MINISTER’S FOREWORD

The Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 details the Queensland Government’s vision for a unified, harmonious and inclusive community. It also provides for a Multicultural Action Plan to realise this vision, and to publicly commit to practical actions we will take to deliver positive change for all Queenslanders, ensuring the continuing economic and social participation of all people who have made Queensland their home.

This includes making sure services provided by government are responsive to the diversity of the people of Queensland, that we facilitate pathways to economic participation, and confront racism and discrimination to make Queensland a place of welcome for everyone.

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on our economy and our community. It has highlighted our strength and resilience as a community as we have worked together to care for and support each other. It has also highlighted some areas where we need to take action, so that everyone in our community has equitable access to government messaging, information and support.

We benefit enormously from diversity and this Action Plan will build on our strengths to support thriving communities by addressing the challenges we face to ensure equitable access and opportunity for all. The Action Plan includes a commitment to engage with stakeholders to develop a whole-of-government target for cultural and linguistic diversity representation on Queensland Government boards which will be implemented over a five-year period. This commitment will mean that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will be better able to see themselves reflected in key decision-making bodies and the Queensland community will experience the benefits we know diversity brings to decision making.

This Action Plan will contribute to developing the Queensland Government as a leader in supporting cultural diversity and inclusion.

I look forward to working with my Ministerial colleagues and their agencies, my Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council, multicultural communities, non-government and private sector organisations, to realise the benefits this Action Plan will bring to Queensland.

Leanne Linard MP
Minister for Children and Youth Justice
and Minister for Multicultural Affairs
WHO DO WE MEAN BY PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BGACKGROUNDS?

This Multicultural Action Plan focuses on people who identify as being from diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds, specifically people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, people seeking asylum and Australian South Sea Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government are building a reframed relationship that acknowledges, embraces and celebrates Indigenous Australians, and builds on strengths to support thriving communities.

We are proud that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have continuing rights and responsibilities as the first peoples of Queensland, including traditional ownership and connection to land and waters.

In the spirit of healing, we recognise the past acts of dispossession, settlement and discriminatory policies, and the cumulative acts of colonial and state governments since the commencement of colonisation which have left an enduring legacy of economic and social disadvantage that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced and continue to experience.

We will move forward together with mutual respect, recognition and a willingness to speak the truth about our shared history.

Through our continued shared commitment to reconciliation, all Queenslanders will be part of this journey.
OUR COMMITMENT TO MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism may mean different things to different people. The Queensland Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 (the Act) outlines the Queensland Government’s commitment to multiculturalism and fostering opportunities for people from a range of diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

The 2021 Census showed that over 22 per cent of Queensland’s total population was born overseas. It also found 13.5 per cent of Queenslanders speak a language other than English at home, confirming the rich cultural and linguistic fabric of Queensland society.

To the Queensland Government, our Multicultural Queensland Charter expresses what multiculturalism means and how we can promote an inclusive, harmonious and united community. The Charter honours Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Australian South Sea Islander peoples and recognises our history of migration and cultural diversity as one of our strengths. It outlines eight guiding principles:

1. We are committed to democracy and Australian laws, so our community is strong and unified.
2. We all work together to make Queensland a prosperous state.
3. We all respect, embrace, celebrate and are free to express our culture, language and religion.
4. We all have equal rights and responsibilities, and everyone can access government services, when needed.
5. We are all committed to mutual respect and fair treatment, so Queensland is a caring, safe and inclusive place to live.
6. We all ensure everybody gets a chance to contribute and participate.
7. We all communicate respectfully and build mutual understanding of the views, stories and issues of importance to all Queenslanders.
8. We all make sure everyone feels like they belong and look after each other in times of need.

Through this Multicultural Action Plan, the Queensland Government will bring these Multicultural Queensland Charter principles to life and contribute towards multiculturalism.
HOW THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED TO DELIVER EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND REALISE THE BENEFITS OF OUR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

All Queensland Government initiatives and services, including funded services, are designed to be responsive to all Queenslanders. The Queensland Government has had success working towards this ambition across each of the three multicultural policy priority areas – Culturally responsive Government, Inclusive, Harmonious and United Communities and Economic Opportunities.

