

Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework

3 February 2020



Foreword from Hon Mark McGowan MLA Premier of Western Australia

From the arrival of our First Peoples, with their wealth of languages and cultures, Western Australia has been a multicultural State. Our cultural diversity has continued to flourish since European settlement, with people originating from more than 190 countries now calling Western Australia their home.

Multiculturalism has shaped the successful and vibrant State that we live in today so that we are well-placed to confront our challenges, build on our achievements and harness the knowledge, skills and talents inherent in our cultural diversity.

My Government is committed to ensuring that every Western Australian has the opportunity to participate equitably in all aspects of our civic, social, economic and cultural life.

As we move into a new decade, we have an opportunity to embrace all aspects of our cultural and linguistic diversity to make Western Australia truly inclusive.

The Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework is a blueprint for the public sector to lead in realising these aims and be an example for the community, non-government and business sectors to follow.

I urge all State Government agencies to fully support and action the Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework to further our vision of a State where everyone has a strong sense of belonging, can participate fully and can achieve their goals.



Mark McGowan MLA
PREMIER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Foreword from Hon Paul Papalia CSC MLA Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

As the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests I am committed to promoting cultural diversity as one of Western Australia's greatest strengths.

As a descendant of Italian migrants, I have firsthand knowledge of how my family found their feet in a new country so that they—and those who came after them—could belong and contribute to the best of their ability to this great State.

Our cultural and linguistic diversity has created a dynamic society that links us to the rest of the world, creating global connections and furthering our economic and social prosperity. It is vital that, as a government, we provide the practical tools to harness these opportunities.

The Multicultural Policy Framework is an effective guide to ensuring that every Western Australian gets a fair go and that together we achieve the full potential of multiculturalism.

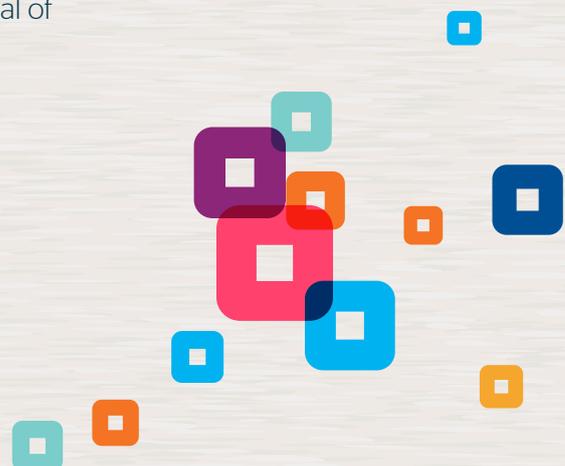
I acknowledge the work of my Multicultural Advisory Group, its Multicultural Policy Framework Subcommittee, the Office of Multicultural Interests, my office and everyone from public and community sectors who participated in consultations, provided feedback and supported the Framework's development and implementation.

I look forward to the implementation of this Framework and working together to build and maintain a society where everyone feels included and the full potential of our multicultural society is realised.

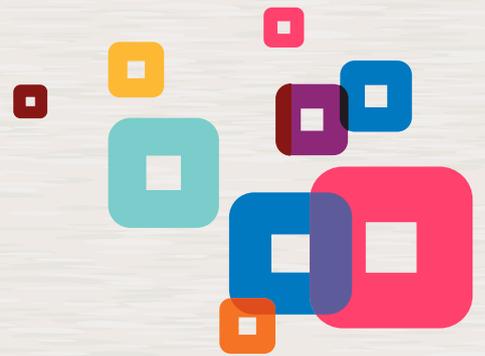


A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Papalia'.

Hon Paul Papalia CSC MLA
MINISTER FOR CITIZENSHIP AND
MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS



The Government acknowledges that Aboriginal peoples, as First Peoples of Australia, have a unique place in society. Aboriginal peoples and people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have vastly different starting points and there are different challenges for each in terms of achieving equitable outcomes. While some of the elements of this Framework apply to both population cohorts, it is still critical that there is a dedicated focus on Aboriginal people in the development and implementation of policies, programs and services. The Framework is therefore primarily focused on Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds while identifying areas of intersection between the two groups.





