



Department of  
**Creative Industries,  
Tourism and Sport**



**OFFICE OF  
MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**

# **A Multicultural Act for Western Australia**

**Consultation Summary Report**

May 2026

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## Ministerial foreword

Western Australia has a long and proud history of supporting and celebrating cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

The Western Australian Government recognises the contributions that culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities make to our society.

To ensure our laws and institutions continue to reflect and support this diversity, the WA Government has been consulting on a potential Multicultural Act for Western Australia.

In recent years, significant progress has been made through policies that promote inclusivity, participation and equitable access for all communities in Western Australia.

During a time of considerable change in Australia's broader social landscape, considering how multiculturalism is represented through legislation is becoming increasingly necessary.

This is why wide-reaching consultation on a potential Multicultural Act for Western Australia has been so important.

Between November 2025 and February 2026, a total of 2,161 people provided feedback. This included 1,710 written and online survey responses, as well as feedback from 451 participants through in-person consultations, which were held across Perth metropolitan and regional areas throughout Western Australia.

This high engagement shows how passionate Western Australians are about having their say, and how invested they are in supporting the future of multiculturalism in Western Australia.

This report summarises the diversity of views and insights shared during the consultation. It provides a foundation to help inform development of a multicultural legislation as well as guide future work undertaken to further multiculturalism in Western Australia.

Crucially, this report will help inform how the principles that underpin a safe, inclusive and harmonious community are maintained and remain central to the way government, communities and institutions work together.

Thank you to all those who have participated in this process so far, and for playing your part in informing the future of multiculturalism in Western Australia.

Your invaluable feedback will ensure that any legislation that is developed considers the lived experience of all Western Australians and will shape and strengthen our society for future generations.

Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA

**MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**



## Acknowledgement of Country

The WA Government acknowledges the Traditional Custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community.

We honour the enduring cultures, knowledge systems and deep spiritual connection to Country of Aboriginal people and communities, which continue to shape Western Australia's identity. We pay our respects to all members of Western Australia's Aboriginal communities and to Elders both past and present.



*Photo: Wadumbah Aboriginal Dance Group at the 2026 Western Australian Multicultural Awards, Thursday 12 March 2026. Photo by Michael O'Hara.*

## Acknowledgements

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) is a division of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport.

OMI would like to thank everyone who took the time to contribute to the public consultation on development of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. Your experiences, thoughts and expert advice are valued greatly.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge organisations that invested considerable effort in conducting their own consultations to contribute to the process and to those that helped promote the public consultation through their networks. We also extend our thanks to the Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council (MMAC) members who provided guidance and assisted the consultation process, including volunteering their time at two ministerial forums to help facilitate groups. We also thank the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA for their time and guidance.



**We are committed to ensuring all Western Australians are welcome and included, and that everyone is treated equitably**

## Executive Summary

Western Australia is a long-standing multicultural society. Cultural, linguistic and religious diversity is a defining feature of Western Australia and contributes to its social cohesion, economic prosperity and civic life.

In recent years, changing social conditions, global events and community concern about racism and exclusion have prompted renewed consideration of how multiculturalism is recognised, protected and supported through law. In this context, the Minister for Multicultural Interests directed Western Australia to consult on the potential development of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. This report summarises what was heard through the consultation process and contributes to the evidence base for the next stage of decision-making, including whether to proceed with legislation.

### **Purpose and approach**

The consultation sought feedback on whether a Multicultural Act would strengthen Western Australia's multicultural framework and, if so, how such legislation should be framed. It focused on guiding principles, definitions, governance and advisory arrangements, public sector responsibilities, and regional considerations.

Between November 2025 and February 2026, 2,161 people provided feedback through online surveys, written submissions and in-person consultations held across metropolitan and regional Western Australia. Participants included community members, leaders from CaLD communities, faith leaders, service providers, non-government organisations (NGOs), local governments and WA Government agencies.

Consultation activities were designed to maximise accessibility and participation, including translated survey materials, targeted engagement with key stakeholder groups, and facilitated forums that prioritised lived experience and practical implementation considerations.

### **Overall sentiment**

Across consultation formats, there was broad support for establishing a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. Respondents consistently framed the proposed Act as relevant to all Western Australians, rather than to CaLD communities alone.

