health outcomes for refugee humanitarian entrants, to provide a better picture of the overall health and wellbeing of individuals in this population; and the Building a New Life in Australia longitudinal study of 2,399 humanitarian entrants from 2013 to 2018, which has now entered a second stage, resuming in 2022. QPASTT recommends that

initiatives to compile data on humanitarian migrants are coordinated across systems in order to understand needs, levels of access and outcomes from mainstream services. This requires a whole-of-government approach to data collection.¹⁸⁰

In collecting data, Professor Jakubowicz notes that the use of 'CALD' as a term obscures a range of issues. It fails to identify targets of racism; capture ethnicity, which is relevant for health purposes in particular; account for different levels of literacy in English and other languages; or adequately cover the Australian population as a whole.

The Panel notes Professor Jakubowicz's recommendation that the ABS review its CALD data standard. The ABS has advised the Panel that it does not advocate for the use of the abbreviation 'CALD' or specifically define the term, despite its use in a range of contexts across government. The ABS is, though, currently reviewing the suite of indicators for cultural and language diversity and routinely reviews ABS-owned statistical standards to ensure fitness for purpose and maintain currency. The ABS also explained that it shares health-linked insights with an interdepartmental reference group on Australia's diverse communities.

Bringing it all together

While the raw materials to have a better understanding are available, the Australian Government over the last 25 years has not had a focused effort to draw these materials together. Calls to rebuild government-supported research capability, repeated over the years, have also come through the submissions to this Review. As FECCA, along with many others, states:

There have been previous calls to the Government to lead the development of a national multiculturalism research agenda and establish an independent and well-funded body to provide strategic and coordinated research in all areas of multiculturalism. Such measures would affirm the Government's commitment to the multiculturalism agenda and help to inform better policy and practice.¹⁸¹

Professor Jakubowicz makes several recommendations, supported by this Review, to progress implementation, including that a properly resourced trans-disciplinary audit be undertaken of Australia's multicultural research capacities, priorities and stakeholder needs (Recommendation 2).¹⁸² Along with bringing together researchers to discuss research agendas for multicultural Australia (Recommendations 3 and 4),183 data definition, collection and availability (Recommendation 6),184 and establishing a national multicultural research institute through an expression of interest process, using a hub-and-spoke model (Recommendation 5). 185 This aligns with input provided by academics during the Panel's Melbourne consultations, including attendees from Alfred Deakin Institute.

Other recommendations include the revival of 'cultural memory' through reinstating updates and public-servant access to the MAIS database and collaborating with the ABS and other government agencies and the Australian Social Science Data Archive and similar archives. In addition, the important work The People of Australia 2001 (ed. J. Jupp) should be updated and made accessible online (Recommendation 8).186

Professor Jakubowicz recommends revising data collection and to include the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council in this work. Data collection on intersectional and multicultural issues should be common, accessible and able to be shared securely (Recommendation 9).187

8.1.1. Recommendation 28

Recommendation 28: The Australian Government, and the newly established Multicultural Australia Commission, progress implementation of a multicultural research framework to support data and research

The Review recommends that the Government, and the newly established Multicultural Australia Commission, progress implementation of a multicultural research framework having regard to the recommendations contained in Appendix D.

Leadership and accountability



Leadership is about raising awareness, advocating for change, being a role model for inclusive and respectful behaviours, and at all times being conscious of the words that are used. Whether it is through writing, speeches, or other ways of communication, the way that messages are used to create a sense of harmony based on fact is a leadership responsibility. To lead with a sense of hope for the future, the leaders should use words to bring people together rather than cause division.

Ideally, everyone in Australia is responsible for an inclusive society; in our workplaces, social interactions, online or in person, everyone should take a human rights approach to inclusivity, fairness, respect and equality. However, aside from matters of safety and law, for example, not everyone is always accountable in these settings, except for leaders who are and should be accountable, either as a reportable or a performance-based requirement of their roles. A particularly critical role of leadership is to bring everyone on the journey to advancing Australia's multiculturalism, providing for a fair go, especially during times of crisis.

APS leadership capabilities

The APS Leadership Capability Framework makes clear the leadership capabilities considered critical for success in most senior roles in the APS, and has been developed to create and maintain a strong performance leadership culture, which is crucial to ensuring public confidence and trust in the SES. The framework states that leaders are to model, champion and advance institutional integrity. A capable senior leader is visionary, influential, collaborative, entrepreneurial, enabling and delivers results. They are courageous, self-aware, resilient, citizen-centric and lifelong learners. 188

These are all important capabilities to have and, combined, should equate to inclusive, accountable leadership capability. Adding cultural intelligence to this framework would ensure leaders have the capability needed to lead competently at a senior level.

Along with the APS Leadership Capability Framework, the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours, stipulates that secretaries (agency or departmental heads) must be respectful and:

- Treat people with decency and respect
- Embrace diversity and actively seek out views and perspectives that challenge your own
- Build an inclusive culture that enables people to make their best contribution. 189

Regarding the leadership requirement to 'build an inclusive culture that enables people to make their best contribution', it is unclear how this performance is measured or the extent of accountability applied. Agency census results are one indicator of achieving — or not achieving — inclusive culture in the workplace, yet low results have not resulted in reportable actions to improve culture at the agency level. Until recently, there was not even a mandatory requirement to report agency employee census results to the public.

Reporting more openly on inclusive cultural performance measures will increase the accountability of departments. So will strengthening the APS Commissioner's direction for agency heads as the accountable authority for diversity and inclusion.

In Chapter 5 the Panel outlined responsibilities for government in order to support and advance the shared benefits of multiculturalism in Australia. Led by a Commissioner as agency head, it is proposed the leadership and accountability model entail:

- · holding federal departments to account for diversity and inclusion strategies and action plans
- the setting of key performance indicators for departments to report against annually to the Commission and then be tabled to Parliament by the Commission
- · annual consultations with state and territory governments for contribution to the annual reporting and to enable states and territories to link community and local government feedback/input for the annual report
- fiscal accountability through the development of Multicultural budget statements
- · ensuring consistency and coherence of the implementation of Australia's Multicultural Framework and Action Plans (MAPs) across all government portfolios through coordination across the design and implementation of policies, programs, laws and regulations
- · holding government departments to account for diversity and inclusion or MAP action plans
- the national role to champion and keep connected across federal, state and territory, local governments and grassroots community, with a strong focus on collaboration, co-design, co-production and shared responsibility.

Other measures for accountability and success include:

- · APSC Commissioner accountability for a partnership with the Multicultural Australia Commissioner to ensure the APSC's overarching APS workforce responsibility and responsibility for lifting APS capability is integral to APS multicultural policy and accountability measures
- use of Census results to support accountability it's a step forward that departments now publish employee engagement census results, but agency heads' performance should be managed against results and they should be held accountable for a decline in agency culture or reported increases in discrimination, racism or bullying, as examples.

The Multicultural Australia Commission, in collaboration with the APSC, should develop multicultural and cultural intelligence and competency role descriptors for leaders at all levels, to be used in performance development agreements and job advertisements.

The role of the APSC

The APSC has an important role to empower and enable government. The Australian Government must hold the APSC accountable to lift the performance of departments and agency heads on diversity and inclusion outcomes. The APSC should drive and monitor implementation of service-wide strategy and change in culture, supported by other centralised agencies like the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Funding and resourcing will be critical.

The APSC approach to delegated responsibility has not worked; the Panel is making recommendations to government to lift the multicultural capability across the board and enable the APS to be a best-practice example and model employer. As the APS recruitment mandate should set the standard and innovate and champion recruitment best practice, we recommend the following:

- · development of inclusive recruitment and selection practices that consider the diverse communication styles and cultural backgrounds of candidates. Recruitment practices applied to all external and internal recruitment activities
- · recruitment panels to have diverse representation and gender balance, along with unconscious-bias refresher training as appropriate

- appropriate flexibility around leave and public holidays to observe cultural days of significance as recommended in a number of submissions to this Review. The Panel notes, at time of writing that the current APS workplace bargaining process is finishing up and the Commonwealth has agreed to cultural or religious leave being a common condition across the APS: 'Your agency may approve up to 3 days paid cultural leave per year for essential religious or cultural obligations.' Staff will also be able to swap a public holiday for cultural or religious reasons on top of this cultural leave entitlement. We further recommend that the APS conducts research and looks to state and territory government examples to promote best practice in the workplace. The APS needs to be considerate, for example, when organising meetings, to be inclusive of employees' cultural and or faith practices. Access to multi-faith prayer rooms should also be provided in the workplace
- · cultural competency training should be well resourced, available for all employees, adapted to roles and responsibilities, and face-to-face where possible — not a tick-and-flick, once-a-year online activity
- · ongoing data collection and the publication of data by the APSC to ensure transparency and accountability. This should include which agencies have plans or strategies in place, mandating that these be made publicly available, and reports on the percentage of Executive Level 2 (EL2) and above leadership levels of staff from multicultural backgrounds. Service-wide employment targets for senior APS leadership should be implemented, drawing, as an example, on lessons from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's target for EL2 and above; without a target or a meaningful performance indicator, there will probably be no pressure on agencies to improve representation
- optimisation of the APS's increased openness to have people work remotely with a greater focus on recruiting employees from multicultural, metropolitan and remote communities outside of Canberra, and also the development of a range of entry pathways to the APS. A model that could be drawn on is ICT jobs, with the creation of APS ICT cadetships and apprenticeships, including partnering with universities in regional areas. Potentially this model could be used for other kinds of roles, such as policy, partnering with outer suburban universities that have a high proportion of students from multicultural backgrounds, who are often first in their family to attend higher education.

Building trust

Through consultation and submissions that the Panel received, we heard a strong, united voice from communities wanting to be a part of decision-making processes, to co-design with government and business, to share responsibility and in effect have a role in accountability as well.

When it comes to accountability, people told us they want to see action and be a part of the action; they want to co-create, co-design, co-produce with the relevant layers of government and community. The below 'trust-checklist' model provides a sustainable framework for building (or rebuilding) trust that should be applied between government and community, and form the basis for advisory terms of reference. We envisage that this checklist will be employed as part of all proceedings for the Multicultural Community Advisory Council.

The Trust Flows Project is a research project that provides practical suggestions on how trust relationships between government and the public can be improved. The project proposes a check 'trust checklist' that can be used to identify important elements for building trust (see Table 4). Key to the principles is sharing responsibility; the Project guidelines were shared with the Panel through the Review and informed that this may mean reaching beyond established institutions and leaders and existing programs. Governments need to engage with a broad range of stakeholders to identify common interests and benefits that might be achieved by working together. Part of this is genuine partnership with Indigenous stakeholders and practices as well as with culturally and linguistically diverse stakeholders, women and men and non-binary stakeholders as well as youth, elderly and socially vulnerable members of community; that all are engaged is important as part of ensuring true shared responsibility.

No one sector, community, institution, or organisation can solve these issues alone, nor can one age cohort. Allowing communities to have agency is key to successfully finding solutions to many of the challenges we face. This is at the heart of co-creation.

Table 4: One example of processes and behaviours to build trust — Trust Flows Project 'Checklist model' 190

Processes	Behaviours that build or reduce trust	Are these behaviours built into engagements with communities?
Relationship building	 Trust is often personal as well as institutional. One thing that makes it difficult to build trust is when government officials are frequently changing over the course of a program. Too often government agencies assume that communities have the time and resources to be fully involved in community-led efforts. Government agencies need to respect that community members have business, employment and family commitments. 	 Are relationship-building activities well resourced? Is time allocated to building and maintaining relationships? Are financial and other resources available; for instance, to travel to communities and engage in partnership-building activities?
Building familiarity / awareness	 Frequent turnover of government officials reduces opportunities to build trust. Communities often want to engage with someone local, who will not be going back to Canberra, Melbourne or Sydney after a few days. Communities can be internally diverse and not all members or segments may be represented by a nominated set of community leaders. 	 How well do you know your partners in the community? Are you aware of community events, important days, customs and traditions? How inclusive are your relationships regarding different voices and representatives within a given community? How consistent are you in engaging with intra-community diversity? How well do your partners in the community know government processes, terminology and so on?
Cultural awareness and competence	 Lack of understanding of cultural overlay Valuing community experience Being open about the cultural features and expectations of your own professional context 	 How aware are you of the cultural differences between your culture and those within the community you are engaging with? What are the cultural needs, traditions and practices, and how might they affect the partnership? Do you communicate the cultural characteristics of your own professional context?
Communication	 Failing to communicate with communities between 'crises' Expecting communities to speak the language of government and understand government processes 	 What strategies are in place to communicate with communities? Is communication open, transparent and respectful? Is the terminology accessible to non-specialists?

Processes	Behaviours that build or reduce trust	Are these behaviours built into engagements with communities?
Collaboration	Talking about 'community-led' but actually not letting the community lead Taking time to co-design with communities, not just consult	 Collaborations take place between equal partners; are your relationships with communities collaborative? How could collaborative structures be built or improved? Do you know techniques for co-designing programs?
Reciprocity	Officials assuming and not listening Fostering joint responsibility instead of assuming that government will always take the lead	 Reciprocity refers to a process of 'give and take', in which benefits and privileges are shared and returned between parties; what does reciprocity mean in the context of your work? How can reciprocity be improved?
Reliability	 Officials not following through on promises made Community members speaking to media about issues not raised with officials 	 Reliability might mean the willingness to follow through on promises, including in communications with community How would you define reliability in the context of your work?
Transparency and openness	 Governments need to keep communities informed. Explain how decisions are made and by whom. Officials being willing to hear what communities are thinking and feeling 	What kinds of information do you think your partners in the community need? What information should not be shared? Why?
Vulnerability	 Government officials are sometimes scared of communities and do not want to meet and listen. Valuing community experience Government agencies having a 'fortress mentality' Government experts talking at communities 	 Vulnerability could mean transparency about weaknesses or about past failures, and being vulnerable means sharing information that might not make the person revealing it look good; is there room for vulnerability in your relationship with communities? What could be the benefits / pitfalls of being vulnerable?
Accountability	 Lack of trust that community can manage money More interested in announcing program, spending money and compliance rather than measuring impact Helping communities understand important of good governance 	This relates to the willingness to deliver on promises and stick to agreements: what does accountability mean in the context of your work with communities?

Processes	Behaviours that build or reduce trust	Are these behaviours built into engagements with communities?
Responsibility	Communities needs to feel ownership of their own destiny (and understand that with responsibility comes accountability)	Empowering communities means government agencies giving up some power and being clear about the boundaries between government and community responsibilities.
Respect	Both sides open and welcoming Junior officials assigned to meet with senior community leaders	Respectful engagements are an important element in trust relationships; what are ways of showing respect in a relationship?
Confidentiality	Being able to have open and confidential conversations builds trust.	Confidentiality means not revealing sensitive or controversial information, including in the case of disagreement; how could confidentiality be fostered in your relationships with communities?

9.1.1. Recommendation 29

Recommendation 29: The Australian Public Service Commission to take a lead role in lifting multicultural capability across the APS, positioning it as a model employer on recruitment, workforce representation and practice

The APSC to take an active lead role in lifting multicultural capability across the APS and position the APS to be a best-practice example and model employer on recruitment, workforce representation and practice, and cultural competency, supported by service-wide employment targets for senior APS leadership drawing on lessons from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's target for EL2 and above.

Implementation



This Report reflects the culmination of extensive consultation and deliberation by the Panel, drawing on the insights and experiences gained through the Review. It encapsulates actionable recommendations to implement a robust multicultural framework for Australia, based on a roadmap (Figure 20) and pragmatic steps to turn vision into reality, and to bring about much-needed change for a stronger, better and more inclusive Australia.

We urge the Australian Government to prioritise implementation of these recommendations and to ensure shared ownership and commitment across government. Our assessment is that significant uplift of capability and commitment is needed to ensure consistent whole-of-government commitment and understanding of these issues. To this end, we recommend that as part of the government's response to this Report, the Prime Minister write to each Minister allocating responsibility as recommended in this report and emphasising the need for action to be prioritised to deliver on an agenda for a successful and prosperous multicultural nation.