Introduction

The Government of Western Australia’s vision is for an inclusive and harmonious society where everyone has a strong sense of belonging, can participate and contribute fully in all aspects of life and can achieve their goals.

Western Australia’s multicultural society includes all of us, whether we were born here with ancestries reaching back generations, or whether we have recently arrived.

Australia is recognised as one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world. Much of this success can be attributed to government’s multicultural policies and programs, which are grounded in our recognition of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its related treaties and conventions¹ and to widespread acknowledgement of the significant contribution that migrants have made to the development of Australia as a nation.

Aboriginal peoples are the First Peoples of this country and provide a rich and diverse foundation of culture, language and spirituality. Since European settlement, migrants to Australia have created an even more diverse society. Western Australians now come from more than 190 countries and speak approximately 240 languages including around 50 Aboriginal languages.

Cultural diversity is undoubtedly one of the State’s greatest strengths. It has contributed to our economic growth and enriched our society. It is in our best interests to recognise and optimise the benefits that cultural diversity brings and to provide everyone with the opportunity to make economic, social, cultural, civic and political contributions to the State.

The WA Charter of Multiculturalism demonstrates the Western Australian Government’s commitment to multiculturalism and a multicultural policy position that embraces all of us. Founded on four principles—civic values, fairness, equality and participation—it identifies key objectives for government to achieve an inclusive and harmonious society. The policy emphasises the importance of mutual respect, substantive equality and a commitment to shared values.

The Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework articulates policy priorities and provides a guide for government to translate the Charter’s principles and objectives into actions that will lead to positive outcomes for all Western Australians.

The WA Charter of Multiculturalism and the Multicultural Policy Framework represent the Western Australian Government’s affirmation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the dignity and worth of the individual and the equal rights of each one of us to participate fully in all aspects of life and achieve our potential. It reinforces the Government’s zero tolerance for racism.

It is the responsibility of Western Australian public sector agencies to ensure that, through their policies, programs and services, each one of us can participate fully and share in the State’s prosperity.

¹ See Appendix 2

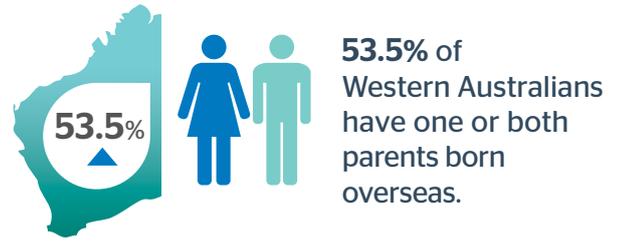
Western Australia's cultural diversity

A snapshot from the 2016 Census

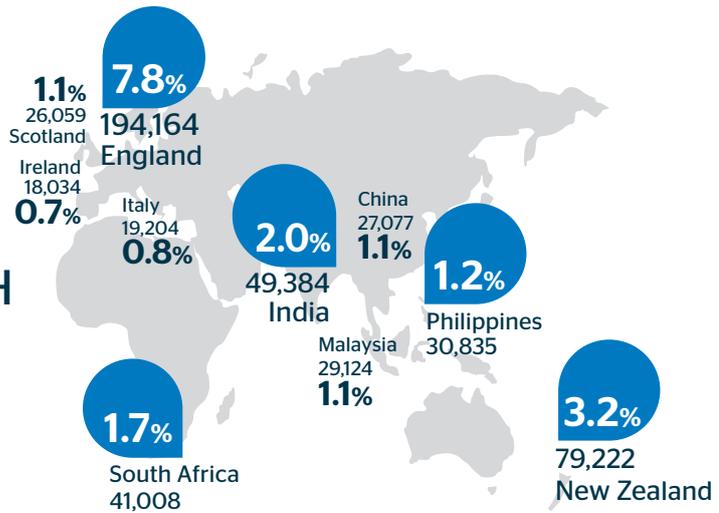
The 2016 Census shows that WA's resident population has reached **2,474,440**.



The proportion of overseas born is larger in WA (32.2%) compared with the national figure of 26.3%.

