

Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council

Meeting Communiqué

The seventh meeting of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council was held in Cairns on 19 May 2021, chaired by the Honourable Leanne Linard MP, Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Members travelled to Cairns on 18 May 2021 and undertook 'site visits' to meet with local stakeholders including the Cairns Regional Council, the Cairns branch of the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT) and the Islamic Society of Cairns at the Cairns Mosque. Members heard about issues, concerns and successes in the region, including the work of the local council as a Welcoming Cities member; the need for a shared multicultural space in Cairns for local culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities; representation of specific groups such as Muslims in the media; and the importance of places of worship in regional areas.

The following day the Council held their meeting which commenced with members discussing issues of concern for their respective communities. Issues raised were wide-ranging and several shared issues emerged including: the need to encourage community members to provide a submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee inquiry into serious vilification and hate crime; the need for more education to address racism; the need for regional services to be tailored and appropriate for the range of CALD cohorts; and the lack of CALD representation in politics and the media.

Council members briefly discussed the development of the next multicultural action plan, resolving to meet out-of-session to provide the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs with more comprehensive feedback.

Professor Andrew Markus from Monash University provided Council members with a presentation on the key findings for Queensland from the 2020 Scanlon Foundation Social Cohesion Survey. Notably, the survey showed that in line with the national trend in 2020, Queensland's Scanlon Monash Index of Social Cohesion score improved across all five domains which include: belonging, worth, social justice, political participation and acceptance/rejection.

The Council was joined by the Australian Race Discrimination Commissioner, Mr Chin Tan, and Ms Catherine Duff of the Race Discrimination team at the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to discuss the development of a National Anti-Racism Framework (NARF). The Commissioner outlined the rationale and need for a NARF and emphasised the framework would be a roadmap and reference point for Australia about race relations.

The Council assisted the AHRC to run a community consultation session on the NARF with local multicultural community groups and service providers. A report outlining the findings from the consultation will be made available on the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs' website.