Figure 20: Proposed roadmap for Australia's Multicultural Framework



Summary list of all report recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Australian Government to affirm commitment to multicultural Australia
- Recommendation 2: Australia to formally observe the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March
- Recommendation 3: The Department of Home Affairs, through government and non-government consultation, to action an immediate review of the Australian citizenship test procedures, including considering providing the test in languages other than English and in alternative and more accessible formats
- Recommendation 4: Develop a national plan to celebrate Australia's cultural diversity, to synchronise existing federal, state, territory and local government initiatives such as Harmony Week to acknowledge and celebrate Australia's cultural diversity
- Recommendation 5: Ensure a formalised and expanded role for SBS, ABC and CBAA
- Recommendation 6: Improve access to government funding for independent multicultural media
- Recommendation 7: Use more diverse sources for government advertising for multicultural campaigns
- Recommendation 8: Creative Australia to undertake a whole-of-government review of investment in community cultural programs
- Recommendation 9: Creative Australia to lead development of a pilot multi-year seed fund community-driven creative solutions to social challenges
- Recommendation 10: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts to establish a program for community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation
- Recommendation 11: Establish a Multicultural Affairs Commission and Commissioner, and standalone Department of Multicultural Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship, with a dedicated minister
- Recommendation 12: Leverage Australia's diversity of languages to support our economic prosperity through a revitalised language policy led by the Australian Government
- Recommendation 13: Ensure the sustainability and quality of language services (interpreting and translating)
- Recommendation 14: Establish a fully funded TIS National capacity within the existing business unit
- Recommendation 15: Boost National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) funding
- Recommendation 16: Leverage the potential and strength of Australia's multicultural youth
- Recommendation 17: Promote national diversity and inclusion standards in the Australian Public Service and for government-funded organisations and public institutions
- Recommendation 18: Cast a wider net to improve diversity of recruitment in the Australian Public Service
- Recommendation 19: The Department of Education and the Department of Home Affairs (through AMEP), in collaboration with state and territory governments, to increase investment for programs to support language acquisition courses at all learning levels, which is complementary to relevant curriculum cycles
- Recommendation 20: The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations revise the Australian Curriculum Literacy and Numeracy Continuum and L&N Vocational Education competencies to promote and advance cultural literacies. The Department of Education to adjust assessment instruments such as NAPLAN to reflect this priority
- Recommendation 21: The Multicultural Australia Commissioner, together with the Department of Home Affairs Citizenship and Settlement sections, in consultation with the NIAA and across government as appropriate, to improve understanding of First Nations history in Australia as the first peoples. Develop initiatives to deepen Australia-wide understanding, such as the history presented through citizenship processes, civic participation, pathways to permanent residency, education and for older generations
- Recommendation 22: The Department of Health and Aged Care to provide funds to maintain evidence-based resources in refugee health to support practitioners
- Recommendation 23: Establishment of a formalised partnership between NDIS and the Department of Home Affairs to support newly arrived refugees with disability

- Recommendation 24: Establish a dedicated Multicultural Aged Care Unit within the Department of Health and Aged Care to engage and collaborate with multicultural communities to develop a robust, dynamic approach to culturally sensitive aged care
- Recommendation 25: Empower LGBTIQ+ intersectionality within multicultural communities
- Recommendation 26: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of multicultural grants and funding programs, with consultation and co-design of guidelines and common standards across the Australian Government, state and territory and local governments and community sectors
- Recommendation 27: The Digital Transformation Agency's Data and Digital Government Strategy to help bridge the digital divide by prioritising equity and inclusion through integrating culturally responsive digital infrastructure
- Recommendation 28: The Review recommends that the Government, and the newly established Multicultural Australia Commission, progress implementation of a multicultural research framework having regard to the recommendations contained in Appendix D
- Recommendation 29: The Australian Public Service Commission to take a lead role in lifting multicultural capability across the APS, positioning it as a model employer on recruitment, workforce representation and practice



Photo: MFR consultation in Alice Springs, Northern Territory — November 2023.

Appendixes



Appendix A: Terms of reference

The terms of reference, below, provided comprehensive guidance on the Review and its parameters.

Overview

Australia's vibrant, modern multicultural society is a national strength. Multiculturalism is a central characteristic of a shared Australian identity, alongside Australia's First Nations traditions and its British institutions. Our national identity continues to grow from pre-settlement to today and into the future.

Migration is fundamental to the Australian story. It supports our economic success and drives the increasing diversity of our society. Successive waves of migration have shaped and influenced the development of a rich multicultural society.

Australia is a majority migrant nation and one of the most successful and cohesive multicultural societies in the world, building on over 60,000 years of First Nations culture. Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities are integral to our vibrant society.

- The 2021 Census highlights Australia's increasingly diverse make-up. More than half of Australian residents (51.5 per cent) were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented 3.2% of the population. Over 5.5 million Australians speak a language other than English at home.
- · Australians embrace the growing diversity of Australian society. The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute's 2022 Mapping Social Cohesion Report points to support for multiculturalism (88%) and a belief that immigrants are good for the economy (87%). Yet, it also highlights challenges that require attention if we are to facilitate genuine inclusion and maximise the benefits for all, such as the experience of discrimination based on people's skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion (16%).

The Review will help ensure a Government that works for multicultural Australia. The Australian Government plays a critical role in supporting our inclusive and cohesive multicultural society, and ensuring we continue to enjoy its social and economic benefits.

It is timely to consider the existing institutional, legislative and policy framework, noting:

- immigration will continue to drive increasing diversity across Australian society
- the role racism and discrimination plays as a key systemic barrier to our shared aspirations for an inclusive and equitable multicultural society
- the nation is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Framework Review represents an important opportunity to capture and reflect on the lessons learned from the pandemic about how government supports and works with diverse communities in crises
- the institutional settings that support Australia's multiculturalism haven't been reviewed in almost a generation
- the current Multicultural Access and Equity Policy was last updated in 2016.

The Review will be a first principles review of multiculturalism in Australia. It will provide clarity on the principles of multiculturalism, ensuring they are relevant, responsive and adaptable over time. It will apply a strengths based lens to consider institutional arrangements and legislative and policy settings at the Commonwealth level.

The Review will advise the Government on what institutional, legislative and policy settings can best build Australia's multiculturalism over the next decade. It will also identify how to better meet the needs of Australia's increasingly diverse society.

The Review will acknowledge the diversity of Australia's First Nations cultures, languages, lore and connection to lands and waters. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and groups will be invited to contribute to the consultation process to reflect on their experience of living in a multicultural Australia.

Terms of reference

The Review will assess and make recommendations on the institutional arrangements, legislative and policy settings required to advance a multicultural Australia and meet the current and future needs of multicultural Australia at the Commonwealth level.

The Review will consider the diverse range of experiences in multicultural Australia, including Australians of migrant family backgrounds, people born overseas themselves or who have at least one parent born overseas, refugees and humanitarian entrants, and permanent and temporary visa holders.

The Review will assess and make recommendations on matters that address barriers to inclusion as well as those that enhance the social, cultural and economic strengths provided by Australia's multicultural diversity. This will include the identification and application of benchmarks for measuring effectiveness where available.

The Review will also consider the gendered forms of prejudice and discrimination which may act as compounding barriers to social and economic inclusion.

The Review will be guided by three key principles:

- · advancing a multicultural Australia
- supporting our cohesive and inclusive multicultural society
- ensuring settings are fit for purpose in harnessing the talents of all Australians

and will consider:

- the effectiveness of existing federal:
 - legislative and regulatory frameworks and legal settings
 - relevant policy settings and programs
 - strategies to promote multiculturalism, social cohesion and inclusion
 - services designed to support multicultural Australia
- · how the above existing federal arrangements interact with state and local government settings, identifying potential areas of duplication and gaps, and opportunities for further inter-governmental collaboration
- roles and functions of government and non-government organisations respectively
- · identifying areas for reform to address any systemic barriers that prevent people from multicultural communities from fully participating in Australian society, including those barriers that exist due to racism and discrimination
- the effectiveness of current federal diversity, equity and inclusion strategies, including for the promotion of people from CALD backgrounds into leadership roles
- how the Federal Government can more strategically communicate and engage multicultural Australia, including in languages other than English
- · opportunities to define a modern shared Australian identity and strengthen public understanding of multiculturalism as a collective responsibility through education and public awareness raising.

Review Panel and Reference Group

The Government has appointed a panel of three eminent Australians to conduct the Review. This includes a member of the Australian Multicultural Council to lead the Review, The Panel will lead and co-author the Review. They will advise the Government on what settings can best build Australia's multiculturalism over the next decade. As well as identify how better to meet the needs of Australia's increasingly diverse society.

The Reference Group provides advice and support to the Review Panel. They include representation from peak bodies, the business and community service sectors, grass roots and civil society organisations.

Secretariat

The Department of Home Affairs will provide the Secretariat to the Review Panel.

Public consultation and submissions to the Review

The Review Panel will conduct comprehensive public consultations during the review period on the substance of the issues outlined within the terms of reference. The Panel may invite and publish submissions and seek information from any persons or bodies.

The Review will consult extensively across Australia with:

- · key community and other stakeholders reflecting a diversity of views and backgrounds
- experts
- Commonwealth and state and territory government agencies
- members of the public.

The Review will have regard to, and complement, the findings or proceedings of previous and ongoing reviews or inquiries applicable to this topic as well as relevant research, including approaches in relevant overseas jurisdictions. This will include, but is not limited to, relevant work being undertaken through:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Strategy
- the Government's National Cultural Policy, Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place
- the APS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy
- the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Inquiry into Issues facing diaspora communities in Australia
- the Legal and Constitutional affairs References Committee Inquiry into Nationhood, national identity and democracy
- the Government's A Migration System for Australia's Future review
- the Reforms to address temporary migrant worker exploitation package
- the Department of Home Affairs' review into settlement services
- the Rapid Review into the Exploitation of Australia's Visa System
- the Department of Home Affairs' review into democratic resilience.

The Review will not consider:

- operational level policy, procedure or program settings or implementation
- immigration or visa processes, applications, timeframes, outcomes or review
- immigration compliance or border protection policies or operational settings.

The Review Panel will provide a final report with recommendations to the Commonwealth Government. They will identify potential areas for reform, action and further exploration. The Review will be finalised in March 2024.

Appendix B: Panel biographies

Dr Bulent (Hass) Dellal AO — Chair



Dr Bulent (Hass) Dellal AO is the Executive Director of the Australian Multicultural Foundation and a former Chair of SBS.

Dr Dellal has considerable experience in multicultural affairs and currently sits on several boards. In May 2020 he was appointed as Adjunct Professor, Alfred Deakin Institute, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University. His service to multicultural organisations, the arts and the community was recognised through an Order of Australia Medal in 1997. In the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours, Dr Dellal was appointed an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in recognition of distinguished service to the multicultural community through leadership and advisory roles, to the advancement of inclusiveness and social harmony to youth and broadcast media.

Dr Dellal has been a member of each Australian Multicultural Council or its equivalent since December 2008. (Australian Multicultural Advisory Council: 2008 (two terms); Australian Multicultural Council: 2011—14; 2014—17; 2018—2021, Deputy Chair; 2022—24, Chair.)

Ms Nyadol Nyuon OAM



Ms Nyadol Nyuon OAM is a lawyer and human rights advocate. She is the Executive Director of the Sir Zelman Cowen Centre, Victoria University, which provides legal education, training and research, with a particular focus

on law and cultural diversity.

Ms Nyuon is highly regarded for her work involving human rights advocacy. She is a current board/advisory member of:

- Harmony Alliance (Chair)
- CareerSeekers
- · Chisholm Institute Board
- Rio Tinto Australian Advisory Group
- MCG Trust
- AFL Player Association Human Rights Steering Committee.

Ms Nyuon has experience serving as a Commercial and Public Interest Lawyer for Arnold Bloch Liebler, as well as a Senior Consultant the Community Crime Prevention Unit at the Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria, where she led engagement with African and South Sudanese Australian communities to inform the development and delivery of justice programs and services.

In 2022 Ms Nyuon was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in recognition of her service to human rights and refugee women.

Ms Christine Castley



Ms Christine Castley has served in multiple senior leadership roles across the Queensland Government, with significant experience in strategic policy, governance and service delivery.

Ms Castley is currently Chief Executive Officer at Multicultural Australia, after serving as Deputy Director-General in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Ms Castley is also a board member for the Institute for Social Science Research and the Residential Tenancies Authority in Queensland.

Reference Group

The Reference Group has provided advice and support to the Review Panel, and includes representation from peak bodies, the business and community service sectors, grassroots and civil society organisations. The reference group members are:

- Mr Mohammad Al-Khafaji
- Mr Osmond Chiu
- Ms Swati Dave
- Ms Rana Ebrahimi
- Mr Bachar Houli
- Mr John Kamara
- Ms Premila Levaci.

Appendix C: Glossary

Culturally and racially marginalised (CARM)

Diversity Arts Australia supports the 'potential of the term CARM', as it aligns with 'ongoing marginalisation' and 'systems of power and privilege', but also acknowledges importance of self-determined language.

The Diversity Council of Australia adopted this term in March 2023, following the release of its research report into CARM Women in leadership.¹⁹¹ The report found that more than half (56%) of women surveyed preferred the term. By focusing on marginalisation and systemic racism, CARM acknowledges the complex nature of intersectional identities and challenges the assumption of whiteness as the norm that the use of CALD continues to reinforce. CARM also captures additional cohorts including First Nations, who have unique and complex experiences of violence, discrimination, racism, and multigenerational trauma.

Culturally and racially diverse (CARD)

CARD presents a middle ground between 'CALD' and 'CARM'. CARD acknowledges the issue of race as a defining characteristic over language, addressing two key concerns with 'CALD' - that it includes white communities, and that it does not include second generation migrants who are not linguistically diverse. But by making 'diversity' rather than 'marginalisation' a final defining term, CARD identifies a broader cohort than CARM. It may be more easily accepted by current critics of CARM, who do not wish communities to be defined by marginalisation.

People of colour or Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour

Popular in the United States, POC was coined in the 1960s-70s as term of solidarity that uses 'person first' language as opposed to more racially charged terms like 'coloured people'. It is not currently commonly used in Australia.

Intersectionality, multigenerational, multilingual

Throughout the report we will also use words such as intersectional, multilingual, multigenerational and superdiversity.

- Intersectionality: the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. These can include social characteristics such as Aboriginality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, colour, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status, geographic location, medical record and/or criminal record
- Multigenerational: of or pertaining to several generations, as of a family or society
- Multilingual: persons or groups able to use three or more languages for communication, or something written or spoken in three or more languages
- Superdiversity: diversity within groups that are themselves diverse parts of a population.

Ancestry

Ancestry can refer to a person's descent, self-identified origin, nationality, group, or country in which their parents or ancestors were born. The Australian Bureau of statistics states that:

a person's ancestry, when used in conjunction with the person's and their parents' countries of birth provides a good indication of the ethnic background of first and second generation Australians. Ancestry is particularly useful to identify distinct ethnic or cultural groups within Australia such as Maoris or Australian South Sea Islanders, and groups which are spread across countries such as Kurds or Indians. Country of birth alone cannot identify these groups. This information is essential in developing policies which reflect the needs of our society and for the effective delivery of services to particular ethnic communities. 192

Ethnicity

The Macquarie Dictionary defines ethnicity as 'relating to or peculiar to a human population or group, especially one with a common ancestry, language'.

Appendix D: Commissioned paper — Research Strategies for Multicultural Australia

Research Strategies for Multicultural Australia

Submission to the Multicultural Framework Review 14 October 2023

Emeritus Professor Andrew Jakubowicz PhD FRSN FASSA A.Jakubowicz@uts.edu.au

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Preface

Why this submission

The Commonwealth released the draft terms of reference for the Multicultural Framework Review in March 2023. Research was not included in the Draft. In June 2023 the full Terms of Reference were released and again did not include Research. There was widespread disappointment that there was no Research reference (Jakubowicz, 2023). Following discussion with the Review chair, it was agreed that I would be engaged to prepare a submission on the Research area, with some commentary on Data.

The importance of corporate memory to the impact of research

Multicultural policy in Australia has a fifty-year history. An understanding of that history helps policy makers to set contemporary issues in a context, and deduce from previous events the likely consequences of different choices. Corporate memory (or amnesia) (APSREFORM, 2023) is crucial, especially when new policies and ideologies sweep clear the comprehension that had existed and guided earlier steps. In the case of research and research strategies, cultural memory encompasses the issues that the research was designed to explore, how the research was developed and undertaken (methodology), the outcomes of the research, and to what extent the results were fed into policy decisions and with what effects. Cultural memory in the wider community also serves important ends; it gives a sense of continuity to struggles for human rights, illuminates single events as parts of sequences of political, institutional and social interactions, and helps spread shared understandings of challenges and innovations across society. A nation is defined both by what it chooses to remember, and what it accepts to forget. Research is a healthy antidote to amnesia with its dangerous consequences.