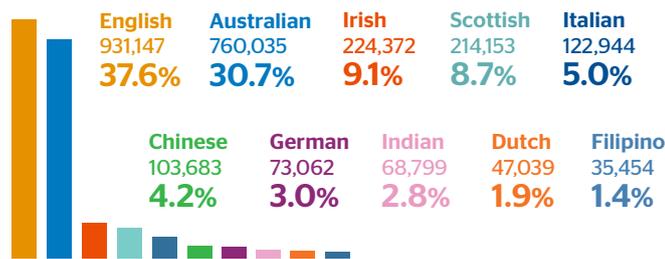


TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF BIRTH



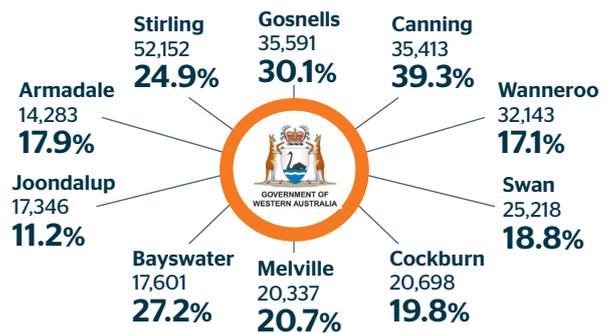
TOP 10 ANCESTRIES

In 2016, **77.2%** of Western Australians had a non-Australian ancestry.



TOP 10 MOST CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

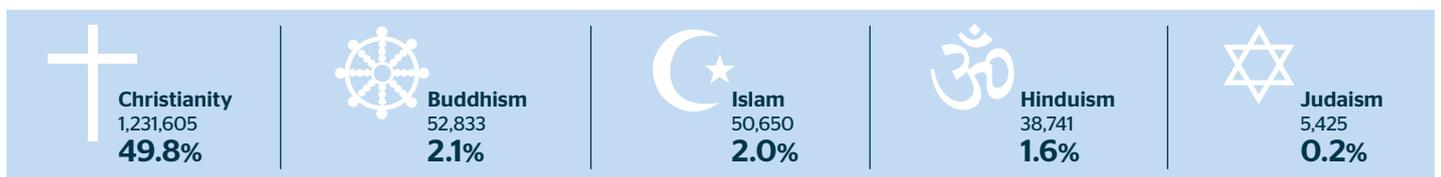
90% of people born in non-main English speaking countries live in Metropolitan Perth (and 75% of all Western Australians).



RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

WA is a multi-faith society with Western Australian's having many different religious affiliations.

Christianity is the largest religious group. The fastest growing religions are Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. 33.0% of people (814,145 Western Australians) identified with no religion.





Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework

Actioning the Charter

The Western Australian public sector agencies have a leadership role to play in demonstrating behaviours and implementing policies and practices that will achieve the Western Australian Government’s vision.

The Framework is outcome-focused, providing a structure for agencies to direct their efforts in achieving the government’s vision for multiculturalism in Western Australia—through effective leadership, planning, service provision and engagement with communities. The Framework has a whole of community focus recognising that all Western Australians and organisations have a part to play in realising the full potential of multiculturalism in this State. While focused on the Western Australian public sector, it can be adapted for any sector or organisation.



Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework

Actioning the Charter

Charter principles	Charter objectives	Multicultural policy priorities
<p>Civic values—the equality of respect, mutual respect, individual freedom and dignity for all members of society subject to the acceptance of the rule of law, social, political and legal institutions and constitutional structures</p>	<p>Facilitate the inclusion and empowerment of members of all communities as full and equal members of the Australian community, enjoying the rights and duties of a shared citizenship</p> <p>Encourage a sense of Australian identity and belonging as citizens, within a multicultural society</p>	<p>Harmonious and inclusive communities</p>
<p>Fairness—the pursuit of public policies free of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion on the basis of characteristics such as origins, perceived ‘race’, culture, religion, ethnicity and nationality</p>	<p>Ensure that all individuals and minority groups, recognising the unique status of Aboriginal peoples, receive equal and appropriate treatment and protection under the law</p>	<p>Culturally responsive policies, programs and services</p>
<p>Equality—equality of opportunity for all members of society to achieve their full potential in a free and democratic society where every individual is equal before, and under, the law</p>	<p>Enable the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures and backgrounds from which members of the Western Australian community are drawn</p>	<p>Economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation</p>

