



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Local Government**
Office of **Multicultural Interests**

Engaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

A guide for the Western Australian Public Sector



Community engagement is a process of involving citizens in government decision-making processes, policies and programs.

November 2011

Community engagement

Cultural diversity is one of the State's greatest assets. People from more than 200 different countries live, work and study in Western Australia, speak as many as 270 languages and identify with more than 100 religious faiths. Our cultural diversity and expanding population brings many economic, social and cultural benefits, and creates opportunities and challenges for the public sector in providing policies, programs and services that successfully meet the needs of all Western Australians.

Today, community engagement is a fundamental and powerful tool for government agencies. Some of the benefits for culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities, the public sector and Western Australia include:

CaLD Communities

- Participation in social, economic and cultural life
- Contribution to public policy
- Community capacity building
- Successful settlement outcomes

Western Australia

- An active citizenship and civil society
- Increased social capital
- Support for State development
- Expanded global networks

Public sector

- Improved public policies, programs and services
- Direct community feedback
- Best practice standards
- Strengthened corporate values



Community engagement

Community engagement is a process of involving citizens in government decision-making processes, policies and programs. It is a way of understanding and addressing community needs through listening, building relationships and collaboration. This guide identifies key issues to consider for successful engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Successful culturally and linguistically diverse community engagement means the public sector agency:

- allocates resources and develops systems and skills to engage with communities
- develops partnerships with communities

- gains community input into the development, implementation and review of policies, programs and services
- provides information and support in ways that are culturally appropriate
- evaluates its outcomes and provides feedback to communities.

Incorporating multicultural profiles into organisational processes and workplace culture promotes the public sector values of excellence, professionalism, innovation and respect.

Four elements contribute to building capacity and positioning the public sector to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in WA.

Cultural competency

Good practice

Provide cultural competency training and recruit staff to reflect the diversity of your clients.

Better results

Improved service delivery, productivity, staff and client satisfaction.

Link

DiverseWA
Cultural Competency Training Package
Culture and religion information sheets

Language services

Good practice

Implement the *WA Language Services Policy 2008* according to your organisational needs.

Better results

Government services are more accessible to people who are unable to communicate in written or spoken English.

Link

WA Language Services Policy 2008
A guide for Government agencies.

Data collection

Good practice

Collect and maintain CaLD client data that record key statistics and profiles to reflect current and future demographics.

Better results

Effective service provision, reduced duplication and identification of gaps.

Link

Cultural Diversity in Western Australia
Standards for recording cultural and language diversity

Promotion

Good practice

Promote your agency to CaLD communities through multilingual, culturally inclusive branding and images. Utilise ethnic print, radio, television and online media.

Better results

Effective, positive communications of your services as inclusive, culturally aware and for all Western Australians.

Links

Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia
Ethnic media
Community groups

Increasing community engagement

Community engagement includes interactions ranging from information sharing to capacity building. There is not a prescriptive model for community engagement. The most appropriate methods are determined by the issues, objectives, stakeholders and resources of a particular situation. It is important to develop a strategy that is appropriate to the issue and considerate of the communities involved. You can choose from the following methods for the results you wish to achieve.

Inform

Provide information about public policies, programs and services in formats that are easily accessible and culturally appropriate.

Outcome: Increased understanding of key issues, services and the options available.

Considerations:

- ▣ Is your printed material (including your website) in plain English and translated into different languages?
- ▣ Does your database/mail-out include ethnic organisations, CaLD community groups and community leaders?
- ▣ Do you meet face-to-face, produce audiovisual or pictorial communication (e.g. DVDs) to share information?
- ▣ Do you utilise ethnic media to communicate and market your services to CaLD communities?
- ▣ Does your agency use translating and interpreting services, if required by clients?

Translating and interpreting

Consult

Seek the views of CaLD communities and provide feedback on the outcomes of any consultations.

Outcome: Identification of community needs and feedback on policy, programs and services.