Limitations and acknowledgements

This submission has been produced in a very short period. Thanks go to the Department of Home Affairs for materials sourced by them - documents, reports and research. However the time constraints mean that this submission does not canvass the range, extent and impact of the significant research program commissioned by DHA and other departments across its many areas related to multicultural policy — including settlement, combatting violent extremism (CVE), adult education, social cohesion, economic impacts, and refugee and humanitarian support. A full literature review was not possible, neither was an exploration of Commonwealth support for research through the various Australian Research Council schemes in recent. A more consultative approach with the broad research community had to be constrained to a short online survey with limited reach based on questions I thought important to answer. Some recommendations propose further research — helpful in casting forward possible ways to proceed if the Review accepts this submission, and the Panel report outcomes are adopted by the Government.

The ten recommendations in this submission are based on the evidence to hand and the options canvassed with a range of stakeholders. I am most grateful to those who took time to discuss these issues with me, the sixty respondents to the online survey of researchers, and the Academy of Social Sciences which facilitated some of these contacts.

Why add Research and Data to the Terms of Reference?

The pandemic and the foregrounding of data

With the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in February 2020 it soon became apparent that different populations were being impacted in different ways - vulnerability to infection and illness was closely related to age and locality, while locality also displayed socio-economic (class) and cultural (ethnicity) factors (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2022a) and these overlapped and reinforced both advantages and disadvantaged status. Two major public health interventions early on, foregrounded the ethnic dimension of social disadvantage and the consequential impact on wellbeing and morbidity. In Melbourne the "lock down" in the inner city public housing particularly affected residents of African origin (Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, 2021). In Sydney the lockdown in high-risk neighbourhoods particularly affected "multicultural" communities — especially from the Middle East, Indo-China and the Pacific. These perceived inequities revealed a number of features of public data — most importantly, that data that could have helped researchers identify and thus develop responses to the most vulnerable communities, were lacking (Jakubowicz, 2021). Despite the multicultural nature of Australia and the commitment by governments in 1999 to collect data on cultural and linguistic diversity in the policy areas (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 1999), this had not occurred. Indeed it was rejected by some jurisdictions throughout the first phases of the pandemic in transmission and early vaccination roll-out (Jakubowicz, 2022). One consequence of the realisation by the incoming government of such data failures was the decision to instigate a data framework review, due to commence at the time of writing.

Research has played a critical role in the development of public policy for multicultural Australia. Where systemic research has been implemented, then policies have tended to be robust, effective and nuanced. Where research has been truncated or fragmented, then policies have become far less effective and far more controversial and often harmful. Discussing the COVID pandemic Treasury Assistant Minister Andrew Leigh noted that the earlier lack of data had been superseded in relation to mortality, and that this was crucial to good policy (Leigh, 2022).

In recent years the research community has begun to persuade government of the need for a more capable research infrastructure, including the impact that "big data" can have on illuminating research issues and indicating policy directions. The Decadal Plan for Social Science Research Infrastructure under development by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, the passing of the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022, and similar large-scale initiatives indicate that issues relevant to multicultural Australia need to be placed in this policy planning process. We need to be aware of the dual interconnected pathways - research within the multicultural space, and multicultural priorities within the research space.

Research in the development of multicultural policy

Research can encompass many different forms of activity. Western Sydney University, drawing on government definitions, describes research as "the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings" (Western Sydney University, 2023). It involves systematic and creative work undertaken to increase knowledge by collecting, organising and analysing evidence, often thought of as data ("that which has been given") to be assessed through reason and calculation. Critically, research must advance a new understanding of a situation or behaviours under examination. Research aims to unsettle the taken-for-granted and produce arguments backed by data used as evidence, and with demonstrably rational analysis. One of the most apparent dimensions of multicultural policy has been its role in unsettling the takenfor-granted world of settler colonialism, while reshaping narratives of explanation. The conceptualisation of what contributes to a multicultural society has been part of that research. Independent researchers set their own terms for their research, while much research has been undertaken for government, either by external partners or built into the structures. A great deal of research also occurs within communities, identifying needs, collecting histories, and developing narratives of local lives.

Research supported by government in this context makes three important contributions. Within government, research provides evidence to help shape policy, evaluate implementation and refine rationales. For multicultural communities, research helps develop evidence to advocate for needs and build communal memory, both towards government and within the communities. Within the wider society, research provides evidence to help resolve matters of public interest and concern, and to open up deeper shared insights to underpin wide and rational debate, while building societal memory.

The concept of a multicultural Australia, first elucidated in a paper given by Immigration Minister Al Grassby in 1973 (Grassby, 1973), has a close relationship to social science research. Grassby's adviser Jim Houston (Houston, 2018) was briefed by among others, Melbourne researcher Des Storer (Storer, 1975), while scholars such as "Mick" Borrie (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019), Jerzy Zubrzycki, Jean Martin (Martin, 1976) and Charles Price provided advice in relation to theorizing cultural diversity, and understanding the realities of the emerging culturally pluralist Australia of the time. A full range of disciplines and approaches was involved — psychology and social psychology, sociology, demography, social anthropology, economics, political science, political philosophy, religious studies, legal studies, history, creative arts and literature studies and more, all contributed to building both the frameworks of understanding and the detailed examination of the processes and outcomes of societal growth and adaptation (National Archives, n.d.).

Interaction between research and practice has been amplified through research conferences and publications, advisory publication groups and partnerships with a variety of organisations. Over the first "generation" of multicultural Australia (from 1975 to about 1998/9), research structures went through a number of iterations, maintaining a trajectory of depth and growth. These began with research advisory groups to the major policy advisory committees (Zubrzrycki, 1977) and then extended with the advent of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) (Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs., 1986). The next national government engagement with research infrastructure occurred in the late 1980s, with the establishment in the Department of Immigration of the Bureau of Immigration (later Multicultural and Population) Research (BIMPR) (Bureau of Immigration Multicultural and Population Research, 1995), and the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of Prime Minister (Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1997).

The Australian Population, Multicultural and Immigration Program survived the end of the Bureau (1996). This Joint Commonwealth/ State advisory committee supported a number of projects, including an extension of the research for The People of Australia encyclopedia (Jupp, 2001) to the states and territories, surveys of regional migration schemes, and the impact of migration on state economies. However the Commonwealth pulled back and the focus shifted to the state partners. With the creation of the Department of Home Affairs the program was terminated in 2016.

The building and degradation of research structures and the outcomes

The decision to develop a research infrastructure carries with it organisational, staffing and resourcing questions, even before contests over the focus of the research have been resolved. Given that Australia has seen many different approaches, comprehension of their trajectories is invaluable in developing such structures in the future.

AIMA was created by the Fraser government acting on the guidelines sketched out in the Galbally report (Galbally, 1978). Its key promoter, PM Malcolm Fraser's political adviser Petro Georgiou, went on to become its first director. Its most important role was undertaking evaluation of the Galbally report implementation (Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 1982), though it did create new knowledge aimed to further identify barriers to participation and access to services for migrants of the time. Without bipartisan buy-in, it was politicised from the outset, seen by its supporters as a professional agency concerned with systematic failures to meet the needs of migrants, while also foregrounding innovation that was seen as effective. AIMA also had a membership which provided a framework for building a national constituency in support of its work and the multicultural project. However some critics saw it as conservative and biased towards government programs, rather than as an independent channel for "truths' about multicultural Australia (Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 1983). Much of this tension was displayed at the 1984 AIMA research conference, where for the first time critics were able to present their perspectives to researchers from around the country. AIMA was closed down in 1986.

The Hawke government created two institutions with research roles — the Prime Minister's Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) supported research tied to policy goals, using both commercial and academic research teams. The Bureau of Immigration (Multicultural and Population) Research sponsored research across the broad range of settlement and multicultural fields, some as general information (eg on Australia's religions), others more specifically focused for topic experts or stakeholders (eg employment). It also organised research symposia and conferences. With conflict over multicultural perspectives central to the 1996 election, the return of the LNP government under PM Howard was immediately followed by instructions to close down the Office and the Bureau, which followed soon after.

Writing during the ascendant years of the Bureau in 1994, the late Graeme Hugo notedrecent years have seen a veritable explosion of publication on immigration and settlement issues. Foremost here has been the active publication program of the BIPR itself, which alone now constitutes the most comprehensive collection of immigration and settlement of any nation in the world" (Hugo, 1994). Its closure was a major loss of coordinated energy in research and social knowledge.

There had been a number of research centres before OMA and BIMPR (eg the University of Wollongong Centre for Multicultural Studies established in 1977). Some of these continued to operate during the OMA/BIMPR period, with the Wollongong Centre publishing the end run of the OMA research reports (Dr William Cope worked at the Wollongong Centre before becoming head of OMA and BIMPR, then leaving government after their closures in 1996). After that time the research landscape became more of an entrepreneurial terrain, with two major directions emerging associated with quite divergent perspectives on the most important research questions.

In Melbourne, the Scanlon Foundation (Scanlon Institute, n.d.), resourced by and named for a former business executive and Liberal Party treasurer, entered a partnership with Monash historian of Australian race relations Andrew Markus, to research and publish an annual study of social cohesion. The approach drew heavily on the concepts developed in North America which explored trust and cohesion (Jakubowicz, 2009) as the underlying dynamic of a society able to settle immigrants. Scanlon has published annual reports and has developed a Social Cohesion Index, collaborated with and resourced by various governments, and plays a central role in debates about experiences of and attitudes to multicultural Australia.

In Sydney concerns about the racism that seemed to be accelerating in the post 2001 period drew social geographer Kevin Dunn and his colleagues to establish the Challenging Racism Project (Challenging Racism Project, n.d.), now based at Western Sydney University. Most of its resources have been drawn from a continuing series of projects funded by the Australian Research Council aided by bodies such as the Human Rights Commission, with a significant scholarly output. The focus of the team has been on the extent, nature, and experiences of racism and strategies for resistance and programs for reduction.

Another major concentration of researchers, the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, under director and UNESCO Chair in Cultural Diversity and Social Justice, Fethi Mansouri, carries both an Australian and wider global perspective. It has a particular interest in Middle East studies, and a wider multi-disciplinary purview on institutional forms of racism. It receives both University support and has secured many ARC grants, while also collaborating with all levels of government. Its Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS) (CRIS: The Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies, n.d.), with Michelle Grossman as director, based on a consortium of local and international universities, civil society organisations and think-tanks, undertakes collaborative research focussed on social impact goals and practices, with ongoing support from the Victorian government.

Aftermaths: national Research considerations

The termination in about 2000 of any national research strategy in relation to immigration and multicultural issues, seriously fragmented the capacities that had been evolving, while disrupting opportunity for future evidence-based policy debates. The contribution that a cohesive national research agenda confers is aptly demonstrated in the Appendix, which contains a selective list of BIMPR and OMA publications.

Many of the researchers and civil society leaders interviewed for this submission pointed to the desolate research landscape that emerged after 2000 and in particular, the corrosive and limiting effects of the lack of any coordinated national research agenda, research conferences and ongoing interaction between policy and research. This situation has worsened despite the emergence of innovative research clusters. For instance a meeting "Beyond Racism: Policy frameworks for a diverse Australia" held at Curtin University in Perth during September 2023, which brought together policy-makers, not-for-profits, communities and academics, stressed the continuing pressing need for new multicultural research agendas.

Over the past decade Parliament has addressed this issue repeatedly, without progress.

2013 Joint Parliamentary Inquiry into Multiculturalism

The 2013 Joint Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia represents the last major public government-level consideration of the multicultural research field (Parliament of Australia Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2013). The Committee report, Chapter 7 of which was on research, noted the decline in research capacity, quoting Graeme Hugo's submission that:

I would like to stress ... the need for an independent research capacity which does research itself but also encourages, coordinates, and leads research which is directly policy relevant and translates that research not just for policymakers but to inform the public discourse.

Summarising its understanding the Committee stated it:

recognises the importance of informed policy, and an independent research body that is responsive to a wide range of issues relating to settlement, integration and participation of all communities. The research needs to be integrated into policy development processes and there must be a feedback loop from the research, through practice, monitoring and evaluation.

The Committee found there were three major issues — a) lack of consistent and useful data; b) poor accessibility to data for both academic and community researchers; and c) no national research agendas to help shape research outcomes.

It recommended that the Australian Government collect accurate and up-to-date disaggregated data in order to identify trends in migration and multiculturalism, and to measure and address CALD related disadvantage. It also recommended the establishment of a government funded, independent collaborative institute for excellence in research into multicultural affairs with functions similar to that of the former Bureau of immigration, Multicultural and Population research. Its statutory framework should articulate key principles of multiculturalism, its functions including research and advice to government, and a cross-sectoral independent board. This institute should actively engage with local communities, private business and non-government organisations and provide data for better informed policy.

The qualitative and quantitative research capabilities of the institute must enable up-to-date and easily accessible data and research analysis on social and multicultural trends.

More dedicated research into long-term migration trends occurring within Australia and the social effects of migration—such as the local impacts of migration on cultural diversity and social inclusion within Australian society—should be supported.

The Committee particularly recommended an increased emphasis on qualitative data collection, and the collection of mobility data allowing service planning and delivery to follow movements of communities from localities of first settlement.

None of these recommendations were endorsed by the incoming government.

2017 Senate Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism

Although there had been no response from the Government to the 2013 recommendations, the Senate established a Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism in 2016, which reported in 2017 (Senate of Australia, 17 August 2017).

However after this second report was completed, in December 2017 the Government finally responded to the 2013 Report. In relation to the recommendation on research, the Government supported it in principle but rejected the call for the establishment of an independent institute as "not necessary", claiming the ABS data was sufficient for researchers, and that existing collaborative research was meeting the need for data sharing and access and equity outcomes.

In its discussion of the adequacy of research and data, the 2017 Committee noted that there "was a general consensus that neither data nor research is currently sufficient to promote multiculturalism in Australia, to plan for and deliver services to CALD communities, and to formulate multicultural policy" (p.83). Moreover, it noted "it is time Australia had a national multicultural research agenda to better promote diversity and cultural coexistence (p.84). A number of submissions argued for a national research institute.

The Committee concluded that there was a need for a comprehensive range of data, including on racially motivated crime. It expressed a concern that "that Australia does not have a national multiculturalism research agenda". It recommended (r 13) that "the Australian Government consider establishing an independent and resourced body, such as a National Centre for multiculturalism and religious diversity, to provide strategic and coordinated research into the areas of multiculturalism and religious diversity" (p.88).

There was no government response to this Committee, though there was a key outcome - the Parliamentary Greens moved legislation in the Senate based on the Committee recommendations, which sits there still (Di Natale, 2018). The Greens' proposed Multicultural Commission would have a research function.

2021 Senate Inquiry on Nationhood, national identity and democracy report

The 2021 Senate report on Nationhood (Senate of Australia, 2021) reviewed the wider debate over the relationship between democracy, nationhood, national identity and cultural pluralism. It noted that "High quality data and research is the foundation for promoting social cohesion. The committee commends the work of the Scanlon Foundation and others." (p.118). It then recommended that: "the Australian government establishes and resources a national research centre on migration, citizenship and social cohesion, to monitor: flows of migration and migrant settlement; issues of diversity and cohesion; affiliation and identity; civic participation and engagement; evaluation of service provision and access; and gaps in existing research" (p.119).

2022 Senate Inquiry on Issues facing diaspora communities in Australia

The 2022 Senate Inquiry into Diasporas in Australia (Senate of Australia, February 2021), which produced the infamous challenge to Chinese Australian witnesses as to their loyalty to Australia (Hurst, 16 October 2020), also addressed research. In evidence to the Committee, emphasis was placed on community capacity to collaborate in or undertake research to identify issues and build evidence to support claims for government support.

For instance the African Think Tank argued that many multicultural community organisations "lack the capacity to strategically evaluate the value of their work, which can hamper their growth and sustainability. To remedy this, ATT recommended that community organisations' research and evaluation skills be developed" (p.29).