Policy priority 1: Harmonious and inclusive communities

Charter principle	Charter objectives
Civic values —the equality of respect, mutual respect, individual freedom and dignity for all members of society subject to the acceptance of the rule of law, social, political and legal institutions and constitutional structures	Facilitate the inclusion and empowerment of members of all communities as full and equal members of the Australian community, enjoying the rights and duties of a shared citizenship
	Encourage a sense of Australian identity and belonging as citizens, within a multicultural society

Policy priority	Policy outcome	Strategies
Harmonious and inclusive communities	Every Western Australian values cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and feels that they belong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity and celebrate the achievements of people from culturally diverse backgrounds • Address racism and discrimination at both an individual and institutional/systemic level, including implementing the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality • Develop workplace cultures that are welcoming and inclusive of all Western Australians • Initiate and support events and projects that build mutual understanding and respect between cultures

Social cohesion is achieved by supporting peoples' sense of belonging in a society, encouraging participation, combatting racism and discrimination, and promoting equal rights and responsibilities for all. A cohesive society is where everyone:

- feels that they belong and are respected, accepted and included
- shares a commitment to a country's laws, rights and responsibilities
- can participate in all aspects of society including education, training and employment
- has the opportunity to contribute to civic and political life and to have a say in decisions affecting them.

Diversity is a statement of fact that encompasses the range of visible and invisible attributes, experiences and identities that shape each individual. Diversity embraces all human differences including but not limited to sex, ethnicity, physical ability, social class, marital status, religion, political conviction, age or gender history.

First and foremost, what binds us are the principles and values we share and adherence to the laws of the State.

Fundamental to our progress as an inclusive and harmonious society is recognition and respect for our Aboriginal heritage and commitment to reconciliation. This is the foundation for building a society in which our cultural diversity is embraced and valued and where everyone experiences a sense of belonging.

All members of society and both government and non-government organisations have a role to play in ensuring that educational institutions, workplaces and community spaces are environments where people are respected, included and provided with equal and equitable opportunities. Social gatherings, local community events and sport, recreation and arts activities are all avenues to build mutual understanding.

Policies and strategies that enable each of us to identify with, connect with and nurture our cultural, linguistic and religious identity are important. So, too, is fair, balanced and fact-based public conversation and reporting and acknowledging the positive contributions that all Western Australians have made and continue to make to the State.

The Government has zero tolerance for racism. Racism and discrimination are never acceptable and must be challenged by all of us. It is a cost to both the individual and society as a whole. Leadership—at all levels—that champions the positive benefits of cultural diversity and combats racism and discrimination is critical.

Policies and strategies that enable each of us to identify with, connect with and nurture our cultural, linguistic and religious identity are important.



Taking action and measuring progress

This Framework provides a structure and strategies to guide development of agency multicultural plans. Not all strategies are universally relevant to all agencies and plans should be customised in accordance with an agency's remit, type and scope.

To track progress in implementing multicultural plans, agencies are to develop indicators/measures that must include (where applicable):

- actions taken to promote cultural and linguistic diversity as an integral, valuable and positive feature of the workforce and the wider Australian community, including via agency publications and promotions, awards and events
- actions taken to prevent, monitor and respond to individual and institutional/systemic discrimination, including implementing the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality
- evidence of the extent to which the workplace culture is welcoming and inclusive of all Western Australians, including events and projects that have been initiated and/or supported to build understanding and respect between cultures.

Policy priority 2:

Culturally responsive policies, programs and services

Charter principles	Charter objectives
<p>Fairness—the pursuit of public policies free of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion on the basis of characteristics such as origins, perceived ‘race’, culture, religion, ethnicity and nationality</p>	<p>Ensure that all individuals and minority groups, recognising the unique status of Aboriginal peoples, receive equal and appropriate treatment and protection under the law</p>
<p>Equality—equality of opportunity for all members of society to achieve their full potential in a free and democratic society where every individual is equal before, and under, the law</p>	<p>Enable the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures and backgrounds from which members of the Western Australian community are drawn</p>