Considerations:

- ▣ What are the objectives and the intended outcomes of the engagement?
- ▣ Who are the key community organisations, groups, leaders, elders and individuals that need to be involved?
- ▣ What dates, times and venues suit the needs of the community and will maximise attendance?
- ▣ Are interpreters, childcare and transport required and budgeted for?

How will you keep stakeholders informed and involved after the consultation?

Community consultations



Increasing community engagement

Involve

Involve CaLD community members in the development, implementation and review of policies, programs and services.

Outcomes: Policies, programs and services are relevant and respond to the needs of CaLD communities.

Considerations:

- ▣ Which multicultural agencies may be strategic partners for advice and planning?
- ▣ Have partnerships with relevant community groups, ethnic organisations and leaders been established?
- ▣ Have key representatives been sourced from community groups?
- ▣ How will involvement of CaLD communities be maintained?

[Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia](#)

[Community groups](#)

[Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally](#)

Empower

Actively invest in capacity building to develop stronger communities, and empower individuals and groups to acquire the skills to participate effectively in the processes of decision making, feedback and evaluation.

Outcomes: Increased capacity of CaLD communities to engage with the public sector and advocate on community issues.

Considerations:

- ▣ Which CaLD communities are most in need of capacity building?
- ▣ Can CaLD communities easily gain access to your programs, services and staff?
- ▣ What forms of capacity building can your agency provide that will benefit CaLD communities?
- ▣ Can your agency provide opportunities for leadership training, mentoring, work experience and community education?

[Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally](#)

[The Western Australian Multicultural Service Awards](#)

Creating partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to building capacity and positioning the public sector to meet the needs of CaLD communities in Western Australia.

In 2011, the State Government released the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy which places a greater emphasis on the future role of State Government as the facilitator of services, and non-government organisations (NGOs) as providers. In future, the public sector will have greater integration and deeper collaboration with NGOs to meet community needs.

Successful partnerships can:

- develop and articulate a common understanding of issues, needs and solutions
- leverage financial, technical and human resources and expertise
- generate innovation and improvements in service provision
- streamline referral processes, and reduce gaps and duplication in programs and services.

Public sector agencies are most likely to develop partnerships with NGOs working exclusively with or providing services to CaLD communities. Agencies may also work in collaboration with CaLD community groups to facilitate engagement in government decision-making processes, policies and programs.

Partnerships with non-government organisations

Many NGOs provide programs and services that are designed to meet specific needs of CaLD communities. These organisations provide a range of services from general information, referral services, social support and capacity building programs to structured health, accommodation, employment, education and training, family and settlement services. These organisations usually employ culturally diverse and multilingual staff with strong grassroots connections to communities and are often at the coalface of issues affecting CaLD communities.

Working with NGOs

- Be clear about what it is you require and ensure that expectations and roles are clearly explained.
- Identify what your agency can offer to strengthen the partnerships and build grassroots engagement into your work practices, including staffing and financial resources.
- Research the organisation you wish to contact, its history, current programs and services, client base, and existing government partners.
- Meet with their clients in order to understand their needs and the impact of the organisation's programs and services on their communities.
- Build trust by being open about other organisations you are working with or plan to meet.
- Provide feedback on the outcomes of engagement. Share reports or meeting notes and, in the long term, inform the organisation of the agency's response or actions undertaken in light of the engagement. Invite the organisation to also provide information on the outcomes it has achieved.



Creating partnerships

Partnerships with CaLD community groups

CaLD community members establish incorporated entities to support their communities in a number of ways. Their constitution will identify membership criteria and, generally, membership of community groups is open to any member of the public with an interest in the group's mission. Depending on the migration period, CaLD groups may have hundreds (emerging communities) or thousands of members (established communities), who generally work as volunteers to manage programs such as social services, language schools, support for the ageing and cultural celebrations. CaLD community groups may have access to grants from various government agencies to support their programs.