This Multicultural Action Plan will build on this good work as we work to promote an inclusive, diverse and welcoming community by 2032 and create great legacies by enhancing our cities and regions for all who reside in Queensland.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

Throughout COVID-19, the Queensland Government has worked hard to ensure that people who have difficulties communicating in English can access vital public health messaging in a range of channels, formats and languages. Feedback from community organisations and community leaders has been used to ensure that any language gaps were identified, and the development of translated materials prioritised.

For languages where it was difficult to source qualified interpreters and translators, community leaders were supported to provide COVID-19 messaging to members of their community who had low English literacy. For example, agencies worked closely with the Queensland African Communities Council to identify languages and dialects requiring translated materials or information provided in other modalities such as video. In addition to being responsive in the short term, the Queensland government has taken a long-term approach to supporting people from multicultural communities to access interpreters as part of disaster preparedness.

This includes an investment of $730,000 over three years from 2021-22 to boost the supply of interpreters in priority languages. The Interpreter Training Boost Program, delivered by TAFE SA, 2M Language Services and the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), will help Queenslanders who speak in-demand languages with their interpreter training and NAATI certification fees. It will provide opportunities for at least 100 Queenslanders to gain jobs in the interpreting industry, building connections with diverse communities and strengthening our economic recovery.
Queenslanders have a long tradition of welcoming and assisting people fleeing torture, war and facing persecution.

We have supported the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our community via the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program, delivered through Communify Queensland, a proven, professional human service organisation, working in collaboration with the Australian Red Cross, Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma, Multicultural Australia and the World Wellness Group.

The Queensland Government has committed $4.6 million to this program since 2017-18 and an additional $8.3 million from 2021-22 through to 2024-25, to alleviate financial hardship and mental distress for those requiring emergency relief.

No matter how people came here or where they come from, the Queensland Government has helped reduce barriers facing refugees and people seeking asylum to create opportunities for them to participate and contribute to all aspects of life.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The Queensland Government’s Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative, which provides an investment of $320 million over four years and $80 million ongoing, will assist up to 15,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders each year to gain skills, qualifications and experience to enter and stay in the workforce. People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are one of the priority cohorts for this signature initiative.

The Queensland Government has also invested $3 million to help up to 1000 work-ready migrants, refugees and international students access support and guidance to help them find jobs and build up their careers through the Diverse Queensland Workforce Program, part of the $200 million Future Skills Fund.

The Queensland Overseas Skills Qualifications Unit provides free academic assessments of qualifications gained overseas to support migrants to use their skills at an appropriate level in the workforce and contribute to the Queensland economy.

These programs have helped create the environment where everybody can have a fair go because they are supported to:

- be on an equal footing;
- get the most out of opportunities, including getting the right support when they need it; and
- get a job that makes the most of their skills and knowledge.
THE QUEENSLAND MULTICULTURAL ACTION PLAN 2022–23 TO 2023–24

The intent of the third Action Plan is to continue strengthening the foundations to ensure people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are able to access services, participate and contribute fully both socially and economically, and to consolidate and embed the results achieved in previous action plans.

It includes six key actions to start our 10-year journey towards achieving our vision:

By 2032, the Queensland Government will be a leader in supporting cultural diversity and inclusion

These actions are aimed at ensuring we know who our clients are and understand their experiences in dealing with government, address any barriers to their access to government services, realise the immense benefits of harnessing the skills and experiences of our diversity, and address racism and discrimination in all its forms.

It also includes a commitment to engage with stakeholders to develop a whole-of-government target for the representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds on Queensland Government boards to be implemented over the five-year period, 2022-23 to 2026-27.

KEY ACTION 1:

The Queensland Government will facilitate economic participation opportunities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds

Equity and parity in workforce participation and the economic growth of Queensland is a critical issue. There are current and longer-term opportunities to address ongoing challenges to the full inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse cohorts in Queensland’s economy, as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery plan and in the lead up to 2032.