Policy priority	Policy outcome	Strategies
<p>Culturally responsive policies, programs and services</p>	<p>All Western Australians are informed of and have equitable access to government services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate multicultural policy goals into strategic and corporate planning, procurement and review processes • Identify inequities in service access and outcomes for Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and develop strategies to address them • Provide language services to ensure language is not a barrier to equitable access to information and services, including complaints processes • Collect and analyse cultural and linguistic data to contribute to the identification of client needs, the development of policies and programs, and evaluation of outcomes • Enable culturally diverse communities to have meaningful input into policies, programs and systems through co-design and planning, co-delivery and implementation, and evaluation processes • Implement recruitment and selection processes that facilitate workforce diversity, and provide opportunities for the development of cultural competencies across the workforce
	<p>Programs and services are culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of all Western Australians</p>	
	<p>Customised Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD)-specific services are provided for those who need them</p>	
	<p>A workforce that is culturally competent and representative of its community and business and client needs</p>	

Evidence-based policies, programs and services that are culturally responsive are critical in achieving equitable access and outcomes for all members of the community. Systemic proactive measures are required to achieve substantive equality, recognising that policies and practices put in place to suit the majority of clients may have a disproportionate impact, not address the specific needs of certain groups of people and, in effect, may be indirectly discriminatory. This is systemic discrimination.

Employment, education, training, health and wellbeing, housing, transport, justice and family and social support are key focus areas for the delivery of services to the community. Social indicators such as employment and education levels, health outcomes and interaction with the justice system can reveal inequities that must be addressed for us to achieve true equality for all.

Social identities are also multi-dimensional because we can belong to different groups at the same time. It is important for policies and programs to acknowledge the intersection of these identities with culture, language or religion. Some groups, such as women, young people, seniors, people with disability, people who are Deaf or hard of hearing and LGBTQI+ may experience particular barriers when accessing services.

For policies, programs and services to be responsive to community needs, it is vital for planning processes to include:

- collection of cultural and linguistic data that identifies the demographic makeup of an agency's workforce and clients, and which enables identification and analysis of community needs, levels of service access, and outcomes for diverse client groups to contribute to evidence-based policy and program development
- engagement of communities in policy and program design, development, implementation and review.

Culturally responsive service delivery requires:

- culturally competent staff who demonstrate cultural awareness and understanding
- provision of language services to ensure clients who are not proficient in spoken or written English have equitable access to programs and services.

Evidence-based policies, programs and services that are culturally responsive are critical in achieving equitable access and outcomes for all members of the community.



Taking action and measuring progress

To track progress in implementing multicultural plans, agencies are to develop indicators/ measures that must include (where applicable):

- collection and use of cultural and linguistic data including, country of birth, main language other than English spoken at home, and English language proficiency to inform agency policies, plans and programs
- implementation of the Western Australian Language Services Policy including the provision of interpreters, translated material and other multilingual strategies as required
- involvement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in co-design and planning of policies, programs and services, co-delivery and implementation, and evaluation
- the proportion of Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds employed at all levels within the agency
- development of cultural awareness and cultural competency among all staff.

Policy priority 3:

Economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation

Charter principle	Charter objectives
Participation —the full and equitable participation in society of individuals and communities, irrespective of origins, culture, religion, ethnicity and nationality	Remove all barriers to equal participation in, and enjoyment of, all aspects of society: social, political, cultural and economic
	Foster the recognition of the achievements of, and contributions to, the Western Australian community of all individuals regardless of their origins, perceived 'race', culture, religion and nationality

Policy priority	Policy outcome	Strategies
Economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation	Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are equitably represented in employment and on boards, committees and other decision-making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement recruitment and career development processes that support employment and progression of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds Achieve equitable representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds at all levels and in decision-making roles
	Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community is harnessed to grow economic, social, cultural, civic and political development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, develop and promote initiatives that support the development of businesses and the entrepreneurial potential of Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community Identify, develop and implement initiatives that encourage social, cultural, civic and political participation by members of Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community Develop and strengthen global connections through partnerships with Western Australia's cultural and linguistic communities and businesses

The Government recognises cultural diversity as one of the State's greatest strengths. At a national and State level, there are significant dividends to be gained from our cultural diversity in terms of international trade and diplomacy. There is an increasing correlation between migration source countries and Western Australia's trade markets, including tourism. International education is, and will remain, a major income source.

For organisations, a culturally diverse workforce opens the door to new perspectives, and innovative and creative approaches. It brings cultural knowledge and connections in addition to language skills. Where this is reflected and implemented at the leadership level, decision-making and organisational performance can improve.