In summary, over the past decade considerations by Parliament of various dimensions of multiculturalism and cultural diversity have returned to the need for a strong, resourced and independent research capacity. However governments throughout the decade have rejected this advice, in part claiming that the Australian Bureau of Statistics was a sufficient source for government and the society more broadly. While the ABS has a critical role to play (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2022b), it neither pretends to be such a resource nor has the brief to supply the wide range of required research alone, though it can and does contribute in partnership with other research groups. None of the government responses have addressed the importance of a national multicultural research agenda. While not a recommendation, the MFR could consider suggesting the government does provide a response to the three Senate Inquiry reports relevant to multicultural research structures and agendas.

Key Issues in Research and Data

The relationship between well-structured and supported research, and good policy development, implementation, and evaluation

There has been an increasing focus on research and data in analyses of public policy in Australia (Jakubowicz, 2015). In the early years of multicultural policy, research was already seen as a major dimension of policy development.

The Galbally Report (Galbally, 1978) proposed a Commonwealth-State working party to advise on arrangements for collecting and analysing information (data) for planning and evaluating services (p.7). Most importantly it proposed an Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, "because of the lack of information on multicultural developments in Australia and overseas", which would "engage in and commission research and advise government bodies on multicultural issues" (p.11). Galbally argued that "if we are to achieve the real benefits of a multicultural society, its development must be guided, supported and given direction by independent experts of high calibre" (p.109).

The Institute was to be directed by a small council of experts in multicultural development and migrant issues. Its functions would include the commissioning of research, the dissemination of information, the development of materials for training of professionals in fields such as medicine, social work, education and the media, the provision of advice to government, and the education of the community. While most of its research work was involved with program evaluation and community needs (Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 1982), it sponsored a research conference in 1984, and produced a research directory in 1986 (Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs., 1986).

Even though the Institute was abolished in 1986 during Budget cuts which impacted multicultural programs, the Labor government soon recognised the critical role in policy of the range of research it had been established to promote. The government after 1986 partly separated the dual functions of research and policy, and created the Bureau of Immigration (and later Multicultural and Population) Research (Bureau of Immigration Multicultural and Population Research, 1995), and the Office of Multicultural Affairs with its own research program (Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1997). The research output of these agencies is summarised in the Appendix. The Office's research was extremely important in the development of the 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (Australia Commonwealth Government, 1989) (Borowski, 2000).

Thereafter the various policy statements by government were essentially unsupported by independent research. However in 1998 the Coalition government commissioned a major survey of community attitudes to cultural diversity, using the private firm Eureka Research (Eureka Research, 1998). While designed to inform policy engagement with the growth in racism unleashed around the rise of the politician Pauline Hanson the research demonstrated significant levels of prejudice in the community, and was refused release by the government as a secret Cabinet paper (Jakubowicz, 2011). The policy outcome of the research was the creation of a Community Harmony agenda, one element of which was the naming of the UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as Harmony Day.

Another example of how research and policy can test each other was a research project funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship during the Labor government in 2012, and published under the Coalition in 2014. "Voices shaping the perspectives of young Muslims" was contracted to provide insights for government policy. The research concluded that government needed to listen to the voices of young Muslims. A series of recommendations, which had been requested, were provided. All of these, especially those directed at other government departments, were rejected en masse. The comment was made that the young Muslims needed to listen to government, not the other way around. The report was only released for publication with the proviso that it would not contain any recommendations. This interchange between government and scholar-researchers points to the problem of intellectual property ownership, and also whether and through what means the public has the right to access research it has paid for.

A different indication of the tension that can arise between research and policy can be found in the 2020 decision of the Coalition government and the Department of Home Affairs to terminate the Multicultural Australia and Immigration Studies (MAIS) data base provided online through Informit (https://search.informit.org/ourcollections/indexes/mais). The Department Library provided Informit with monthly updates, though the collection contained material dating back to the 1800s. In the background paper for the MFR, the Department noted:

[MAIS] also offers an almost unique source of publications from inception of the Department of Immigration in 1945, the former Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research and the former Office of Multicultural Affairs have been indexed, as well as those by relevant government, non-government and research organisations throughout Australia. MAIS is used extensively by researchers of migration and multicultural topics in Commonwealth Departments, the Parliamentary Library, universities and other educational institutions and in this way promotes collaborative relationships between the Department, academia and the broader research community. From January to December 2020 there were 297,417 searches conducted across the

A footnotes states "Access to Informit is currently paused for staff of the Department of Home Affairs due to budgetary restrictions".

The Value proposition for MAIS, also prepared by the Department for the MFR, states:

When regularly updated MAIS creates many benefits, including:

- Researchers, policy officers and decision makers are able to source up-to-date information on citizenship, immigration and multicultural issues from a curated database, saving research time.
- An up to date MAIS provides confidence accessing a quality source of information, curated by professional apolitical government librarians.
- The MAIS database informs a wide public dialogue on immigration and multicultural affairs which has a positive effect for the department's reputation within the broader research community.

Here we have evidence that a conscious decision was made, framed through a budgetary rationale, to prevent public servants accessing research that may help them develop more evidence-based policy advice, while having a negative effect on the DHA reputation, and ensuring a decay in the quality of the MAIS content.

How to identify key issues in multicultural Australia and their reflection in research agendas

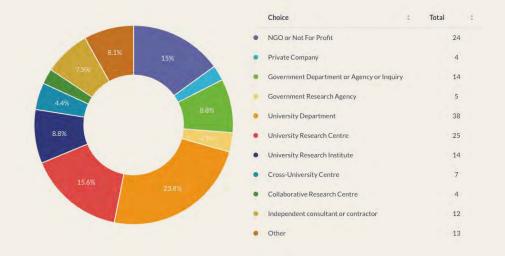
Research agendas are best formed through collaborative consultation between stakeholders. The deliberative democratic process initiated in the AIMA national research conference in 1984 continued through the 1980s and 1990s. Regular national research conferences were held where researchers, communities, government policy areas and other stakeholders were able to interact, present their insights, engage with their communities of interest and knowledge circles, and refine future research directions.

Researchers Survey 2023

As part of preparing for this submission, a survey was sent to over one hundred researchers in government, academia, commercial organisations and civil society. There were sixty responses. Disciplines included anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, social work, health sciences, political science, global studies, social economics, history, law, education, public communication, journalism, cultural studies, gerontology, disability studies, social geography, computer studies, and Islamic studies.

Despite the range of issues and disciplines involved, ninety percent of respondents agreed that "multicultural perspectives are very important in understanding key issues in my field of research in Australia". About two thirds preferred to work as an independent or university-based researcher, rather than directly for government or business. There was two-thirds support for the government commissioning an audit among stakeholders to identify priorities for multicultural research across the country. One third supported the proposition that "governments rarely use the research they commission in the multicultural field", suggesting that for some researchers a trust problem exists in relation to future collaborations with government.

Thinking of the research structures within which you have undertaken work on multicultural Australia, which of these have you worked in: (mark all that apply)



Question 2 demonstrates the range of work experiences of respondents — two thirds had worked in University Departments, 40% had worked in NGOs or NFPs, while about 23% had worked for government. About 40% had worked in a research centre.

In considering how multicultural research should be supported, up to which three of these options would you be most to support?



When asked to consider what models of research organisation would they support, two thirds opted for a virtual institute with a small real hub and virtual cross-sectoral network.

Survey respondents were asked to describe what they saw as the most pressing research issue for multicultural Australia. A significant minority identified racism and anti-racism as the most important focus. Others identified a range of issues: that research should explore the uniqueness of the Australian experience and situation, the role of religion as a facilitator or barrier to integration, the detailed experiences of settlement, the importance of interculturalism as a modifier of the pluralism of multiculturalism, the challenges of super-diversity, making access and equity work more effectively, the critical need to improve capacity in health care, and exploring arts and cultural access and engagement. There were also concerns with the recruitment and involvement of younger researchers from diverse backgrounds ("would the old White guys get out of the way please"). The enrichment of community capacity to undertake research was important for some — ranging from community history, to project needs-analysis and evaluation. Renewed research institutions, accessible relevant and uniform data, and reintegrating White Australians into the multicultural story were also emergent themes.

An audit example: understanding Canadian multiculturalism

One approach to an audit that may serve as a guide in Australia, was that undertaken by Will Kymlicka for Immigration and Citizenship Canada (Kymlicka, 2010). Having canvassed the country province by province, he demonstrated the differences and commonalities within the research being undertaken at the time, and arrived at a proposal for ten common research themes that could be supported by government. These included pan-Canadian issues of the adaptation of multiculturalism to religious diversity, the challenge of racism and discrimination, the issues associated with labour market integration, immigration outside the major cities, security issues and multiculturalism, and the future of multiculturalism given the rising hostile debate in Europe and elsewhere. These will be very familiar to Australian readers. In addition he noted the particular relevance of relating multiculturalism to Aboriginal peoples, the vulnerability of groups such as women and youth (and one can add people with disabilities), patterns of ethnic community formation and the capacity or readiness of service delivery agencies to respond to the needs of multicultural communities. All of these also resonate with Australian circumstances. The value of the audit lay in part in the buy-in it generated among researchers from various sectors across the country, into a national conversation about research priorities.

The place of history: retaining memory

It is apparent from the submissions to inquiries and the reporting by researchers that history as a process, the exploration of heritage and the understanding of the past engagements across cultures, should play a central role in any research agenda or structure seeking to illuminate or serve multicultural Australia. Two key historical initiatives are currently in imminent peril of being lost to future generations, partly as a result of rapidly changing technologies of memory, partly as their content has been frozen in time.

The two editions of the The Australian People: an encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins, edited by James Jupp (in 1988 and 2001), provide an extraordinary but increasingly inaccessible and ageing resource. The expanded and revised second edition was published with support from the Australian Population Immigration and Multicultural Research Program by Cambridge University Press, and copyright is held by the Commonwealth. With nearly a 1000 pages of text and illustrations, it is a unique resource for all the stakeholders from citizens to bureaucrats, scholars to teachers. It is exactly the type of resource that should be made available in an accessible format online, and integrated into a program of updates and revisions on a permanent basis.

Making Multicultural Australia in the 21st century (http://multiculturalaustralia.edu.au) was originally created in the late 1990s as one of Australia's first educational CD ROMS, with support from the NSW government. In the 2000's it was migrated to the Internet with support from the NSW, Victorian and Queensland governments, the Australian Cultural Foundation, and Optus Communications. It was last revised in 2010, though it is still widely used in education and by researchers all over the world. It is one of the few (if not sole) repositories for many "grey" publications from Australia's multicultural history, and is supported by a major archive of interviews, social documents, and media resources. However its future is affected by the lack of any ongoing "host" institution, with its only Internet presence doomed to be a file on the Pandora archive. Its invaluable content should also be a part of a continuing research and publishing process, feeding Australia's thirst for insights into the history of multiculturalism and the people who have been so much part of its development.

What are the main Data issues?

Research and data are intimately related though their relationship can be complex. Research questions determine methodologies which then establish criteria for what type of data is relevant. At times the availability of data determines what research questions can be asked and therefore what knowledge can be gleaned. Data includes qualitative and quantitative, historical documentary, and the original research that can be expressed through creative works.

The Immigration Minister Andrew Giles raised the issue of "data" while in Opposition prior to the 2022 election when he pointed to data failures as being important determinants of discriminatory and dangerous outcomes during the COVID 19 pandemic in Melbourne.

In summary the data issues that seem the most pressing include:

- a. Unlike the USA, Canada, the UK or New Zealand, Australia has no mainstream data that allow us to determine whether racism is occurring other than through proxies such as country of birth, ancestry identification, language spoken or religion;
- b. the collection and use of data about cultural and linguistic differences can be haphazard, crude, ambiguous and misleading (Pham et al., 2021);
- c. when CALD data are collected and applied the results may be suppressed due to governance fears of stigmatisation of identifiable groups;
- d. some government concerns include that individuals from CALD backgrounds might refuse to participate in normal data sharing due to fears of surveillance;
- e. current data models such as the ABS CALD stack may misrepresent realties that are better seen through labels such as "ethnicity" (ruled out in 1999 when "Ancestry" was chosen' but under the discussion by ABS for the 2026 Census) or "racialised" (used to label experiences of professionals from Africa facing workplace discrimination);
- f. the availability of large data sets, such as those created through MADIP/PLIDA. fundamentally transforms the research act, changing ethical relationships and understandings.

Studies such as those undertaken at the AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2023) demonstrate that Australian data collection at the source often cannot aid in research questions on cultural diversity. Sample sizes are not shaped to ensure reliable reportage in the area, while many research projects simply fail to recognise the traditional owners or members of minority groups. Yet awareness of the data issues and regularity of data collection could be improved through system-changing decisions. For example, any Commonwealth-funded research could be required to collect the key data from the CALD core group list and, while assuring data security, make it available to other legitimate researchers through one of the national data archives online.

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Research structures

We have looked at the development and underdevelopment of research, the contemporary lack of any national agendas, and the randomness of research clusters. Many of the comments on the researchers' survey pointed to the need for a clear model and implementation of a research structure, to complement the agendas that may be adopted. We now briefly review what structures have been attempted and their benefits and drawbacks.

Research and policy committees — the role of the founders Zubrzycki, Price, Martin, Encel, Borrie

If we begin with the period around the adoption of the concept of "multicultural Australia" we find a plethora of changing advisory committees to government, often forming then being amalgamated, then being reframed and redirected, each with its membership either continuing or being replaced. Much of the dynamic occurred in the relationship between the Australian National University and the Department of Immigration, with a small network of researchers involving one another in the utilisation of research. It is at this period we find sociologists such as Jerzy Zubrzycki, Sol Encel and Jean Martin, and demographers such as "Mick" Borrie and Charles Price playing a key role — summarising field research and translating into useable policy evidence.

Inquiries — Galbally Jupp Racist Violence

Policy inquiries often triggered research and use them extensively in their deliberations. While the Galbally Inquiry was fairly limited on the specifics of research other than in relation to AIMA, the Poverty Inquiry generated a number of new studies by contracted university researchers or research centres (Henderson, 1975). Similarly the Jupp Inquiry (Jupp, 1986) opened up research studies in a number of areas, as did the later Inquiry into Racist Violence (Moss and Castan, 1991). A reactivated MAIS could provide curated access to such material.

Government Institutes etc. — AIMA, AIHW, AIFS, ABS

Where there has been recognition by government of the need for ongoing research support to program areas, Institutes have been established, usually to support specific legislated activities. We have already seen the benefits and problems associated with the model when implemented as AIMA.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) was created in 1980 under the 1975 Family Law Act, and is responsible to the Minister for Social Services. It undertakes its own research with-in house staff, commissions reports, runs an annual conference, publishes its work in academic peer reviewed journals, and publishes its own journal. Its fourteen research programs include "Building a New Life in Australia", which is a longitudinal study of humanitarian migrants who arrived in 2013 (Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), n.d.).

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) was created in 1987 under its own Act, with a Board responsible to parliament through the Minister for Health. It has statutory functions in relation to statistical information, while being involved in data collection and management, producing reports, and enhancing data resources. AIHW has noted the poor level of data in relation to health and disability for culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2020) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2023).

The critical role of the ABS is best demonstrated in the provision of data linkage services, now intensified through the establishment in 2015 of the whole of government Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), n.d.) curated by the ABS, and in process for a name change to "Personal-level integrated data asset" (PLIDA) (Gruen, 2023). In part the Life Course Data Asset initiated in July 2023 seeks to support what the Australian Statistician has called "evidence-based policy making at the community level" (Gruen, 2023), including data on culture, migration and other demographics.

Government Agencies — OMA, BIMPR

The in-house agencies were the Office and the Bureau in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, complementary but with different initial functions — one driven by policy designed to engage with diversity, the other by the need for knowledge creation about diversity. Both undertook and commissioned research, though with different intents and user-outcomes. As noted, the agencies were both closed-down within months of the Coalition gaining power in 1996, suggesting their vulnerability as institutional forms to ideological perspectives and the consequent budget priorities.

Commissions — HREOC State of the Nation, CyberSafety

Various government commissions are also established by statute, though they have executive powers in pursuit of social betterment outcomes. The Australian Human Rights Commission administers the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, and seeks through conciliation to resolve offending actions, including racial vilification. The Commission, depending on its resources, can retain researchers to undertake projects related to its activities. Such research is focussed on identifying experiences of vulnerable groups, and developing strategies for engagement with racism and building social cohesion under the community education role of the Commission. In the past the Commission has published reports about "The State of the Nation", exploring the condition and experiences of "people of non-English speaking backgrounds (Antonios, 1995)".

