

## **Welcome**

### **Welcome to Western Australia!**

Western Australia (WA) is the most culturally diverse state in Australia. Over half a million people or more than a quarter (27 per cent) of the population of WA were born overseas. People from more than 200 countries live, work and study in WA, speaking as many as 270 languages and identifying with more than 100 religious faiths.

This website will provide you with a wide range of information and resources to help you participate in all aspects of social, economic and cultural life in our great State.

### **Office of Multicultural Interests**

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) is a division of the Department of Local Government. OMI supports the development of State Government policies and programs to promote multiculturalism and improve services to Western Australians from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. OMI provides leadership on multiculturalism within the public sector, to the WA community and with businesses—creating partnerships for a more inclusive and productive society.

The Office of Multicultural Interests' Strategic Plan 2009–2013 outlines the following objectives:

- Participation—Full participation of CaLD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities in social, economic and cultural life.
- Equity—Remove the barriers to equity experienced by CaLD communities.
- Promotion—Promote the benefits of Western Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity.

OMI is not responsible for citizenship (naturalisation), visa or immigration matters. For information about immigration or becoming an Australian citizen, please contact the Department of Immigration and Citizenship on telephone 13 18 81 or visit [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au).

## **POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **Language Services**

The Language Services Policy 2008 is a Western Australian government policy that aims to ensure that language is not a barrier to services and programs for people who require assistance in English. Many Western Australians require assistance in communicating effectively, for example, Indigenous people, migrants and those who are deaf or hearing impaired.

If you visit a government office and need help with communicating in English you can request an interpreter, who will be provided free of charge. To assist with this, you can request a Western Australian Interpreter Card.

To obtain an Interpreter Card please contact your nearest settlement services provider listed in the *Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia* under the 'Resources and publications' section of this website.

OMI can give you information on the use of interpreters. Please see the Language Services area of this website for further details.

### **Community Grants Program**

The Community Grants Program (CGP) is designed to support the OMI Strategic Plan 2009–13 by achieving participation, equity and promotion of all Western Australians in projects and events that enhance cross-cultural engagement and support capacity building.

Not-for-profit, incorporated community organisations and groups based in WA can apply for funding. There are two grant categories: Small Projects (up to a maximum of \$5000); and Community Initiatives and Projects (up to a maximum of \$15,000).

OMI looks forward to receiving your application and working with you to benefit the WA community. To get further information, obtain details on past grant recipients, check if your organisation can apply for funding, or to discuss your project before submitting a formal application, please contact the OMI Grants Officer.

For copies of guidelines and application forms, visit the Community Grants Program area of this website for further details.

## **RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS**

A wide range of resources and publications are available on the OMI website including statistics on WA's cultural diversity, 'Culture and Religion Guidelines for Service Providers' and educational materials for schools. If you are a new arrival to WA, the *Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia* will be particularly helpful for you.

## **Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia**

It can be a challenge to find your way around the many services available from government and non-government organisations and business groups in WA.

The 2010 edition of the *Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia*, provides useful guidelines to help you settle in WA.

The directory provides the essential information and contact details in the important areas of housing, employment, education, health, transport, childcare and legal services, as well as background information on the Commonwealth, State and local governments.

Please visit the 'Resources and publications' area of this website to view the *Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia*.

### **Have you experienced racial abuse or discrimination?**

It is unlawful to discriminate against or treat a person unfairly because of their race or religion.

If you have been involved in an incident that you would regard as racially motivated, you are encouraged to report such incidents to the WA Police. The WA Police Assistance Centre can be contacted on telephone 131 444.

The *Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984* makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of age, family responsibility, family status, gender history, disability or impairment, marital status, political conviction, pregnancy, race, religious conviction, sex, sexual orientation and spent conviction in the areas of:

- access to places and vehicles
- accommodation
- education
- facilities and services
- land
- membership of clubs
- provision of goods
- work or employment.

If you feel you have been discriminated against on any of the above grounds, you can seek advice and lodge a complaint with the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity in Western Australia. Please contact the Equal Opportunity Commission on telephone (08) 9216 3900 or go to the website at [www.eoc.wa.gov.au](http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au) for details on how to lodge a complaint.

For more information about OMI initiatives and programs, please contact:

Office of Multicultural Interests

Department of Local Government

140 William Street

Perth 6000

Telephone: (08) 6552 1500

Fax: (08) 6552 1555

Email: [harmony@omi.wa.gov.au](mailto:harmony@omi.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au)