However, barriers to employment exist for many Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly those who are newly arrived or who enter through Australia's Humanitarian Program. Employer preferences for people who have Australian work experience, and difficulty obtaining recognition of overseas qualifications and skills, often drives overseas-qualified migrants to find work in less skilled occupations. This results in costs to both the individual and the Western Australian economy.

A range of strategies are needed to ensure that public authorities are representative of the community they serve, and to better utilise the State's cultural and linguistic diversity.



Taking action and measuring progress

To track progress in implementing multicultural plans, agencies are to develop indicators/ measures that must include (where applicable):

- the percentage of Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds employed in senior positions and represented on decision-making bodies including on boards and committees
- support provided for initiatives, programs or enterprises and which capitalise on the entrepreneurial potential of Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities and develop and strengthen global connections
- initiatives implemented to facilitate participation by Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in social, cultural, civic and political activities.

Unconscious bias and lack of cultural capability in the workplace can pose further challenges. Some groups, including people who arrive as refugees and those who are perceived as visibly different, may experience greater disadvantage seeking work or career advancement. Within these groups, some people, such as women and people with disability, may experience multi-layered disadvantage in a competitive employment market.

A substantial proportion of Western Australian small businesses are owned by migrants, an indication of how the drive, determination and hard work of migrants is making our cultural diversity one of our greatest assets. It is in the State's interest to nurture this potential so that it can develop in as many avenues as possible—in business and industry, and in our civic and political institutions to ensure that they are both representative of the community and enhanced by the contribution of diverse knowledge, skills and perspectives.

For the Western Australian public sector, a range of strategies are needed to ensure that public authorities are representative of the community they serve, and to better utilise the State's cultural and linguistic diversity, including:

- addressing unconscious bias in recruitment and selection processes and encouraging applications from people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in internship and graduate programs
- mentoring and coaching programs to support and progress staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- utilising employees' cultural and linguistic skills in service delivery and recognising bilingualism as a relevant technical skill for specific positions
- ensuring that workplaces, boards and committees are culturally and linguistically diverse
- reviewing procurement practices to encourage support for organisations and businesses established by Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Implementation

In implementing this Framework, Western Australian public sector agencies will be required to develop their own multicultural plans in accordance with their portfolio area, policy and program priorities. The Framework provides for a staged approach to implementation. Agency plans may be annual or cover multiple years.

The Office of Multicultural Interests will be available to provide guidance to agencies in developing and implementing their multicultural plan and will provide planning and reporting templates.

Monitoring and reporting

Multicultural Plans shall be aligned with the Multicultural Policy Framework Priorities and the Policy Outcomes identified in the Framework adapted to each agency's remit, type and scope.

Directors General and Chief Executive Officers are accountable for implementing the Multicultural Policy Framework in their agencies through their annual reports, which are tabled in Parliament, noting progress in:

- development and implementation of the agency's multicultural plan
- achievement of outcomes and Key Performance Indicators identified in the plan.

Where relevant to an agency's plan, information provided in the annual report should include details of the:

- goals and strategies to increase cultural awareness within the workplace and improve cultural diversity in the workforce and on its boards, committees and other decision-making bodies
- demand for and provision of language services, including interpreting and translating services and other multilingual communication strategies
- collection and analysis of cultural and linguistic data in relation to the agency's workforce, customers, clients and stakeholders, including birthplace and language, to develop future strategies
- initiatives developed to address identified needs of Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities and achieve equitable outcomes relevant to the agency's portfolio
- initiatives that support and develop the entrepreneurial capacity of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to facilitate participation in social, cultural, civic and political activities
- strategic and corporate planning, procurement and review processes that integrate multicultural policy goals.



The Multicultural Policy Framework annual reporting requirements can incorporate or be incorporated in agencies' reporting in relation to the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality and other relevant policies and plans.

A copy of each agency's Multicultural Plan should be provided to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests by 31 August.

Each year, the Office of Multicultural Interests shall prepare a summary of implementation of agencies' Multicultural Plans for consideration by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests and the Minister's Multicultural Advisory Group.

Evaluation

The Government will evaluate the implementation of the Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework within five years of its introduction. The evaluation will form the basis of a report to Parliament by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. The report will highlight progress by agencies in implementing the Framework and showcase examples of initiatives undertaken across the WA public sector.