Support was most often linked to the potential for legislation to embed inclusion, equity and participation in law, strengthen accountability and continuity across government, ensure consistent application of multicultural principles across agencies and regions, and provide clearer obligations for accessible, culturally responsive service delivery.

Some respondents raised concerns about duplication with existing legislation, administrative burden, and fostering social division, with a small number of respondents expressing views calling for cultural conformity and a preference for a single, shared national culture. These views were present but not predominant and were often raised as broader commentary rather than as responses to the consultation questions about the proposed Act.

## Key themes from the consultation

### **Multiculturalism as a whole-of-community framework**

Respondents emphasised that multiculturalism should be framed as a whole-of-community framework grounded in shared rights, responsibilities and democratic values, while remaining responsive to different starting points and lived experiences. Many contributors highlighted the importance of clarity about how multiculturalism operates alongside recognition of Aboriginal peoples as Western Australia's First Peoples, stressing that multicultural legislation should complement, not undermine, Aboriginal rights, cultural authority and self-determination.

### **From aspiration to accountability**

A recurring theme was the limitation of non-binding policy frameworks. Many respondents described legislation as a necessary mechanism to translate multicultural commitments from aspiration into enforceable and enduring obligations, with emphasis on consistency across agencies, clear expectations for planning and reporting, and greater transparency in assessing outcomes.

### **Principles, values and definitions**

Consultation feedback identified a consistent set of core principles respondents expected a Multicultural Act to reflect, including respect, equality, fairness, inclusion and participation, with strong emphasis on substantive equality and zero tolerance for racism and discrimination.

There was strong support for clear, plain-language definitions to underpin a Multicultural Act and support consistent implementation and public understanding. Frequently referenced terms for definition included CaLD, equality, equity and substantive equality, discrimination and racism (including systemic forms), multiculturalism, and cultural safety. Many participants also called for explicit recognition of race, religion and lived experience within definitions, including recognition of antisemitism and Islamophobia as forms of religious discrimination.

### **Governance and public sector responsibilities**

Respondents expressed strong support for establishing a legislated multicultural advisory body to strengthen accountability and ensure community perspectives inform implementation. Key expectations included genuine influence on decision-making, independence, adequate resourcing, representation of metropolitan and regional Western Australia, and strong connection to grassroots communities, while avoiding unnecessary duplication with existing structures.

There was also strong support for embedding public sector responsibilities within a Multicultural Act, particularly through alignment with existing frameworks such as the Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework, Western Australian Language Services Policy and the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality. Respondents emphasised clear and proportionate obligations, meaningful reporting and evaluation, and recognition of language services as foundational to equitable access and participation.

### **Regional and place-based considerations**

Participants from regional, rural and remote Western Australia emphasised that a Multicultural Act must account for geographic differences in service access, infrastructure, costs and community capacity. Key expectations included mechanisms to ensure regional voices are systematically heard, place-based approaches that reflect local context, stronger partnerships with local government, and improved regional-level data collection and reporting.

## Introduction

Western Australia has been culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse for a long time. Aboriginal peoples, and the richness and diversity of Aboriginal cultures and languages, have endured and maintained connection with Country for more than 60,000 years. Successive waves of migration have shaped the State which continues to become more diverse in its population, languages, faiths and lived experiences. Based on the 2021 Census, more than 32 per cent of Western Australians were born overseas, speaking over 249 languages and practising more than 130 religions. This diversity is a defining feature of the State and presents important opportunities and responsibilities for government.

In May 2025, OMI began to undertake the development of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia (the Act). The proposed Act aims to formally embed inclusion, equity and participation in law, ensuring government policies, services and decision-making are responsive to the needs of all Western Australians, while recognising different starting points and experiences.

Several Australian jurisdictions have established multicultural legislation to support recognition, responsiveness, accountability, and long-term commitment to inclusive, equitable and culturally responsive government policies and services. In this context, OMI commenced a jurisdictional review, findings shared through the [Research and Findings Report – WA Multicultural Act](#). This was followed by a public consultation process to explore whether similar legislation would strengthen outcomes in Western Australia.