Over the next two years, the Queensland Government will take practical steps to contribute to improved economic outcomes for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This includes promoting access to social procurement opportunities, improving accessibility of existing government funded employment and training programs to culturally diverse communities and organisations and building the capacity of smaller and new and emerging communities to be competitive in government funding processes that support employment pathways.

We will know we have been successful in implementing this action when we see improved reach into new and emerging communities and increased program participation, employment and training that matches the skills and ambitions of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COMMITMENT

Thirteen agencies have signed up to Key action 1 and will undertake specific activities in support of this action. Some examples of how this will be implemented include:

- Trade and Investment Queensland will undertake Export and Investment roadshows for Migration Queensland business visa holders and migration agents/immigration lawyers in regional Queensland, in collaboration with Mayors, local councils and businesses, to facilitate investment.

- The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will advertise for community members from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in government employment, grants and program assessment panels, as appropriate.

- The Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning will encourage increasing use of social clauses in tenders and contracts to purchase additional social benefits when contracting mainstream suppliers.

KEY ACTION 2:

Barriers to participation facing culturally and linguistically diverse communities will be removed so they can join the Public Sector and Queensland Government boards, through culturally inclusive recruitment practices and workplace cultures.

We know that nearly 50 per cent of skilled migrants and refugees are not using their skills or experience gained before arriving in Queensland.\(^1\) Research has also highlighted the importance of culturally and linguistically diverse people being able to establish local networks and obtain work experience to facilitate opportunities for getting a job in their field.

As the largest employer in Queensland, the Queensland Government will take practical steps to significantly improve economic opportunities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including migrants, refugees, people seeking asylum; and Australian South Sea Islander peoples, by providing meaningful employment and career progression opportunities, including mentoring, work placement or pathways to better using their skills and experience. This will help support achieving a culturally responsive government through a more diverse workforce.

Agencies will also develop strategies to address any identified under-representation of employees from culturally diverse backgrounds amongst agency staff.
We will know we have been successful in implementing this action when we report improved results in the *Working for Queensland Survey* for the indicator: *Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation* and our workforces better reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, including in leadership roles, with increased representation, retention and progression of employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Further, we will build on the existing whole-of-government commitment and progress made to increasing all forms of diversity on Queensland Government boards by engaging with stakeholders to develop a whole-of-government target for culturally and linguistically diverse people on boards, committees, and other bodies over the five-year period 2022-23 to 2026-27. Evidence shows clearly that decision-making, service delivery and organisational legitimacy are all improved when governing bodies reflect the diversity of communities and stakeholders.

Diversity of skills and expertise, and the perspectives and lived experiences of all Queenslanders, contribute to good governance, improving the performance and leadership of an organisation, and help ensure that boards are making decisions in the interests of the Queensland community.

Diverse boards bring more inclusive and egalitarian culture — one that elevates different voices, integrates diverse perspectives and insights, and welcomes conversations about diversity, including workforce diversity. Diverse boards also support workforce diversity by providing leadership, championing diversity, and setting a good example for the public sector workforce.

### SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COMMITMENT

Key action 2 is an all-agency action. Agencies will undertake specific activities in support of this action. Some examples of how this will be implemented include:

- The Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy will establish a senior executive multicultural champion to support planning for diversity and inclusion.

- The Queensland Police Service will deliver the Multicultural Recruit Program, through the Queensland Police Service Academy, offering tailored induction, support and development of recruits from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- The Department of Education will consider the Multicultural Queensland Charter in the drafting of certified agreements to ensure inclusive, non-discriminatory language consistent with the Charter’s principles.

- Queensland Health, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs will establish internships and pathways to employment to better utilise the skills and experiences of people with overseas qualifications.
KEY ACTION 3:

Over the next two years, Queensland Government agencies will improve their cultural responsiveness by undertaking an audit of critical areas of service delivery (funded or directly delivered).