Definitions

Citizens/Citizenship

Promotion of active citizenship and representation in the democratic process is one of the main strategies in facilitating full participation by culturally and linguistically diverse communities in social, economic, cultural and civic activities.

Citizenship can be formally defined as the legal relationship between an individual and a state. More broadly, and in the context of the WA Charter of Multiculturalism, citizenship is the condition of belonging to social, religious, political or community groups, locally, nationally and globally. Being part of a group carries with it a sense of belonging or identity, which includes rights and responsibilities, duties and privileges. These are guided by the agreed values and mutual obligations required for active participation in the group. Citizenship incorporates three components—civil (rights and responsibilities), political (participation and representation) and social (social values, identity and community involvement). In this context, the term ‘citizen’ refers to not only people who hold Australian citizenship but all Western Australians.

Culturally and linguistically diverse

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) was introduced in 1996 to replace ‘non-English speaking background’ (NESB) and was intended to be a broader, more flexible and inclusive term. It is generally applied to groups and individuals who differ according to religion, language and ethnicity and whose ancestry is other than Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Anglo Saxon or Anglo Celtic.

For the purposes of data collection, the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity* apply. These are national standards for measuring diversity and include a core and standard set of cultural and language indicators.

The core set comprises:

- country of birth
- main language other than English spoken at home
- proficiency in spoken English
- Indigenous status (used when the focus is not specifically on people from migrant and refugee backgrounds).

The other indicators in the standard set are:

- ancestry
- birthplace of parents
- first language spoken
- languages spoken at home
- main language spoken at home
- religious affiliation
- year of arrival in Australia.

Agencies are encouraged to collect the minimum core data set and to identify and include relevant standard variables as appropriate.

Culturally responsive

Culturally responsive can be defined as the ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, in a manner that acknowledges their worth and preserves the dignity of individuals, families, and communities. The focus should be on seeing the individual as unique, identifying cultural identity, and responding to the needs of each person in a manner that is respectful and maintains this identity. Providing culturally appropriate care therefore includes:

- staff to be aware of the influence of their own cultural beliefs on their practice
- respect for, and sensitivity to, the cultural practices and beliefs of others
- provision of language services
- organisational commitment that recognises and supports cultural diversity including the provision of staff cultural competency training.



Culture

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing shared values, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, assumptions and norms formed through similar experiences.

We develop shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding through the socialisation process. This creates a cultural identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group. For example, it can influence what we believe is right or wrong and how we behave towards others.

Culture is not just about ethnicity. Culture is dynamic and constantly changing. It is the shared system of learned and shared values, beliefs and rules of conduct that make people behave in a certain way. It is a process for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. It is a lens through which we view the world.

Diversity

Diversity is a statement of fact that encompasses the range of visible and invisible attributes, experiences and identities that shape each individual. Diversity embraces all human differences including but not limited to ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values systems and national origin.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity describes a population of human beings whose members identify with each other, usually based on a presumed common ancestry; recognition by others as a distinct group; or by common cultural, linguistic, religious or territorial traits. People can share the same nationality but belong to different ethnic groups, while people who share an ethnic identity can be of different nationalities.

Institutional/systemic discrimination

Institutional, or systemic, discrimination is discrimination that is embedded in the policies and practices of an organisation. While this form of discrimination is often unintentional, the effect is to limit or restrict some groups of people from accessing all or some of the services of an organisation in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. This type of discrimination is often difficult to distinguish as it appears neutral but has a negative effect on people with a particular attribute or characteristic such as perceived impairment, race or gender.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a process for systemic change recognises that individual characteristics do not exist independently of each other but rather inform our social identity and can intersect to create complex forms of oppression as a result of systems and structures that do not take this diversity into consideration.

Our social identities are based on groups or communities we belong to and give us a sense of who we are. Social identities are also multi-dimensional because we can belong to different groups at the same time. Where we are socially located is defined by the identities or groups to which we belong.

Using intersectionality as an analytical lens can guide us to consider a range of social identities simultaneously and enable us to understand the way privilege, power and oppression influence to include or exclude and how they shape an individual's sense of power, resilience and wellbeing.