Consultation began with the launch of a discussion paper by Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA, Minister for Multicultural Interests, on 24 November 2025, and continued to 15 February 2026. This Consultation Summary Report outlines what was heard during this period. It reflects the views of community members, community organisations, service providers, government agencies and other stakeholders, and provides an evidence base to inform the next stage of policy development.



Photo: CaLD Community Stakeholder Forum, Sunday 23 November 2025

## Our approach

OMI managed the public consultation and communications process following the Minister's direction and with the endorsement of the Director General, CITS.

The aim of the communications and consultation processes was to achieve broad and representative feedback. This was guided by the following principles:

- Accessibility and participation by community members, with a focus on ensuring participation by members of Western Australia's CaLD communities.
- Provide all communications in plain English, noting that English may also be a second language for some recipients.
- Ensure that translation has been considered and prioritised in all communications where appropriate, offering the option to provide translations on request.
- Provide a clear understanding of what a Multicultural Act is.
- Provide a clear understanding of OMI's role in the development of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia.
- Ensure that all messaging is consistent, targeted and rolled out across a wide range of stakeholder groups to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible are informed and able to participate in the consultation process.

A subcommittee of the MMAC was established to support consultation and potential development of the Act by providing strategic advice, community insight and policy input.

Specific stakeholder groups were targeted as part of engagement activities undertaken to ensure participation by those most likely to be impacted by multicultural legislation. These groups would also act as a communications channel to promote wider engagement with their own networks:

- CaLD groups and associations.
- CaLD peak and advisory bodies.
- Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council.
- WA Government agencies.
- WA Local Governments.
- CaLD-specialist community service providers.
- Broader community service providers.

## Design and planning

From August to November 2025, OMI conducted a cross-jurisdictional review of multicultural legislation across Australia and overseas including their key elements and impact. The main impact areas attributed to the establishment of Multicultural Acts were:

- demonstrated jurisdictional commitment to multiculturalism
- increased profile, recognition and investment in the multicultural sector
- enhanced government responsiveness to the CaLD community
- improved governance and accountability framework
- increased regional and local government engagement
- strengthened social cohesion and community resilience.

Establishment of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia would enable stronger alignment with legislation in other Australian jurisdictions and establish a more consistent policy and legislative environment. This could make it easier to benchmark and evaluate outcomes, strengthen cross-border collaboration, and minimise unnecessary differences in approach—particularly for organisations working across multiple jurisdictions.

An initial short online survey of community stakeholders in August 2025 sought preliminary feedback on the key components a Multicultural Act for Western Australia should include to be effective, receiving 102 responses.

This foundational research and preliminary survey informed the development of a discussion paper exploring what might be included in a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. To guide feedback, the discussion paper included key questions across the following areas:

- Guiding principles.
- Key definitions.
- Independent multicultural advisory body.
- Public sector responsibilities.
- Regional communities.
- Any other matters.

The online discussion paper was made publicly available through the OMI website on Monday 24 November 2025.

The discussion paper invited feedback on the proposed Multicultural Act for Western Australia with responses due by 15 February 2026. Submissions could be made by:

- making a written submission
- completing an online survey responding to the key questions in the discussion paper
- providing general feedback on the proposed Act through a short 'Have Your Say' online survey which was made available in 22 languages.

To enable accessibility and participation, OMI facilitated a series of forums, focus groups or meetings to provide feedback on the discussion paper questions.

## Communications

Several key activities were undertaken to promote the discussion paper and support the consultation process:

- A dedicated page on the OMI website was established as the primary source of information for the consultation process, with content and resources updated in line with delivery milestones.
- The opportunity to provide feedback was offered through the WA Government's 'Have Your Say Portal' to achieve broad community reach.
- Communication materials were packaged as an 'Amplification Toolkit' and shared with stakeholder groups identified as key communications channels to assist their promotion of the consultation process with their own networks.
- The Director General, CITS, wrote to all Directors General of WA Government agencies and to the Chief Executive Officers of all WA Local Governments requesting their support to participate in the consultation and promote the discussion paper through their networks.
- A campaign was run across Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, the OMI website and email newsletters during the consultation period. The consultation process was also promoted through the social media and email networks of other WA Government agencies, local governments, non-government organisations, community associations and local media.
- Presentations were made to seven sector network groups to promote the discussion paper and encourage their participation in the consultation process:
  - Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA.
  - Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse WA.
  - City of Wanneroo Multicultural Advisory Group.
  - Indian Ocean Territories SDA Agency Collaboration conference.
  - National Disability Insurance Agency Community and Stakeholder Forum.
  - North West Metropolitan District Leadership Group.
  - Western Australian Local Government Association.