Working with CaLD communities

- Recognise that ethnic and religious differences exist within the same country of origin and may result in the formation of numerous different groups.
 - Research the community group and familiarise yourself with its political history, cultural and religious practices, especially those surrounding gender and sensitive topics of discussion.
 - Community leaders change, therefore identify the current community leaders prior to your meeting, as well as all community members who are likely to attend.
 - Respect community protocols, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.
 - Address language issues by arranging for interpreters or bi-cultural workers to assist if required.
 - Consider the need for interpreters, transport, childcare and catering.
 - Be honest and clear about what you are asking so that community leaders are able to advise you on the relevance, appropriateness or value of the information you require or wish to share with their communities. Seek their advice on the appropriate engagement strategy.
 - Support and build the capacity of community leaders by involving them in meetings and reference groups.
- Respond in a timely manner to engagement initiated by community leaders.
 - Invite the leaders to provide information face-to-face on the outcomes they have achieved. This is the preferred form of communication to build trust and long-term relationships.
 - Provide ongoing feedback on outcomes and inform the group of the agency's response or actions as a result of the engagement.
 - Allow time for leaders to increase the participation of community members, for trusting relationships to grow and for information to circulate. Be patient and work towards mutually beneficial long-term relationships.

Useful links

[Ethnic Organisations in Western Australia](#)

[Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia](#)

[Settlement Services and Immigration](#)

[Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally](#)

How we can help

The purpose of the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) is to lead Western Australia in achieving the full potential of multiculturalism. OMI supports the public sector by providing:

- policy advice
- information on how to improve programs and service delivery to CaLD communities
- partnerships with CaLD community groups, ethnic organisations and stakeholders
- statistics and other information on cultural diversity and multiculturalism
- presentations on Western Australia's cultural diversity
- partnership opportunities.

OMI RESOURCES

The resources listed below are available on the Office of Multicultural Interests website
www.omi.wa.gov.au

OMI Strategic Plan 2009–13

Read our vision, purpose and objectives to achieve the full potential of multiculturalism.

Directory of Services for New Arrivals in WA

Contact details and services provided by government and non-government agencies that assist people who have recently migrated to Western Australia.

WA diversity and economic snapshots

A series of diversity and economic snapshots for Western Australia's major birthplace groups and trading partners containing community, trade, demographic and consular information.

Culture and religion information

Guidelines for service providers.

Teacher's resource kit – A World of Difference

A resource to assist teachers to provide learning and teaching opportunities on the appreciation of cultural diversity and the development of the WA Charter of Multiculturalism.

Working definitions of terms

A list of working definitions of terms and acronyms developed by OMI to help address inconsistencies in the use of terminology.

Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally

A planning guide for Western Australian local governments.

Catalogue of Settlement Services and Programs for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants in Western Australia

A database of WA settlement services and programs for people from CaLD backgrounds.





Other resources

Australian Bureau of Statistics

www.abs.gov.au

Australia's official statistical website that provides statistical data including population by State and Territory.

Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

www.hreoc.gov.au

contains up-to-date information about current human rights issues.

Australian Multicultural Foundation

<http://amf.net.au>

committed to Australia as one people drawn from many cultures.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

www.dfat.gov.au

the department supports Australia's security, prosperity, Australian travellers and Australians overseas.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

www.immi.gov.au

the department builds Australia's future through the well-managed entry and settlement of people.

DIAC community information summaries

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/

describes the communities in Australia by country of birth, and their descendants who are living in Australia.

Face the Facts 2008

www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/face_facts/index.html

factual information about immigrants, refugees and Indigenous peoples.

Making Multicultural Australia

www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au

one of Australia's leading sources of quality educational resources on multiculturalism.

Racism No Way

www.racismnoway.com.au

a project aimed at assisting school communities and education systems to recognise and address racism.

Reporting diversity

www.reportingdiversity.org.au

a project aimed at raising awareness in reporting of issues concerning community diversity.

The People of Australia

www.immi.gov.au

the Australian Government's multicultural policy.

Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commission

www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au

contains a range of free information published by the Commission to raise awareness and understanding of equal opportunity.