Nationality

Nationality refers to country of birth or citizenship. Nationality is sometimes used to mean ethnicity, although the two are technically different. People can share the same nationality but be of different ethnic groups and people who share an ethnic identity can be of different nationalities. The importance of this distinction can be seen in language services.

NESB

NESB is the acronym for 'Non-English-Speaking Background'. For the purposes of the Australian Bureau of Statistics cultural and linguistic indicators, NESB countries include all those except Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Race

Race is an outdated term used to group humans based on shared physical or social qualities, into categories generally viewed as distinct by society. Modern scholarship views racial categories as socially constructed; that is, race is not intrinsic to human beings but rather an identity created, often by socially dominant groups, to establish meaning in a social context. Although still used in general contexts, race has often been replaced by less ambiguous terms, such as ethnicity, populations and people(s).

Social cohesion

Social cohesion is achieved by supporting peoples' sense of belonging in a society, encouraging participation, combatting racism and discrimination, and promoting equal rights and responsibilities for all. A cohesive society is where everyone:

- feels that they belong and are respected, accepted and included
- shares a commitment to a country's laws, rights and responsibilities
- can participate in all aspects of society including education, training and employment
- has the opportunity to contribute to civic and political life and to have a say in decisions affecting them.

Substantive equality

Substantive equality means achieving equitable outcomes as well as providing equal opportunity. It highlights the need to sometimes treat people differently to achieve equal results. It takes into account the effects of past discrimination, and recognises that rights, entitlements, opportunities and access are not equally distributed throughout society. It is achieved by addressing and preventing systemic discrimination by adjusting policies, procedures and practices to meet the specific needs of certain groups in the community.

Unconscious bias

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, which stem from a tendency to categorise people. It is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with a person's conscious values.

Unconscious bias happens automatically and is triggered by making quick assessments of people and situations based on our own background, culture and personal experiences. Often people refer to 'first impressions' and intuitions about others, which are ways of expressing unconscious bias. Unconscious bias is considered to be outside our control though we can take steps to mitigate its effects.

Substantive equality means achieving equitable outcomes as well as providing equal opportunity.



International conventions

Australia is signatory to the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights and a number of International human rights treaties and conventions. These include the:

- 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- 1963 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief
- 1989 International Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 2006 Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

National and State legislation

National

At the national level, United Nations international instruments are supported by legislation including the:

- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Criminal Code Amendment (Racial Vilification) Act 2004.*

State

At the State level, Western Australia's *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* is the primary legislative vehicle through which to promote equality of opportunity. The *Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993* supplements this and national legislation to ensure that people with disability can access services provided by public authorities in Western Australia.

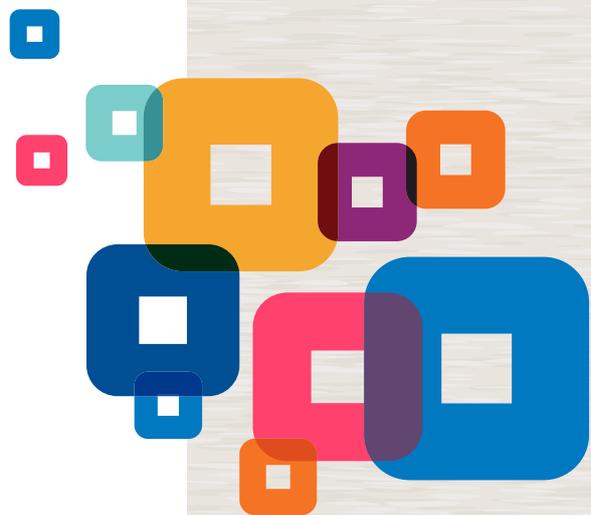
State policy

Two key policies support national and State equal opportunity legislation.

The 2004 'Policy Framework for Substantive Equality' provides a process of continuous improvement through which organisations can progress towards achieving substantive equality and meeting their obligations under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*. Its objective is to achieve substantive equality by eliminating systemic discrimination in the provision of public sector services and promoting sensitivity to the different needs of client groups.

The 'Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014' seeks to ensure that in a linguistically diverse community, limited competence in the English language is not a barrier to accessing services. Western Australians who may require assistance to communicate effectively include people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, Aboriginal peoples and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.





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