The eSafety Commissioner develops strategies supported by research to promote online safety. eSafety research from 2020 found that around 1 in 7 adults aged 18-65 were estimated to have been the target of online hate in the 12 months to August 2019. These include culturally diverse communities whose religion and appearance have attracted the attention of both group and personal hate attackers (eSafetyCommissioner n.d).

Universities — individuals, groups, centres, institutes and Collaborative **Research Centres**

The tertiary education sector has a long history of research in many disciplinary areas reflecting on multicultural Australia. In the current environment of reduced funding, most initiatives have been reworked as collaborative enterprises, drawing in inter-disciplinarity while combining resources and capacities. These projects are established under the legal responsibility of the universities, which are mainly covered by State legislation though heavily funded by the Commonwealth (and students through fees). This collaborative model enhances the impact, allowing the creation of flexible project teams formed for the purposes of the project, meeting State criteria for local involvement, and extending networks of communication about the research.

One example of this project model is the Cyber Racism and Community Resilience Project, which in 2011 gained funding support from the ARC, the participating universities, the Human Rights Commission and VicHealth, with publication in 2017 and thereafter. It comprised researchers from Deakin University CRIS, the Western Sydney University Challenging Racism group, the University of Technology Sydney Cosmopolitan Civil Societies group, Sydney University Psychology, Monash University Journalism, and the civil society Online Hate Prevention Institute. This team produced a tightly woven argument about racism and the Internet, and the nature and extent of racism in Australia (Jakubowicz et al., 2017).

NGOs — Scanlon Foundation, Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) and the Diversity Council of Australia.

The NGO sector contains many organisations which engage with research on multicultural Australia. The three mentioned here demonstrate importantly different characteristics in relation to focus, methodology and scope.

The Scanlon Foundation, a private foundation funded primarily by its founder, established in 2001 and its Research Institute established in 2021 seeks to be "a bridge between academic insight and public thought on matters relating to social cohesion". It offers its services to governments, which contract it to provide reports based on its research. Its publications include "narratives", which are long form journalism pieces rather than peer-reviewed academic articles, geared towards servicing public debate, and have expanded to podcasts and videocasts. After many years of mapping social cohesion (Markus, 2015) it has recently developed a more ambitious project through its independent Institute that tracks social cohesion through an Index over time (O'Donnell, 2022). This work is partly supported by a research contract with the Department of Home Affairs.

The Australian Multicultural Foundation, a project funded through the Bi-Centennial Authority in 1988, was created out of the "ruins" of AIMA. In a joint exercise between FECCA and AIMA (in its last year), the proposal set the parameters for a \$3 million grant from the Authority, which remains the resource basis of the AMF's continuing operations. It also receives funding for projects, and invests in others. Its primary operation is through collaborations with other organisations, including both the Scanlon project on social cohesion and the CRIS research into social resilience and inclusion.

The Diversity Council of Australia represents the perspective of the human resources sector in corporates, governments, education and civil society. It is resourced by its membership, and develops collaborative research with universities, often through the device of ARC Linkage Grants (DCA Research, 2023). Its reports include coverage of culturally and racially marginalised women in leadership, and racism at work.

Proposal for a Multicultural Research Framework

Options

The following grid draws on the analysis and arguments above to constitute a SWOT analysis of the options canvassed in this submission. The matrix of preferred elements has been summarised, though vulnerability to ideological fashion, frameworks that enhance co-operation, useability to the widest range of stakeholders, and impact on policy and practice in government professional and community spheres, are all identifiable factors.

Option	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Examples
Status Quo	Diversity	Scattered priorities	Emerging collaborations, multiple perspectives	No national agenda, erosion of capacity,	ARC, Scanlon, other centres
Statutory Institute	Legislated, clear objectives	Constrained by government resources and ideology	Sustained research program	Marginalises non-partners	AIMA, AIHW
Whole of Government policy and research Institute	Close to centre of government, integrates policy with research	Dominated by government short term issues	Provides global view of government and integrates different perspectives	Diminishes role of non- government research. Easy to close down	OMA
Department Research Bureau	Close fit with policy priorities, enables partnerships	Dependent on annual Dept budget, depends on partnerships	Positions research at core of depart. business	Marginalises exploratory research, Easy to close down	BIMPR
Collaborative research centre	Provides intellectual and impact drivers for research, builds collaboration and flexible partnerships	Depends on annual funding and collaborator buy-in,	Enables independent research, builds on national strengths, multiple funding sources	Vulnerable to policy changes and funding cuts, overly focused on impact at expense of critical review and developing community oriented research capacity	CRIS
Hub Spoke Research Institute	National ambit, web of learning enables new players, enhances sharing of research outcomes and problem definition	Requires ongoing agreement	Enhances international comparative research, integrates academic, government and civil society stakeholders, optimises social benefit	Sustainability of structure, managing multiple forms of research, ensuring flexibility of hub relationship with stakeholder spokes	International models

Best fit to needs

National Hub and Spoke Collaborative Research Institute

This submission concludes that the proposition that should be developed to implement MFR goals in relation to a sustained and sustainable research agenda and structure, can best be achieved through a hub and spoke model that invites collaboration, gives security of funding, and has extensive networks of stakeholders across the widest range of research practices and goals. Whatever format the "hub" takes, it should be resourced through a similar device as that used to establish the Australian Multicultural Foundation, namely a major grant to an independent stand-alone entity, reinforced with philanthropic and recurrent funding, from states, territories and the Commonwealth, and other partnership and project funding. Its research should be made as widely available as feasible, in both traditional and contemporary formats, addressing a diversity of audiences from communities to specialists. It should have a membership structure, an advisory panel, and seek to stimulate wide engagement with and understanding of issues associated with building a multicultural society, integrating intersectional and intercultural awareness.

The ten recommendations and propositions in this submission are designed to create a process that ensures the sensible and measured consideration of the range of interests, diversity of approaches, and scale of needs across the community.

Recommendations to the MFR in this submission

- 1. The MFR recognises the centrality of a well-designed and supported research capacity to the efficient and effective implementation of a national multicultural framework.
- 2. The MFR recommends that a properly resourced trans-disciplinary audit is undertaken of Australia's multicultural research capacities, priorities, and stakeholder needs.
- 3. The MFR recommends that the government initiate and resource a national Summit conference on research agendas for multicultural Australia, through the creation of a cross sectoral steering group, emphasising the involvement of emerging researchers from diverse communities.
- 4. The MFR proposes the establishment of a sustainable cross-sectoral National Multicultural Research Institute and recommends a process to scope and establish such an Institute.
- 5. The MFR recommends the government calls for expressions of interest by parties in leading and participating in the establishment of the National Multicultural Research Institute, using a hub and spoke model.
- 6. The MFR recognises the critical importance of multidisciplinary data in underpinning a national research agenda, and proposes that parameters for data definition, collection and availability are considered as part of the proposed Audit and Summit.
- 7. The MFR notes the negative consequences of the failure by governments during the pandemic to implement the protocols on the use of CALD data agreed nationally in 1999, and recommends that until new agreements on data are reached, the CALD protocol for the use of minimum core data (namely language spoken, country of birth, fluency in English and Indigenous status) are activated in all situations where that data is relevant, and the additional relevant CALD indicators are also collected where required (eg religion, parental countries of birth). Furthermore, if the ABS adopts "Ethnicity/Ethnic group" as a question in the 2026 Census, then this factor be added to the CALD core group for data collection by governments.

- 8. First measures are required to retain and recover cultural memory in danger of degradation and loss. In order to ensure an improved access to existing data, the MFR recommends to the Department of Home Affairs that it re-establish the Multicultural Australia and Immigration Studies (MAIS) data base previously produced by its library and published through *Informit*, extend it to provide access to useable data in collaboration with ABS and other government agencies and the Australian Social Science Data Archive and similar archives, remove the block on its use by the Australian public service, and ensure it is made available as a free service to the wider stakeholder population of Australia. Furthermore, the MFR should propose that DHA considers how to ensure the digitisation and publication online of the contents of The People of Australia 2001 (ed. J Jupp) (© Commonwealth of Australia), and develops and implements a plan for its safe continuation and updating. In addition, the MFR recommends that DHA develops a method to retain and update for ongoing public access the web documentary project Making Multicultural Australia in the 21th Century.
- 9. In considering the roles of the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in supporting research for a multicultural Australia, the MFR recommends that the Councils adapt and adopt the US National Institutes of Health Policy on the Inclusion of Racial and Ethnic Minority groups, in requirements for the grant of research funding. In addition, research data made available through platforms such as the Social Science Data Archive should be required to adopt a common and accessible framework for the secure sharing of data on intersectional, multicultural
- The MFR recommends that the Australian Bureau of Statistics review the use of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity as a concept, in terms of
 - its current relevance,
 - · its capacity to identify targets of racism,
 - · its coverage of ethnicity,
 - how it can better identify literacy levels in both English and languages used at home for emergency communication,
 - its useability by governments and contracted services (eg diagnostic laboratories)
 - how well it covers whole of population (eg Australian born, Australian-born parents, English speaking, and Australian ethnicity, as well as potentially marginalised minorities).

Appendix

Selected Projects from the 1990s

OMA

- http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/multoff_4.pdf
- Access and Equity Annual Report 1995 OMA and DPM&C AGPS, 1995,
- Accessing Legal Aid Access to Legal aid and assistance by people of non-English speaking background OMA and DPM&C AGPS, 1995
- Australia's Hidden Heritage Winternitz, Judith, Dr AGPS and OMA, 1990
- Cultural Differences and Conflict in the Australian Community Fisher, Linda and Long, Jeremy The Centre for Multicultural Studies, Uni of Wollongong, 1991
- Different Agenda: Economic and Social Aspects of the Ethnic Press in Australia Bell, Phillip; Heilpern, Sandra; McKenzie, M; Vipond, J The Centre for Multicultural Studies, Uni of Wollongong, 1991
- Diversity Counts A Handbook on Ethnicity Data OMA and DPM&C AGPS, 1994
- Immigrants and Occupational Welfare: Industry Restructuring and its effects on the Occupational Welfare of Immigrants from NonEnglish Speaking Backgrounds Jamrozik, Adam; Boland, Cathy; and Stewart, Donald The Centre for Multicultural Studies, Uni of Wollongong, 1990,

BIMPR commissioned but not completed 1996

- http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/bimpr_1.pdf
- Australian Poverty: Then and Now Ruth Fincher Australian Centre University of Melbourne The Initial Labour Market Experiences of Immigrants Lynne Williams, Jill Murphy and Clive Brooks Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research
- The Labour Market Experience of Second generation Australians Clive Brooks Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research
- Settlement Needs of Black Africans in Australia David Cox La Trobe University
- Two Decades Later: An Evaluation of the Changes Made in the Role of Ethnic Welfare Organisations in the Provision of Social Services for Migrants Following the Galbally Report Thea Brown and Kim Chu Monash University
- Atlas of the Australian People 1991 Census Australian Capital Territory Ian Burnley University of New South Wales Northern Territory Graeme Hugo University of Adelaide Queensland Richard Jackson James Cook University of North Queensland Tasmania Andrew Beer, Cecile Cutler and Debbie Faulkner Flinders University of South Australia Victoria Chris Maher and Wayne Caldow AHURI, Melbourne, Vic. Western Australia Graeme Hugo University of Adelaide

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Appendix E: Consultation

- · ACT Baha'i Centre
- ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs
- ACT Policing (Community Engagement Team)
- · Adelaide Mosque Islamic Society of SA
- Adelaide University
- Advance Housing
- Afghan Australian Development Organisation
- Afghan Community (SA)
- Afghan Community Naracoorte
- Afghan Community Support Association of New South Wales
- Afghan Fajar Association Inc.
- Afghan Hazara Community
- Afghan Peace Foundation
- Afghan Women on the Move (ACT)
- Afghan Women on the Move (NSW)
- Afghan Women's Organisation Victoria
- · Afri-Aus Care
- Africa-Australia Friendship Association NT (AAFA)
- African Australian Advocacy Centre (AAAC)
- African Australian Council (ACT)
- · African Communities in Townsville
- African Community Toowoomba
- African Women's Group
- African-Australian Women and Girls Association INC NT
- Africause
- · Aged and Disability Advocates (ADA) Australia
- Ahmadiyya Muslim Association
- Aitkenvale Community Hub
- · Aitkenvale State School
- Aknoon Cultural Association
- Albany Entertainment Centre
- Alianza Cultural Latino Americano (ACLA)
- Alice Springs Council Office of the Chief Minister NT Government
- · Alice Springs Town Hall
- · All of Us Consulting
- Alliance Françoise
- Allied Health
- AMAFHH Federation
- Amazing Northern Multicultural Services

- · AMES Australia
- · Amnesty International
- · Anglican Church of Australia
- · Anglican Church Southern Qld
- Anglicare Refugee and Migrant Settlement Services (RAMSS)
- Anti-Discrimination NSW
- Arab Council of Australia
- · Arabic Welfare
- Armidale Sanctuary
- Asian Australian Alliance
- Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS)
- · Association of Ukrainians Tasmania
- Assyrian Resource Centre
- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
- · Attorney-General's Department
- AusCycling
- AusPak Women Association
- Auspire Australia Day Council of Western Australia
- · Australia Day Council of South Australia
- Australia Korea Cultural Exchange Association
- Australia Malaysia Business Council
- Australia Palestine Advocacy Network
- Australia-China Friendship Society NT Branch (ACFSNT)
- · Australia-China Young Professionals Initiative
- Australian Arakanese Association in Cairns
- Australian Baha'i Community
- Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference
- Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University
- · Australian Chinese Charity Foundation
- Australian Cook Islands Community Council (NSW) Inc.
- · Australian Council for Tamil Refugees Inc.
- · Australian Council of Local Government
- Australian Croatian Community Services
- Australian Egyptian Council Forum Incorporated Association
- Australian Federal Police (AFP)

- Australian Football League (AFL)
- Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)
- Australian International Youth Association
- Australian Iranian Community Organisation
- Australian Iranian Society of Victoria
- Australian Lithuanian Community Sydney
- Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC)
- Australian Multicultural Council
- Australian Muslim Women Centre for Human Rights
- Australian National Imams Council (ANIC)
- · Australian National Maritime Museum
- Australian Public Service Commission (APSC)
- · Australian Red Cross
- Australian Refugee Association

- Australian Sangha Association
- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO)
- Australian Sikh Association
- Australian Somali Football Association
- Australian South Sea Islander Community
- Australian Sovereign College
- Australian Sports Commission (ASC)
- Australian Sudanese Club ACT
- · Australian Tamil Congress
- · Australian Tamil Cultural Society of the ACT
- Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- Australian Vietnamese Women's Association
- Australian War Memorial
- · Australians for Syria SA

B

- · Baha'i Community of Qld
- Baha'i Community of Victoria
- · Baha'i Council for Western Australia
- · Believe in Bendigo
- Bendigo Business Council
- · Bendigo Interfaith Council
- Bendigo Malayalee Association
- Bethel Christian School
- Bhutanese community young people
- Blue Line Laundry
- Bochasanwasi Akshar Purshhottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)
- Bordertown Football Club
- · Bordertown High School
- · Bordertown Primary School
- Bosniaks Association of SA

- Brazilian Association for Social Development and Integration in Australia (ABRISA)
- · Brazilian Community
- Brisbane Chilean Community
- Brisbane Tokelauan Community
- Brisbane Tongan Community
- Brisbane Tuvaluan Christian Church
- Brisbane Tuvaluan Community
- Brisbane Tuvaluan Community Inc.
- Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL)
- Buddhist Community
- Buddhist Council of Victoria
- Bunbury Multicultural Community
- Bunbury TAFE
- Burmese Community

- Cairns African Association
- Cairns and District Chinese Association) Inc. (CADCAI
- Cairns and Region Multicultural Association
- · Cairns Bhutanese Community
- · Cairns Bongo Group
- Cairns Hindu Samaj
- Cairns Multicultural Islamic Ladies Association (CaMILA)
- · Cairns Regional Council
- · Cairns Thai Community Association Inc.
- · Cairns West State High School
- Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW

- · Can Do Support
- Canberra Hazara Community
- Canberra Hindu Mandir
- Canberra Islamic Centre
- Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Inc.
- Canberra Punjabi Sports and Cultural Association
- · Canberra Sikh Association Inc.
- Canberra Tamil Association
- Cardinia Gujarati Association
- · Catholic Care
- · Catholic Parents Australia

- CatholicCare TAS
- Celebration of African Australians Inc.
- Centacare FNQ
- Central Australia Women's Legal Service
- Centralian Nepalese Association
- Centre for Australia India Relations
- Centre for Islamic Thought and Educations University
- · Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) Community Support Group
- Centre for Population
- · Chabad of North Queensland
- Chamber of Commerce
- · Charles Darwin University
- Chinese Australian Forum (CAF)
- Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd
- Chinese Community Council of Australia Victoria (CCCAV)
- Chung Wah Community and Aged Care
- Chung Wah Society Inc.
- Citizen Tasmania
- · City of Bayswater
- City of Bunbury
- · City of Canning
- City of Cockburn
- · City of Kwinana
- City of Launceston
- · City of Melville
- City of Salisbury Council
- City of Salisbury (Youth Project Officer)
- · City of Stirling
- · City of Swan

- · City of Townsville
- · City of Wanneroo
- Claddagh Association Inc.
- Cloverdale Community Centre
- CMSport
- Colleen Holmes Learning & Development
- Comitato Assistenza Italiani (Co.As.It)
- Communicare
- Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU)
- Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA)
- Community Development, Education and Social Support Australia (CDESSA)
- · Community Drug Action Teams
- Community Language Schools SA
- · Community Services Directorate
- · Companion House
- Connected Women's Program
- Connection Settlement Communities and Industry
- Consortium of Tamil Associations NSW
- Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions
- Country Women's Association
- Country Women's Association of NSW Riverina
- CQUniversity Australia
- Cricket Australia
- Cultural Geelong
- Culturally Diverse Alliance of Tasmania
- Culturally Diverse Women
- · Culture Care
- · Culture Spring
- Cultureverse
- Curtin University

D

- Darling Downs African Community Council
- Darling Heights State School
- Darwin Bali Community Inc.
- · Darwin City council
- Daughters of Jerusalem
- · Deakin University
- Debre Genet St Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church — Melbourne
- Deloitte Australia
- Democratic Republic of Congo Community Association
- Department for Education

- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Department of Communities Cairns Safer Streets
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Department of Customer Service
- Department of Education Office of Youth
- · Department of Education (WA)
- Department of Education EAL (TAS)
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (VIC)
- Department of Health (TAS)
- Department of Health (WA)

- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Human Services (SA)
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (SA)
- Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (NT)
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Development and the Arts
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (TAS)
- Department of Premier and Cabinet Multicultural Affairs (SA)

- Department of Social Services
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet (TAS)
- Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA)
- Department of Transport (WA)
- Diversity Council Australia (DCA)
- · Djarragun College
- · Door of Hope
- DPC Connected Communities

Ε

- East African Women's Foundation
- Edmund Rice Centre WA
- Elizabeth Grove Masjid
- Equal Opportunity Commission (WA)
- Equatoria Community Welfare Association NSW
- Eritrean Muslim community (SA)
- Espacio LatinX
- Ethiopian and African Community

- Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
- Ethnic Communities Council of Qld
- Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
- Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia
- Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District Inc.
- Everglow Community Care Links
- Ezidi Community Armidale

- Fair Work Ombudsman
- FamilyCare
- Father Atanasio Gonelli Charitable Fund
- Fatima Zahra Mosque
- Fatofatoga o Tokelau
- Federation of Chinese Community of Canberra (FCCCI)
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA)
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia Rural and Regional Advisory
- Federation of Indian Associations ACT (FINACT)
- Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria

- Federation of South Sudanese Associations in Victoria
- Federation of Sri Lankan Organisations
- · Fiji Community Association of QLD
- Fijian Association (NT)
- Fijian Community Wagga Wagga
- Filipino Community (NT)
- Filipino-Australian Affiliation of North Queensland Inc.
- Flinders University
- Football Australia
- Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT)
- Foundation House

G

- German Australian Community Centre
- Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO)
- Gold Coast Cook Islands Community
- Gold Coast Tongan Community
- Great Lakes Agency for Peace and Development International (GLAPD)
- Great Southern TAFE
- Great Stupa of Universal Compassion
- Greek Community (TAS)
- Greek Community of Melbourne & Victoria
- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Melbourne District

Н

- Harman Foundation
- Haymarket Chamber of Commerce (HCC)
- Hazara Community Brisbane
- Hazara Community of Southern Tasmania
- · Health Consumers' Council
- · Health NSW
- Helping Hoops
- · Highfields Disability Services
- Himilo Community Connect
- Hindu Association of WA (Perth Hindu Temple)
- Hindu Council of Australia (Victoria)
- · Hindu Society of Victoria

- Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre of ACT Inc.
- · Hobart City Council
- · Hobart Community Legal Service
- · Hockey Australia
- Hola Networking (Latin America)
- Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency (HARDA)
- Hosanna Logan Church
- HOST International
- Humanitarian and Welfare Association for Afghan Australians
- · HumeRidge Church of Christ
- · Hungarian Council of NSW

- ICNSW Steering Committee
- Independent community representative (Mental Health social worker)
- Indian Association of Bendigo
- Indian Community WA
- Indian Crescent Society of Australia
- Indian Society of Western Australia (ISWA)
- Indian Support centre Inc.
- IndianCare
- Indonesian Community NT
- Indonesian Community Council of New South Wales
- Indonesian Women Islamic Movement
- Initiatives for Women in Need
- Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)
- Integrate Workforce and Esteem Coffee
- IQRA College
- Iranian Women's Association Victoria
- Iranian Women's Organisation of SA
- Iraqi Australian University Graduates
- · Iraqi Community Cultural Association

- Iraqi Families United of SA
- Iraqi Indigenous Committee
- Iraqi Renaissance
- Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre
- ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness)
- Islamic Association of Southern Districts
- Islamic Council of SA
- Islamic Council of the Northern Territory Inc. (ICNT)
- · Islamic Council of Victoria
- · Islamic Information Centre of SA
- Islamic Museum of Australia
- Islamic Sciences and Research Academy Australia —
- Islamic Society of Darwin Inc. (ISD)
- · Islamic Society of SA
- · Islamic Society of the Gold Coast
- · Islamic Society of Toowoomba
- Islamic Women's Association of Australia (IWAA)
- Italian Assistance Association (COASIT)

- James Cook University
- Japanese Community in Cairns

- JBS Bordertown
- Jobs Tasmania

K

- · Kachin Association of Australia
- Kachin Literacy Program
- Karen Community (WA)
- Kenyan Community (SA)
- Kerala Hindu Society Bendigo
- Kin Disability Advocacy
- Kindness Shake

- Kiribati Australia Association
- KJ Lawyers and Migration Consultants
- Korean Association of Canberra Inc.
- Korean Women's International Network Victoria (KOWIN)
- Kuenphen Dharma Centre
- Kurdish Democratic Community Centre

L

- La Trobe University (Vic)
- Lamberts Fresh Produce
- Latin American Community (NT)
- · Latin Oz Qld Inc.
- Launceston General Hospital
- Launceston Hazara Community
- · Lebanese Muslim Association
- Leeton Multicultural Support Group

- Leeton Shire Council
- Legal Aid ACT
- Legal Services Commission
- Lhere Artepe (Aboriginal Corporation)
- Limestone Coast Multicultural Network
- Local Government Multicultural Network
- Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (Bendigo)
- Logan Samoan Advisory Council

M

- Macquarie University
- Malayali Association Cairns
- Maltese Community Centre Latrobe Valley Inc.
- Massoud Foundation Australia
- Media Diversity Australia
- Melaleuca Australia
- Mental Health Foundation
- Mentoring Coaching & Counselling African Australian Youth & Young Adults
- Mercy Community Services
- MercyCare
- Metro Tasmania
- MiCare
- Middle Eastern Communities Council and Afghan United Association of SA
- Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS Australia Inc.)
- Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Region)
- Migrant Resource Centre (Northern Tasmania)
- Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania
- Migrant Talent Connect
- Migrant Workers Centre
- Migration NT
- Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council (WA)
- · Monash University
- Moreland Turkish Association Inc.

- Morella Community Centre
- Mosaic Adelaide
- Mosaic Multicultural Connections
- Multicultural Affairs and Tourism
- Multicultural Affairs Qld
- Multicultural Affairs, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Multicultural Association of Canberra
- Multicultural Australia
- Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra
- Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia
- Multicultural Community Services of Central Australia (MCSCA)
- Multicultural Council of Tasmania Inc.
- · Multicultural Council of the NT
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
- Multicultural Hub Canberra & Regional NSW (Mhub)
- Multicultural NSW
- Multicultural NSW Advisory Board
- Multicultural NSW, Riverina Cancer Care Centre
- Multicultural Qld Advisory Council
- Multicultural Services Centre of WA (MSCWA)
- Multicultural Sudanese Centre Inc.
- Multicultural Women's Alliance Against Family Violence (MWAAFV)
- Multicultural Women's Council

- Multicultural Women's Health Service
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN)
- Multicultural Youth South Australia (MYSA)
- Multicultural Youth Support Services Inc.
- Multilink Community Services Inc.
- · Murdoch University
- Museum of Australian Democracy
- · Muslim Australian Connections of SA

- Muslim Women's Association of SA
- Muslim Women's Welfare of Australia
- Muslim Women's Welfare of Australia/Islamic Charity Projects Association
- MyGov team
- Myriad Kofkin Global
- MyVista Retirement and Aged Care Living

- Nan-Tien Temple
- Naracoorte High School
- Naracoorte Lucindale Council
- Naracoorte Primary School
- Naracoorte Rotary Club
- · National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)
- · National Archives
- · National Capital Authority
- National Council of Churches
- National Council of Jewish Women NSW
- National Film and Sound Archive of Australia
- National Museum of Australia
- Neighbourhood Collective Australia
- Nepalese Community
- Nepali Association of WA
- · Nerang Neighbourhood Centre
- Ngala
- · No One Left Behind; No Woman Left Behind
- Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) Australia
- North Melbourne Football Club The Huddle

- North Metro TAFE AMEP Class
- North Queensland Cowboys
- North Queensland Primary Health Network
- Northern Sound System (Youth Development Officer)
- Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) Alice Springs
- Northern Territory Momineen Inc. (NTMI)
- Northern Territory Primary Health Networks (NTPHN)
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Federation of Community Language Schools
- NSW Government
- NSW Premier's Department
- NSW Public Service Commission
- NT Chamber of Commerce
- NT Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism
- NT Government
- NT Hong Kong Club
- NT Karen Community
- NT Legal Aid Commission
- NT Mental Health Coalition

O

- Office for Multicultural Affairs ACT
- · Office for Women
- Office of Ayatollah Australia

- Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI)
- On Demand Translations
- One Culture Ltd

P

- Pacific Island/Pasifika Community Brisbane
- Pacific Islander Community Bunbury
- · Pacific Islands Council of Queensland
- Pacific Islands Mt Druitt Action Network (PIMDAN)
- Pakistan Welfare Association of Australia
- Pakistani Australia Cultural Organisation
- · Pakistani Australian Association of SA
- · Pakistani Community in Cairns

- PakOZ
- Palestinian Community Toowoomba
- Palmerston Association
- Palmerston City Council
- Panjtan Society of Victoria Inc.
- Parafield Gardens High School (Wellbeing Coordinator)
- Paralowie R-12 (Wellbeing Coordinator)
- · Pasifika Lawyers Association of QLD

- Persian Australian Community Association
- Perth African Nations Sports Association (PANSA)
- · Philippine Cultural Society of Cairns
- Philippines Community
- Pimlico State High School

- Pinnacle College
- PNG Federation of Queensland
- Polonia Polish Association of Qld Inc.
- Pushing Barriers

Q

- Quang Minh Temple
- Queensland African Communities Council (QACC)
- Queensland Corrective Services
- Queensland Department of Environment and Science Multicultural Affairs Queensland
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Mental Health
- Queensland Nauruan Community

- Queensland Niue United Community
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)
- Queensland Tongan Language School Queensland Tuvaluan Community
- Questacon

R

- Radio Tagumpay
- Reform Lab
- Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre Inc. (RILC)
- Refugee and Migrants Communities Network Inc.
- Refugee Communities Association of Australia
- Refugee Council of Australia
- Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- · Regional Victorians of Colour
- Resolution Community services

- Returned and Services League (RSL)
- Riverina Backbone NSW Grow Project Regional Development Australia
- Rotary Club Bordertown
- Rowing Australia
- Royal Australian Mint
- Rural Australians for Refugees
- Ryde Community Forum

S

- SA Bhutanese Youth Association
- SA Country Women's Association (Limestone Coast)
- SA Department of Human Services Youth Engagement
- SA Multicultural Commission
- Salisbury City Rotaract Club
- Salisbury East High School (School Wellbeing officer)
- Salisbury High School (Wellbeing Coordinator)
- Samoa Gold Coast Association
- Samoan Advisory Council in the Territory and nearby Regions
- Samoan Wesleyan Methodist Church
- Service for the Treatment of Rehabilitation and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
- Services Australia
- Settlement Council of Australia (SCoA)
- Settlement Services International (SSI)
- Sex Worker Outreach (SWOP)
- Sierra Leone Community Tasmania

- Sikh community and Social Services and Community and Social Enterprise
- Sikh Community NT
- Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria
- Singaporean/Indonesian Community
- Sister Project
- SiTara's Story (2023 Local Hero of the Year)
- Small Business and Training (Qld)
- Small Business Council (TAS)
- Smile Migrant Centre
- Socio-Cultural Syriac Association of Geelong
- Solomon Islands Brisbane Community
- Somali Australian Community Association NSW
- · Somali Communities Council Inc.
- Somali Support Perth
- Somali Women's Development Association
- South Australia Police (SAPOL)
- South Australian Multicultural Commission

- South Australian State Emergency Services (SASES)
- South Metro TAFE
- South Sudanese Australian National Basketball Association
- South Sudanese Community Association
- South Sudanese Community NT
- South Sudanese Community TAS
- South Sudanese Women's Group
- South Sudanese-Australian Academic Society Inc.
- Southern Aboriginal Corporation
- Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)
- Sri Lanka Association of NSW
- Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery
- Sri Lanka Student Association
- Sri Lankan Association
- Sri Lankan Australian Women's Network (SLAWN)
- Sri Lankan Women's Foundation WA
- St James School

- St Oswalds Glen Iris of Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, Victorian Council of Churches
- State Growth
- STEPS Group
- Students Against Racism
- · Study Townsville
- StudyAdelaide
- Sudanese Community in Cairns
- Summer House Albany
- · Supreme Court of Queensland
- · Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service — (STTARS)
- Swimming Australia
- Sydney Chinese Services Interagency/University of NSW/ Hong Kong University Alumni
- Sydney Cricket League
- Sydwest Multicultural Services

Т

- TAFE Qld
- Tamil Society of the NT Inc.
- Tamil Women's Development Group
- Tanzanian Community in NT
- · TAS Young Australian of the Year
- Tasmania Northwest Islamic Association
- Tasmania Refugee Legal Service
- Tasmanian Chinese Buddhist Academy of Australia
- Tasmanian Muslim Association
- Tatiara District Council
- Tatiara District Council + Chair Tatiara Multicultural Group
- Tatiara Multicultural Group (Afghan community)
- Tatiara Multicultural Group (Nepal community)
- Tatiara Multicultural Group (Pacific Islands communities)
- Te Korowai Aroha Inc.
- Temple Christian College (Wellbeing Coordinator)
- TenderCare Disability Service
- Tennis Australia
- TEYS Australia
- The Bangle Foundation
- The Federation of Chinese Associations Vic

- The Filipino Community Council of Victoria Inc. (FCCVI)
- The Salvation Army
- The Sikh Council
- The Uniting Church of Australia
- The Victorian Sikh Gurdwaras Council
- ThinkHQ
- Together for Humanity
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Top End Women's Legal Service Inc.
- Townsville Chamber of Commerce
- Townsville Enterprise
- Townsville Multicultural Support Group
- Townsville Multicultural Youth Forum
- Townsville Youth Council
- Turkish Islamic Society of Qld
- Tyndale Christian School (Wellbeing Coordinator)
- TYP.G