We know that it is critical for government services to be culturally responsive, so they are accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Emergencies and disasters such as cyclones, floods and droughts are unfortunately a regular part of our lives in Queensland. Each time they happen we see the negative impacts of factors such as unfamiliarity with Queensland’s physical and social environment, low English proficiency, poor awareness of local hazards, undeveloped support networks and previous trauma experiences for many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Through this action, agencies will gain a better understanding of what their clients need by engaging with and deeply listening to culturally and linguistically diverse clients and communities, genuinely seeking and reflecting on the feedback they share and ways they can be improved.

This will be supported by ensuring the audit is embedded in agency planning cycles and appropriately resourced.

Queensland Government agencies will be accountable for then identifying and addressing any barriers to equitable access for the diverse customers they serve.

We will know we have been successful in implementing this action when we see increased access to and satisfaction of culturally and linguistically diverse customers with agency programs and services.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COMMITMENT

Fourteen agencies have signed up to Key action 3 and will undertake specific activities in support of this action. Some examples of how this will be implemented include:

- Queensland Health will review health services provided to new arrivals under the Humanitarian Settlement Program.

- The Department of Transport and Main Roads will implement an Access and Inclusion Index assessment to measure the accessibility and inclusion of their products and services, to develop a road map to improve and to enhance its service delivery.

- The Department of Education will implement a whole-of-department plan to improve educational outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people.
KEY ACTION 4:

The Queensland Government will collect, analyse, and use cultural diversity data to improve service delivery and better meet customer needs.

The Queensland Multicultural Policy *Our Story, Our Future* and Multicultural Action Plans are underpinned by the Queensland Government’s commitment to a consistent approach for collecting statistical information about the diversity of people who use Queensland Government services.

Queensland Government agencies are at different stages and levels of maturity on their diversity data journey. This means current administrative datasets may under-represent culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Understanding where disparities and inequities exist in accessing services is essential for evidence-based policy, resource allocation and service delivery planning. Only then can we ensure that Queensland Government services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all people.

Over the next two years, we will ensure the right systems are in place to collect diversity data.

We will improve diversity data use by analysing current performance against diversity data indicators (country of birth, preferred language, interpreter required and ethnicity/cultural identity) to understand data gaps, opportunities for system performance improvement, target setting and trends relating to our clients.

We will also extend diversity data collection requirements to funded non-government organisations delivering programs and services, and share this information with contracting agencies, as appropriate. This will be supported by implementing strategies to improve the collection of data, such as embedding training for frontline staff on why data is needed, how to collect it and explaining this to customers to encourage them to provide diversity information.

We know we will have been successful in implementing this action when we see agencies reporting annually on their diversity data and using their diversity data to improve service quality and better target their delivery and investment.
SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COMMITMENT

Eighteen agencies have signed up to Key action 4 and will undertake specific activities in support of this action. Some examples of how this will be implemented include:

- The Public Service Commission will establish a new employment target for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- Queensland Health will develop a report on health and wellbeing outcomes of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Queensland and recommend options for improved data collection and analysis.

- The Queensland Mental Health Commission will report on how diversity data has been utilised in whole-of-government planning (Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Suicide).

- The Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Treasury, the Public Service Commission and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services will introduce a new Australian South Sea Islander indicator across their datasets and client information forms.

KEY ACTION 5:

Queensland Government agencies will ensure people who have difficulty communicating in English can access information and services at the right time and in the right manner, through improved access to interpreters and implementing multilingual and multi-modal communication strategies.

The Queensland Language Services Policy (2016) outlines the Queensland Government’s commitment to use interpreters and translated information to improve access to the full range of government and government-funded services for people with difficulty communicating in English.

While $14.6 million was spent on interpreter services across Queensland Government agencies in 2020-21, COVID-19 has highlighted many challenges experienced by culturally diverse community members accessing government information and services including limited access to translated resources, information overload and dealing with misinformation.

Over the next two years we will ensure people who have difficulty understanding or communicating in English have access to information and services more easily.