Photo: Consultation session with community members in Kalgoorlie, Monday 24 November 2025

## WA Multicultural Act Consultation Response Summary

### We heard from



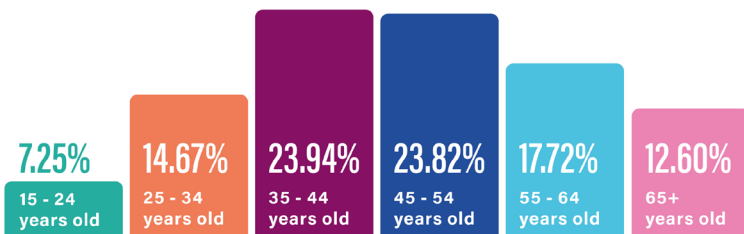
### We received



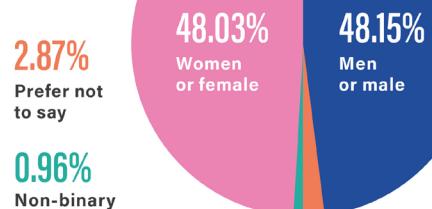
**2,161** total contributions

### Age group

Respondents came from a diverse range of age groups



### Gender



### Location

We received contributions from people in **all ten WA regions**

**78.83%** from metro WA

**19.25%** from regional WA

**1.92%** from interstate



**4.27%** of people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin

**193** different ancestries were identified with by respondents

**92** different places of birth were noted by respondents. The most common places of birth were Australia, India, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Malaysia, China and New Zealand

**145** different languages were spoken by respondents. The most common languages spoken were English, Hindi, Arabic, Gujarati, Mandarin, Punjabi and Spanish

## Consultation process

A total of 2,161 people provided feedback over the public consultation period, including 1,710 written and survey responses and feedback from 451 participants through in-person consultations.

### Face-to-face consultations

Leaders from CaLD community associations were invited to participate in two Ministerial consultation forums to provide feedback to the key questions of the discussion paper. The first was held on 23 November 2025 at the Serbian Community Centre, Kenwick and the second on 1 February 2026 at the Chung Wah Cultural Centre, Balcatta. Together, the forums were attended by a total of 158 people representing 104 associations.

Thirteen focus groups and meetings were held with key community and sector groups in Perth, attended by a total of 212 people.

Between 24 November 2025 and 4 February 2026, a total of 81 people attended regional focus groups in Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Geraldton, Katanning, Albany and Bunbury.



Photo: CaLD Community Stakeholder Forum, Sunday 23 November 2025

### Online surveys

A 'Have Your Say' short survey was made available in 22 languages asking for general feedback on the key components proposed to be included in a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. This generated 1,316 responses, including 28 in languages other than English. A longer survey was also made available seeking feedback on the key questions within the discussion paper, which generated 238 responses.

Both surveys received responses from a range of stakeholders including CaLD community members, members of the wider community, State and local government employees, non-government organisations, faith community members and Aboriginal community members.

## Written submissions

OMI received 54 written submissions to the key questions in the discussion paper by the closing date and a further three submissions after the closing date. While received late, the late submissions were reviewed, and their key themes are reflected where relevant.

Several submissions indicated significant effort by some organisations to seek input from their communities and members to inform a written submission. These included the:

- Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors which facilitated a joint written submission representing seven community services organisations operating in Perth and across Western Australia
- Australian Arab Association which facilitated an in-person consultation in Arabic with around 110 community members from the Palestinian, Egyptian, Syrian, Eritrean, Jordanian and Lebanese communities. Participants included community association leaders, youth representatives, women's groups, mosque committees, cultural organisations and service providers who work closely with CaLD communities across the state
- Youth Affairs Council of WA which, in partnership with the Multicultural Youth Advisory Network WA, conducted a survey of 64 young people across Western Australia
- Western Australian Local Government Association, which surveyed its 139 Local Government members.