U

- Ukrainian Catholic Church Perth
- Ukrainian Community
- Umbrella Multicultural Community Care
- United Sisters
- United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia
- Unity Housing
- · University of New England
- University of New South Wales

- · University of Queensland
- · University of South Australia
- · University of Southern Queensland
- University of Tasmania (UTAS)
- University of Technology Sydney
- · University of Western Australia
- University of Western Sydney

- VICSEG New Futures
- Victoria Police (VICPOL)
- Victorian Afghan Associations Network
- Victorian Arabic Social Services
- Victorian Bangladeshi Community Foundation VBCF
- Victorian Council of Churches

- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- · Victorian Tamil Cultural Association
- Vietnamese Community in Australia Victoria Chapter
- Vietnamese Community of Australia ACT
- Village Connect Inc.
- · Voice of Muslims

W

- WA Local Government Association
- Wagga Wagga African Community
- Wagga Wagga City Council
- Wandana Mosque
- WANSLEA
- Water Polo Australia
- Way in Network/Rotary Club North Ryde/CCA NSW
- We are the Movement
- · Welcoming Australia
- · Welcoming Clubs
- Wellsprings for Women
- West Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
- · Western Australia Chin Christian Church

- Western Australia Vietnamese Women Association
- Western Sydney Community Forum
- Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre (Liverpool)
- Western Sydney University
- Women Life Freedom (TAS)
- · Women's Association South East Melbourne Australia (WASEMA)
- Women's Friendship Group
- Women's Legal Tasmania
- WOSSC Women's Safety Support Services
- Wyndham Community and Education Centre Community Support Group

- · Yayes Cafe
- Yazidi Community Toowoomba
- YMCA Kilgariff

- Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
- Youth Council Salisbury

Z

- Zimbabwe Darwin Community Association
- · Zomi United Football Club

Appendix F: Submission themes

Figure F1: Top 10 priority themes by submitter category*

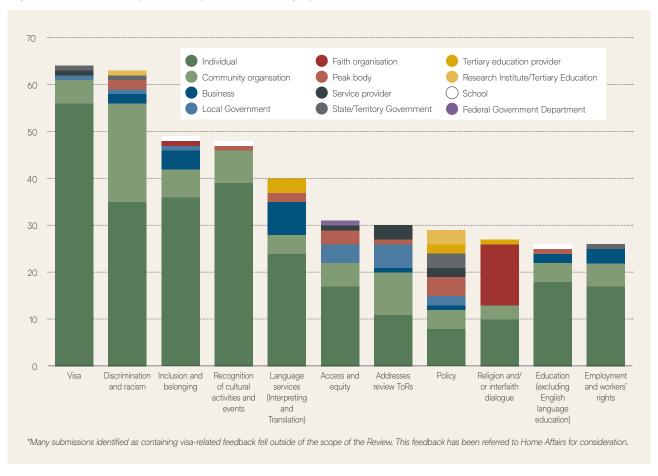
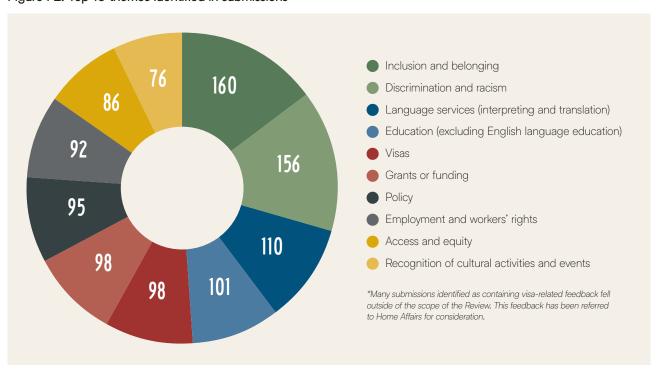


Figure F2: Top 10 themes identified in submissions*



Appendix G: Submissions list

The Review Panel is grateful for the contributions of the following individuals and organisations:

Α

- 2ac Australian Chinese Radio EN0772
- A New Approach ENO312
- Abdisa Kalbesa ENOO07
- ACT Education Directorate CALD Staff Network -EN0690
- Action Research Centre Ltd and Centre for Migrant and Refugee Health - EN0799
- Adis Duderija ENO296
- Adrian Kururangi ENO122, ENO125
- African Alliance NSW EN0734
- African Australian ENO646
- African Australian Advocacy Centre EN0147, MFR0030
- African Australian Council ACT Inc. EN0700
- African Women Community Support Group (AWCSG) Inc
 EN0097
- Africause Youth and Community Services Inc EN0572
- Alba Chliakhtine MFR0005
- Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council EN0754
- Ali A Elliin ENO624
- Alimoni Taumoepeau ENO657
- All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Services -EN0299
- Alladean Chidukwani ENOO61
- Amale Hourani ENO411
- Amandeep Singh ENO062
- Amarjit Singh Pabla EN0308
- AMES Australia EN0505
- Amigos: Interpreters and Translators ENO428 (2)
- Amin Kaveh FA0191
- Amirreza Yazdanian Kalashtari FAO417
- Amit Goyal EN0146
- Amy Luong ENO246
- An Bao Tran ENO542
- An Nguyen ENOOO4
- Anaab Rooble ENO626 (2)
- Dr. Anand Kulkarni ENOO92

- Emeritus Professor Andrew Jakubowicz MFRO016
- Andrus Karl Must ENO623 (2)
- Angela Durey and Linda Slack-Smith ENO295
- Anileen Bensted ENO691
- Anita ENO429
- Anita Rochaniasih ENO071
- Ann Aisatullin ENO575
- Anne-Marie Barrow ENO270
- Anton Muratov ENO339
- Dr. Antonio Cocchiaro AM ENO272
- Aparna Hebbani ENO076
- Arash Sadrnejad EN0702
- Ariadne Braz Magalhaes ENO447
- Arnela Tolic ENO647
- Aruni Arachchige ENO533
- Asian Australian Alliance EN0705
- Asian Australian Lawyers Association NSW Branch -EN0544
- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre EN0776
- Australia Day Council of SA EN0256 (2)
- Australia Hong Kong Link ENO630
- Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC) EN0771
- Australian Baha'i Community EN0800, MFR0025
- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference ENO301
- Australian Federation of Islamic Councils EN0546
- Australian Institute for Diversity in Mental Health -ENO368
- Australian Library and Information Association, CAVAL, and ALIA Multicultural - EN0750
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) -ENO373
- Australian Multicultural Council MFR0031
- Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative EN0804
- Australian Muslim Advocacy Network EN0792
- Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights -EN0523

- Australian Red Cross ENO589
- Australian Romany Association Inc. ENO187
- Australian Services Union ENO514
- Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association -EN0720
- Australian Vietnamese Women's Association EN0716
- Austrian Association of S.A. Inc. ENO157
- Ayesha Khalid ENO318
- Azita Azimi ENO014

- · Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV) and Whitley College -EN0653
- Barker College Junior School EN0707
- Basim Alansari ENO105
- Beatrice Esposto EN0765
- Benalla Migrant Camp Inc. EN0565

- Bernardo Dewey ENO264
- Dr. Bhakti Vasant ENO602
- Bola Zhang ENO498
- Brian Cooper EN0033
- Brotherhood of St Laurence ENO511

- Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Inc. EN0595
- Canberra Punjabi Sports and Cultural Assocition Inc. -EN0665
- Cara Bradley EN0360
- · Cara Cipollone Walsh, Sam Bricknell, Usman Iftihar, Daniela Castro - MFRO017
- Carley Weatherall ENO254
- Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health ENO433
- Centre for Multicultural Youth EN0784
- Charles Darwin University Northern Institute ENO619
- Charles Jenkinson ENOO30
- Charles Lee YUE0255
- Chihiro Gannaway ENO236
- Chinese Community Council of Australia Victoria Chapter - EN0554

- Citizen Tasmania ENO437
- City of Melbourne ENO445
- City of Moreton Bay ENO479
- · Commissioner for Children and Young People South Australia - FNO617
- Community and Public Sector Union EN0601
- Community Hubs Australia EN0593
- Community Response Australia Inc MFR0003
- Con Pagonis ENO102
- CORE Community Services EN0560
- Costa Vasili ENOO81
- Creative Australia MFRO020
- Cultural Infusion EN0521
- CulturalPulse ENO614
- CulturalWorks EN0309 (2)

- Dallas Brooks Community Primary School ENO489
- Danica Meas ENO644
- Darebin City Council EN0522
- David Feith ENO484
- Deakin University Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization (ADI) - ENO367
- Deakin University Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education - EN0746
- Deakin University Deakin Business School EN0719
- Debbie Celenza ENO195
- Debra Smith ENO196
- Democracy in Colour ENO636

- Department of Education EN0786
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations -EN0507
- Department of Health and Aged Care ENO436
- Department of Industry, Science and Resources -EN0586
- Prof Desmond Cahill O.A.M. ENO294
- Diversity Arts Australia MFRO018
- Diversity Australia ENO434
- Divina Guerrera ENO292

Ε

- Edwin Masih ENO381
- Elisha Soo Jung Lee EN0740
- Elvie Yap ENOO36
- Emma Turner ENO663
- Emmanuel Musoni EN0735
- Engage Pasefika Inc. EN0369
- Ephraim Osaghae ENO109
- Eric B. Kagorora EN0557
- Eritrean Australian Community & Settlement Support

Network Inc. - ENO231

- eSafety Commissioner MFR0028
- Ethel Osazuwa ENOO41
- Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc EN0555
- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland EN0774
- Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria MFRO019
- Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia -EN0738

- Faith Communities Council of Victoria EN0156
- Faizal Moulana Hasan Kutti ENO432
- Fara FAO219
- Prof Farida Fozdar EN0781
- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) - MFRO013
- Federation of the Indian Associations of ACT Inc (FINACT) - EN0744
- Felipe Andres Gore Escalante ENOO28

- Fergus Cheng EN0163
- Fiji Sangam Association of Victoria EN0562
- Filef Melbourne Inc. ENO604
- Fiona Stanaway ENO155
- Fitzroy Learning Network EN0785
- Forcibly Displaced People Network ENO342
- Freedom for Faith ENO456
- Fronditha Care EN0801
- FY KWOK EN0320

- Gamini Jayantha Jayantha Weerasekera EN0749
- Gasra na Gaeilge EN0728
- Geoff Fader EN0234
- Ghassan Shahin ENO104 (2)
- Giovanni Butera ITO215

- Girish Sharma ENOO31 (2)
- Glen Fernandes ENO203
- Dr. Glenda Ballantyne EN0763
- Gold Coast Afghan Community Inc EN0684
- Grant Mitchell Spork EN0022

- Harlaxton State School EN0151
- Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change - EN0760
- Hassan Hassan ENO606
- Hassan Raza ENO551

- Helen Said ENO111
- Hong Kin (Ken) Pang ENO137
- Howard L EN0039

- Iga William Severy EN0135
- Immigration Advice and Rights Centre (IARC) EN0769
- Independent Multicultural Media Australia (IMMA) -EN0568 (2)
- IndianCare ENO515
- Inho Mun KO0770
- Initiatives For Women In Need Inc. (IWiN) MFRO015

- Inner West Council EN0775
- Institute for Economics and Peace EN0689
- Integrate Workforce ENO117
- Iraqi Australian University Graduate Forum ENO075
- Islamophobia Register Australia EN0808

J

- Jacqueline Cox ENO197
- Jacqui Honeywood ENOO91
- Jade Qi Li EN0622
- Jamal Eddin Eftekhar FAO235
- Jasmine Hayter ZH0805
- Dr. Jennifer Y.J. Hsu EN0139
- Jenny Grey EN0409

- Jesuit Social Services ENO611
- Jimmy Call EN0332
- Jing Qi EN0777
- Rev. Dr. John Jegasothy EN0548
- Professor Emeritus Joseph A. Camilleri OAM ENO275
- Julia Browne ENO112
- June Anderson EN0745

K

- K C Boey EN0634
- Karitane ENO547
- Kathryn Ellen Jeffery ENO621
- Kavoos Hassanli ENO581
- Keegan Tihai EN0592
- Kelepi Komaisauvou Kubunameca ENO194
- Kelly-Ann Allen ENO258
- Kenneth Dachi EN0764

- Keyon Yang EN0170
- Khan Munhemul ENO241
- Khradija Bakurally ENOO01
- Kim McCausland EN0362
- Kin Advocacy EN0375
- Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, and Monash Councils - FNO475
- Kon Thai Driving School Cairns EN0326

- LEAD Professional Development Association Inc. & LEAD Connect - EN0748
- LEXIGO EN0618
- Liam Lee ENO492
- Lindsay Gordon Hackett ENO673
- Lisa Massey ENOO60
- Liz Vuchocho ENOO21
- Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People

- Seeking Asylum EN0509
- Local Government NSW EN0506
- Lucy (Lucila) Salinas ENO277
- Lushan Charles Qin (Professor) ENOO87
- Luxin Liu ENO143

M

- MacKillop Family Services EN0300
- Macquarie University Lifespan Health and Wellbeing Research Centre - EN0715
- Macquarie University Multilingualism Research Centre -EN0573
- Mai Pham VIO348
- Manningham Council Multicultural Communities Advisory Committee - ENO483
- Mara Reifman ENO267
- Margaret Hui ZHO454
- Margaret Piper EN0380
- Mariangela Stagnitti ENO674
- Mary Johnston ENO608
- Media Diversity Australia ENO468
- Mehrzad Saeedikiya ENO670
- Melaleuca Australia EN0794
- Melbourne Polytechnic ENO500
- Menaka Iyengar ENO450
- MercyCare EN0599
- Merri-bek City Council ENO446
- Michael Oh EN0803
- Michelle Lee ENO453
- Mieken Grant ENOO80
- Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania EN0161
- Migrant Workers Centre ENO493
- Mildura English Language Centre ENO687
- Minwen Wu ENO262
- Mitra Golbaghi FAO286
- Mohamed Ali Kalifullah MFR0009
- Mohammad Deis ENO010

- Mohammad Rajabi ENO664
- Moira EN0040
- Monash University Monash Intercultural Lab EN0796
- Mornington Peninsula Shire EN0768
- Mosaic Multicultural Connections EN0793
- Muhammad Zeeshan Iqbal EN0180
- Mukhles Habash EN0549
- Multi Faith Education Collaboration ENO154
- Multicultural Aged Care EN0791
- Multicultural Arts Victoria ENO306 (2)
- Multicultural Australia ENO789
- Multicultural Australia Community Leaders' Gathering (CLG) and Future Leaders' Advocacy Group (FLAG) -EN0790
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health ENO518
- Multicultural Communities Council of Australia Inc. -EN0556
- Multicultural Community Connect Queensland Inc. -EN0681
- Multicultural Community Services of Central Australia -EN0795 (2)
- Multicultural Council of Tasmania EN0577
- Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory MFR0014
- Multicultural Women Victoria EN0762
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia EN0757
- Multilingual Australia ENO152
- Municipal Association of Victoria ENO655
- Murray Bourne EN0103
- Muslim Women Australia ENO510

N

- Nadia EN0107
- Naracoorte Lucindale Council EN0365
- National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) - ENO497
- National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) -EN0303
- National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC) - EN0520
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) EN0530

- Nayyer Faisal ENO273
- Nella Centorbi ENO114
- Nementobor Kpahn ENO645
- Nepali Society of Tasmania ENO721
- Neranjala ENO224
- New South Wales Government MFR0021
- Next In Colour EN0550
- Nihal Iscel EN0714

- Nimal Sedera EN0753
- Ninik Sugiyanti ENO351
- Northern Health EN0541
- NOT ON MY WATCH EN0113 (2)
- NSW Federation of Community Language Schools Inc. -

EN0658

- NSW Refugee Communities Advocacy Network (RCAN) -EN0574
- NT Working Women's Centre Inc EN0693

0

- Oaktree Australia and National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) - EN0725
- Odyssey Research Hub EN0525
- Olufemi Adeola Ajayi ENO379

- Om Dhungel EN0221 (2)
- Osman Mah EN0133
- Our Race Community EN0787

P

- Pacific Women Professional Business Network Inc -ENO042
- PacificwinPacific EN0159
- Pansy EN0526, EN0527, EN0528
- Pansy Kuang EN0519
- Parsu Budathoki ENO199
- Patricia Alves EN0723
- Penrith Multicultural Interagency ENO427