We will ensure frontline staff have the skills and knowledge to support culturally and linguistically diverse customers, including knowledge of how to access interpreters and communicating this with funded non-government service providers.
We will develop tools, education and support to help guide agency communication with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, building on COVID-19 and disaster preparedness learnings.

We know we will have been successful in implementing this action when customer satisfaction data shows individuals can easily communicate through access to interpreters and other modes of communication.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COMMITMENT

Twenty-five agencies have signed up to Key action 5 and will undertake specific activities in support of this action. Some examples of how this will be implemented include:

- The Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs will progress a more culturally responsive case management approach to African young people in the Youth Justice System and will enable enhanced integration with African families and community organisations.

- The Department of Justice and Attorney-General will continue to develop targeted information and awareness resources to better support culturally and linguistically diverse communities to recognise signs of domestic and family violence and access supports in multiple formats and modes of delivery, including use of plain English, and promote and disseminate the resources via targeted and trusted channels used by diverse communities.

- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services will explore opportunities to partner with research institutes and key stakeholders to understand barriers and opportunities to improve communications for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We will develop tools, education and support to help guide agency communication with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, building on COVID-19 and disaster preparedness learnings.

We know we will have been successful in implementing this action when customer satisfaction data shows individuals can easily communicate through access to interpreters and other modes of communication.

KEY ACTION 6:

Queensland Government agencies will ensure equitable and respectful opportunities and experiences for staff and customers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, through targeted initiatives to address unconscious bias and racism and promote inclusion.

The Queensland Multicultural Policy *Our Story, Our Future* makes clear the Queensland Government’s stance against racism. This complements the administration and intent of the Queensland *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*.

Racism is a profoundly negative and pervasive issue that undermines the Queensland Government’s vision for inclusive, harmonious and united communities across Queensland. It damages individuals and the wider community, leading to poorer social, economic and health outcomes. This can in turn drive increased social exclusion and entrench disadvantage, sometimes for generations.
Many Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have experienced these negative impacts including throughout the pandemic when some Queenslanders were subject to racialised abuse.

The 11-member Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council, who advise the Minister for Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs on opportunities and barriers facing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, provided a submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee’s Inquiry into Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes and appeared before the committee at the public hearing on 3 September 2021. In their submission, the Council noted the impact of racism, vilification and hate crimes on the individuals, families and communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and how these experiences compound the harmful impacts of past trauma, cause psychological distress, and negatively influence their sense of belonging to people, place and country.

Due to these factors, the third Action Plan features an action on taking a stand against racism. We will provide anti-racism training for all staff, including what it is and how to prevent and respond to it.

We will also uplift the cultural capability of agency staff, to help better understand and address barriers to inclusion for culturally and linguistically diverse colleagues and customers.

Senior Executives will provide clear messages affirming agency commitment to zero-tolerance to racism and discrimination and encourage anti-racism initiatives in their agency.

We will know we have been successful in implementing this action when we see improved results in the **Working for Queensland Survey** for the indicator: *Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation* and customer satisfaction data indicates an improvement in service delivery for clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COMMITMENT**

Twenty-six agencies have signed up to Key action 6 and will undertake specific activities in support of this action. Some examples of how this will be implemented include:

- Queensland Corrective Services will commence an organisational culture change program including initiatives and programs aimed at raising awareness and improving outcomes around inclusion and diversity.

- The Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs will embed a cultural advisor into the workplace to ensure culture is considered in all aspects of the work undertaken and to help grow the cultural capability of staff from within.
### AGENCIES UNDERTAKING SPECIFIC ACTIONS

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**ACRONYMS**

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ENDNOTES


2 Chandonnet, A (2021) Emergency Resilience in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities — Challenges and Opportunities, Australian Red Cross


INTERPRETER

The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To talk to someone about the Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2022-23 – 2023-24 in your preferred language call 1800 512 451 and ask to speak with the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
Locked Bag 3405, Brisbane Qld 4001
Phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)
Email: ma@cyjma.qld.gov.au