More information

For more information and assistance, please contact:

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS

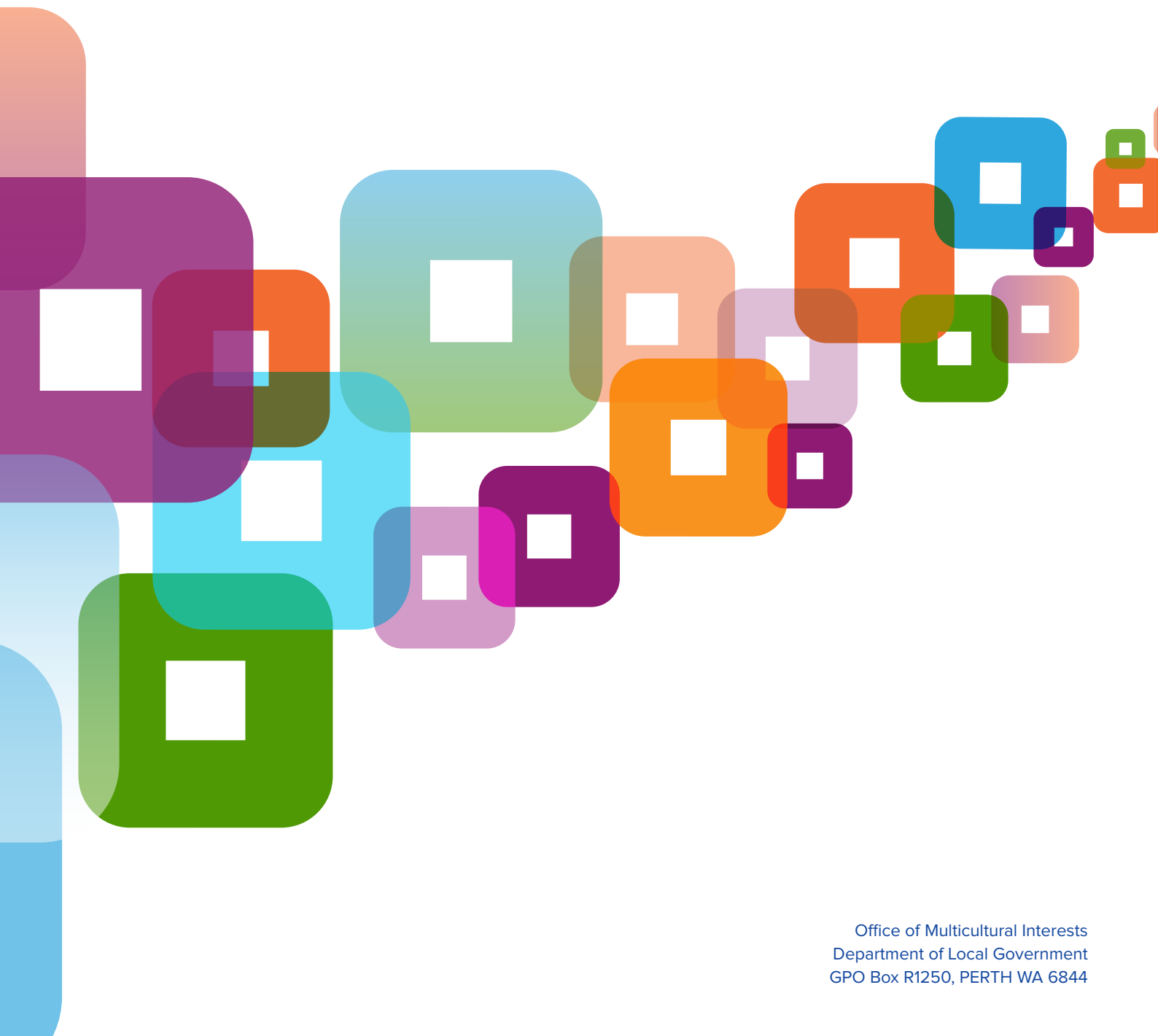
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