- Dr. Peter Balan OAM EN0806
- Phuc Huynh Cong VI0640
- Ponraj Krishna Pandi EN0121
- Professionals Australia ENO607
- ProjectsJSA EN0797
- Prutha Parikh ENO019
- Public Health Association of Australia EN0620

\mathbf{G}

- QPASTT and Social Research Centre ENO480
- Queensland African Communities Council EN0099
- Queensland Government EN0587

R

- Radha Ravi ENO439, ENO694
- Rakesh Kumar Burugu EN0082
- Randa Baini ENO213
- Rasheed Abu Hamda ARO471
- Raul de Abreu Engel EN0108
- Ravi Krishnamurthy ENO371
- Ray Steinwall EN0206
- Reconciliation Australia ENO609

- Refugee Council of Australia EN0559
- Rev Kelepi Komaisauvou Kubunameca ENO181
- Reynaldo Lopez EN0127
- Richard Dove EN0158
- RMIT University Translating & Interpreting Program -EN0582
- Robert Scott Wilson EN0027
- Royal Life Saving Society South Australia ENO232

S

- Sabeen Munawar EN0363
- Sakeasi Tawaketini ENO207
- Samir Kafaji EN0733
- Sara Pendashteh FA0302
- Sarma Tusek EN0747
- Serena Savannah ENOO43

- Settlement Council of Australia EN0751
- Prof Sev Ozdowski AM ENO345 (2)
- Shanay Jacobs ENO414
- Shikha Malviya ENO106
- Shyamala Dhamarla Venkata Subba Rao EN0638
- Slviya Awsee ENO153

- Solange Nyarusalemu Ntigonza ENO438
- Somali Community Inc. ENO435
- Soraya Kassim ENO141
- South East Community Links EN0504
- Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre ENO517
- Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) EN0722
- Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre EN0564
- SSI EN0766
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation -EN0758
- Stephen McGrory EN0377

- Stephen Sibanda ENO539
- Sumitra Kaneson ENOO11
- Sundas Rehman ENO144
- Sunita Kalkal ENO119
- Surinder Jain ENO696
- Susan Patricia Ennis ENO612
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services ENO478
- SydWest Multicultural Services EN0596
- Syed Ammar Nazar Sibtain ENO123
- Syed Atiq ul Hassan EN0352

- Taban Ongee EN0553
- Taihan Rahman ENO205
- Tasmanian Government EN0662
- Dr. Tebeje Molla ENOO83
- Teck Low YUE0210
- Tee Maximilian Pham VIO639 (2)
- Terence John Fewtrell ENO495
- Teresa De Fazio FN0807
- Thais Martins ENO131
- The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators -EN0711
- The Boite (Vic) Inc ENO494
- The Iceberg Foundation ENO115
- The Migrant Centre Organisation Inc. (trading as Thriving

Multicultural Communities) - ENO561

- The Migration Hub at ANU EN0782
- The Office of Khmer-Australian Migration Agents -MFR0004
- The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture -EN0695
- Thi luong ENO089
- Thomas Andreas Bester ENO249
- Together for Humanity Foundation EN0759
- Townsville City Council ENOO08
- Townsville Youth Council ENO661
- Tristan Minh Dang ENO418
- True Relationships and Reproductive Health ENO129
- Trung Doan ENO490

- Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA EN0598
- United in Diversity WA Inc. & Nuanced EN0731
- University of Melbourne ENO584

• University of the Philippines Alumni Association in Victoria Australia - ENO552

- Valerie Lester ENO242
- Van Phuong ENO461
- Venerable Mettaji ENO474
- Vesna Cvjeticanin EN0726
- Victoria Hongkongers Association (Australia) Inc. -EN0635
- Victorian Arabic Social Services EN0508

- Victorian Government ENO672
- Victorian Refugee Health Network ENO516
- Vinothini Thirunavukkarasu ENO183
- VITS Language Loop MFR0002
- Volunteering Australia EN0569
- Volunteering Victoria MFR0023

W

- WA Weekly Arabic Newspaper EN0392
- Prof Wanning Sun EN0116
- Welcoming Australia ENO444
- Wellsprings for Women EN0002
- Wesa Chau ENO086, EN0346
- West Australian Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office -EN0020
- Western Australian Government MFR0024
- Western Sydney Community Forum EN0780
- Western Sydney University EN0536
- Western Sydney University Challenging Racism Project - EN0567

- Whittlesea Community Connections EN0779
- Whittlesea Multicultural Community Council EN0773
- Women of World Stage WOWS Inc. EN0761
- Women's Legal Services Australia EN0767
- Women's Safety Services South Australia (WSSSA) -EN0132
- Wyndham Community & Education Centre Inc. -EN0588
- Wynn Te Kani ENO615

• Dr. Yash Chawla - EN0566

• Yasmin Khan - EN0524

• Zac Chu - EN0580

Appendix H: State and territory legislation and policy settings

New South Wales

- Legislation/foundational document: Multicultural NSW Act 2000, amended and renamed by the Multicultural NSW Legislation Amendment Act 2014.
- Government responsibility: Multicultural NSW is the lead agency for implementing the policy and legislative framework to support multicultural principles in NSW. It administers a range of grants programs.
- Policy: The Multicultural Policies and Services Program is a framework to assist agencies with multicultural planning.
- · Commission/advisory body: Multicultural NSW includes an Advisory Board. Both bodies are established by the Multicultural NSW Act.

Victoria

- Legislation/foundational document: Multicultural Victoria Act 2011.
- Government responsibility: The Multicultural Affairs portfolio previously sat within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, but on 1 February 2021 responsibility was moved to the newly created Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. Information on multicultural community grants is available on the government website.
- Policy: The Victorian Government's Multicultural Policy Statement, 'And proud of it', was launched in 2017. The government issues an annual Report in Multicultural Affairs.
- · Commission/advisory body: The Victorian Multicultural Commission established as an independent body (then the Ethnic Affairs Commission) in 1983 and is now constituted under the Multicultural Victoria Act 2011. There is a range of other multicultural advisory groups.

South Australia

- Legislation/foundational document: South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1980 South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1980 [ceased] | South Australian Legislation. A legislative review of the Act was conducted in 2019. Following the review process, a new Bill was drafted and introduced to the South Australian Parliament on 14 October 2020. The Bill amends the commission's core functions, updates the language of the 1980 Act, and requires the development of a new South Australian Multicultural Charter. The Bill passed the House of Assembly on 27 May 2021 and, as at the time of writing, was before the Legislative Council.
- Government responsibility: The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is responsible for the development of multicultural policies and programs and the promotion of cultural diversity in South Australia. It administers the Multicultural Grants Program, comprising a number of streams of funding support.
- Policy: South Australia currently does not have a multicultural policy document or framework (see above). The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has a brief statement on its website.
- Commission/advisory body: The South Australian Multicultural Commission is a statutory body established under the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1980.

Queensland

- Legislation/foundational document: Multicultural Recognition Act 2016. The Act establishes the Multicultural Queensland Charter. The Charter was jointly signed in August 2017 by the Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and the Speaker, Peter Wellington.
- Government responsibility: The Queensland Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs administers a range of programs and initiatives on multiculturalism and anti-racism, including event and project funding.
- Policy: The current Multicultural Policy and Action Plan, 'Our story, our future', was published in December 2018. The Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 also provides for Multicultural Action Plans and progress reports on the policy. The second Multicultural Action Plan 2019-20 to 2021-22 is currently in place.
- Commission/advisory body: The Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council, established by the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016, is chaired by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Western Australia

- Legislation/foundational document: The WA Charter of Multiculturalism was adopted in 2004.
- Government responsibility: The Office of Multicultural Interests is a division of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. The OMI's website provides a page on funding and grants programs.
- Policy: The Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework was endorsed in February 2020. It sets multicultural policy priorities for WA public sector agencies, based on the principles and objectives of the Charter.
- Commission/advisory body: The Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council advises the government and the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests.

Tasmania

- Legislation/foundational document: Policy only (see below).
- Government responsibility: Multicultural Access Point website with resources and community information.
- Policy: The Tasmanian Government released Our Multicultural Island: Tasmania's Multicultural Policy and Action Plan 2019-2022 in 2019, replacing the 2014 version.

Northern Territory

- Legislation/foundational document: Policy only (see below).
- Government responsibility: The Northern Territory Office of Multicultural Affairs was previously within the Department of the Chief Minister and is now part of the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities. It administers grants programs.
- Policy: The Multicultural Policy for the Northern Territory 2020—25 replaced the Northern Territory Multicultural Participation Framework 2016—19.
- Commission/advisory body: The Minister's Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs in the Northern Territory is chaired by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Australian Capital Territory

- Legislation/foundational document: In February 2023, following extensive community consultation, the ACT Government passed the Multiculturalism Act 2023, to support the Territory's continuous growth and improvement as an inclusive city.
- Government responsibility: The Office of Multicultural Affairs is part of the ACT Community Services Directorate. It runs a range of services and grants programs.
- Policy: The most recent available documentation is the ACT Multicultural Framework and Action Plan 2015—2020. The Framework provided guidance to assist ACT Government agencies and set objectives on provision of services, participation and social cohesion, and diversity. It replaced the ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010—2013. There was a report on the first Action Plan 2015—18, and a second Action Plan was established for 2019—20.
- Commission/advisory body: The ACT Multicultural Advisory Council was established in 2017 and acts as a conduit to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs on the views of members of culturally diverse communities.

Appendix I: Art competition for children and young people

The Review Panel is grateful to receive art works from children and young people representing their vision of a multicultural Australia:



Cover

Name: Miliana

Title of artwork: Everyone is different Age group category: 4—8 years Theme 3: Australia looks like this to me



Chapter 1: Setting the context for multiculturalism in Australia

Name: Fleur

Title of artwork: The Diverse Tree Age group category: 9—13 years Theme 3: Australia looks like this to me



Chapter 2: Identity: how we want to be seen

Name: Alicia

Title of artwork: Colourful crowds Age group category: 14—17 years Theme 3: Australia looks like this to me.



Chapter 3: Belonging: how we feel at home

Name: Mila

Title of artwork: Brightside **Age group category:** 4—8 years

Theme 2: Where I feel welcomed and I belong



Chapter 4: Representation: media, communication and the arts

Name: Olivia

Title of artwork: I am a Liminal Age group category: 14—17 years

Theme 1: I feel seen, I feel heard, I feel safe



Chapter 5: Connection: getting the architecture and

institutional settings right

Name: Amelia

Title of artwork: Me and my kinder teacher

Age group category: 4—8 years

Theme 1: I feel seen, I feel heard, I feel safe.



Chapter 6: Language: supporting Australians to communicate

Name: Anwen

Title of artwork: We are together **Age group category:** 9—13 years

Theme 2: Where I feel welcomed and I belong



Chapter 7: Inclusion: how we work together to get services right

Name: Jaide

Title of artwork: Ajarku Muruu **Age group category:** 9—13 years Theme 3: Australia looks like this to me



Chapter 8: Enabling and measuring success: research evaluation and

reporting

Name: Grace

Title of artwork: The land filling with history and harmony

Age group category: 9—13 years Theme 3: Australia looks like this to me



Chapter 9: Leadership and accountability

Name: Isu

Title of artwork: The heart of Australia **Age group category:** 4—8 years

Theme 2: Where I feel welcomed and I belong



Chapter 10: Implementation

Name: Jonievis

Title of artwork: Different but the Same **Age group category:** 9—13 years Theme 3: Australia looks like this to me



Appendix

Name: Freyja

Title of artwork: Safe Spaces Age group category: 9—13 years

Theme 1: I feel seen, I feel heard, I feel safe

ENDNOTES

- In drafting its report, the Review Panel considered the following descriptive summaries about Australia's multicultural history: Strengthening Multiculturalism — Parliament of Australia, Issues facing diaspora communities in Australia — Parliament of Australia, Our history — Multicultural Affairs.
- 2 First Word to the Review, June Oscar, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, December 2023.
- 3 To show the impacts of colonialism, the Commissioner said: 'the lie had already wrought significant damage and harm to our peoples, which started with conflict and massacres, and continued through policies to assimilate us into Anglo society, the most well-known being the one resulting in Stolen Generations'. See First Word to the Review, June Oscar, December 2023.
- Ozdowski AM, S., The Origin, Evolution, and Success of Australian Multiculturalism, Pre-publication copy provided to 4
- 5 Ozdowski AM, S., The Origin, Evolution, and Success of Australian Multiculturalism, Pre-publication copy provided to Panel (2023).
- 6 Public Submission, EN0722 (2023).
- 7 Ozdowski AM, S., The Origin, Evolution, and Success of Australian Multiculturalism, Pre-publication copy provided to Panel (2023).
- 8 Public Submission, ENO478 (2023).
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- Meera Deo, quoted in Trish Prentice, 'Why call me that?': Reflections on labels in a diverse nation, Scanlon 10 Foundation Research Institute, 2023, p. 22.
- Public Submission, EN0789 (2023). 11
- 12 Public Submission, ENO111 (2023).
- 13 Public Submission, EN0300 (2023).
- 14 Discussion with Panel, Osmond Chiu, Multicultural Framework Review Reference Group Member.
- 15 Public Submission, EN0757 (2023).
- Public Submission, EN0365 (2032). 16
- 17 The Senate, Nationhood, national identity and democracy, Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee, Parliament of Australia website, 2021.
- Noel Pearson, 'Recognition', ABC Boyer Lecture Series, October 2022, ABC website. 18
- 19 Public Submission, EN0567 (2023).
- 20 Public Submission, EN0782 (2023).
- James Arvanitakis, (2014) 'How do we teach what it means to be Australian?', The Conversation, (online at 11 December 2023).
- 22 Public Submission, EN0152 (2023).
- 23 National Multicultural Advisory Council, Australian multiculturalism for a new century: Towards inclusiveness,
- 24 <u>Chapter 4 — Parliament of Australia</u> (aph.gov.au) (online at 11 December 2023).
- 25 <u>Chapter 4 — Parliament of Australia</u> (aph.gov.au) (online at 11 December 2023).
- Public Submission, EN0758 (2023). 26
- Public Submission, EN0757 (2023); Public, EN0661 (2023). 27
- 28 Public Submission, EN0565 (2023).
- 29 Public Submission, EN0559 (2023); Public, Submission, EN0575 (2023).
- 30 Public Submission, EN0720 (2023).
- 31 Public Submission, MFR0020 (2023); Public Submission, EN0494 (2023).
- 32 Public Submission, EN0569 (2023).

- 33 Public Submission, EN0731 (2023).
- Public Submission, EN0375 (2023). 34
- 35 Public Submission, MFRO018 (2023).
- 36 Public Submission, MFR0020 (2023).
- 37 Public Submission, ENO275 (2023).
- 38 Public Submission, ENO275 (2023).
- 39 Public Submission, ENO445 (2023).
- 40 Public Submission, EN0380 (2023).
- 41 Public Submission, EN0574 (2023).
- 42 Public Submission, EN0342 (2023).
- 43 Anonymous Submission, ENO070 (2023).
- 44 Public Submission, EN0575 (2023).
- 45 Anonymous Submission, EN0585 (2023).
- 46 Public Submission, ENO205 (2023).
- Public Submission, ENO480 (2023). 47
- 48 Public Submission, ENO661 (2023).
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- 50 Public Submission, EN0574 (2023).
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- 52 National Report (asianaustralianalliance.net), referenced in Anonymous Submission, ENO590 (2023), (online at 14 December 2023).
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- 58 Public Submission, MFR0025 (2023).
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- 71 Consultation with Foundation House, on 26 September 2023.
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- 90 Anonymous Submission, EN0710 (2023).
- 91 Anonymous Submission, ARO465 (2023).
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- 93 Anonymous Submission, FA0337 (2023); Anonymous Submission, YUE0344 (2023).
- 94 Public Submission, ENOO02 (2023).
- 95 Public Submission, ENO517 (2023).
- 96 Public Submission, EN0785 (2023).
- 97 Public Submission, EN0588 (2023).
- 98 Public Submission, EN0751 (2023).
- 99 Public Submission, ENO117 (2023).
- 100 Anonymous Submission, VIO311 (2023).
- 101 Public Submission, EN0726 (2023).
- 102 Public Submission, ENO497 (2023).
- 103 Public Submission, ENO497 (2023).
- 104 Public Submission, EN0573 (2023); Public Submission, EN0796 (2023).
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