Photo: Consultation session with CaLD not-for-profit associations, Monday 9 February 2026


## What we heard

### Overview

The consultation elicited a wide range of views on the establishment of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia, reflecting perspectives across community members, community organisations, service providers, government agencies and other stakeholders. While responses varied in emphasis, respondents consistently framed their feedback around shared values, lived experience and the practical impacts of legislation, rather than institutional design alone.

Overall, based on the feedback received through submissions and in-person consultations, there was broad support for establishing a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. Respondents consistently described the proposed Act as relevant to all Western Australians, rather than to CaLD communities alone. Across multiple stakeholder groups, it was seen as signalling a whole-of-community framework that recognises diversity as a defining feature of the State. WA Government employees and CaLD community association leaders frequently articulated this by emphasising that multicultural policy should apply universally, while remaining responsive to different starting points and experiences. Some respondents also linked this framing to recognition of Aboriginal peoples as Western Australia's First Peoples, noting the need for clarity about how multiculturalism and First Peoples status coexist within the same legislative framework.

Support for a Multicultural Act for Western Australia was frequently linked to enforceable obligations rather than aspirational policy settings. Respondents frequently highlighted the limitations of existing non-binding policies and described legislation as a mechanism to ensure continuity and accountability across government.



**“A legislative framework would transform multiculturalism from an aspiration into something operational and accountable across government.”**  
– Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework Interagency Network – group discussion response

Those in support of an Act also viewed it as a mechanism to address systemic inequities and embed substantive equality across government activity, with CaLD community leaders and service-delivery organisations emphasising lived experience, access to services, and accountability. Organisational stakeholders in particular emphasised regular public reporting, clear obligations and consistency across agencies.

**“Equity cannot be left to goodwill or individual agency commitment—it needs to be embedded in legislation.”**  
– CaLD community association leader

**“Without legislation, progress depends on political cycles and leadership priorities rather than clear obligations.”**  
– Non-Government Organisation

Recognition of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity emerged as a central theme, alongside strong emphasis on the need to align multiculturalism with human rights principles and protections from racism and discrimination.

Some respondents from the wider Western Australian community and a few organisations did not support a Multicultural Act, most often due to concerns about potential social division, perceived duplication of existing laws, or that cultural diversity should not be formally recognised through legislation. They mostly framed concerns around shared values, national identity, fairness and social unity, suggesting that multicultural legislation could entrench division or provide preferential treatment.

**“People need to be able to participate in society without fear of discrimination because of their culture or religion.”**  
– Faith community representative

**“We already have equal rights under the law. Creating another Act only risks dividing the community further.”** – Individual respondent, wider WA community

Some respondents noted that shared values should be communicated without implying assimilation and should recognise that people can uphold community expectations and take part in public life while maintaining different cultural backgrounds.

While a small number of respondents expressed concerns about duplication or potential social division, these views were not predominant. Where raised, they were commonly framed as a call for careful design to ensure legislation delivers practical outcomes rather than symbolic intent.

The following sections explore these themes in more detail, outlining what respondents said about questions asked in the discussion paper on areas including guiding principles, key definitions, governance and advisory structures, public sector responsibilities, regional considerations and other matters relevant to the development of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia.

## Guiding principles

Across stakeholder groups, respondents described a broadly consistent set of principles and values they associated with a multicultural society and how they may be expressed in a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. Feedback centred on respectful recognition of diversity, fair treatment and participation, and the extent to which principles and values would translate into practice across the WA Government.

While many responses emphasised shared values and social harmony, others highlighted equity or framed their views through the lens of racism and discrimination and the need for culturally safe systems. These principles and values were commonly linked to the importance of recognising Aboriginal peoples as Western Australia's First Peoples within the Act.

### What principles and values do you feel are important for a Multicultural Act to include?

#### **Respect**

Respect was consistently framed as a foundational principle recommended for inclusion in an Act, extending beyond cultural acknowledgement to require equal treatment, inclusion, and full participation. Respondents highlighted *'respect, inclusion, and social harmony'* alongside *'equality, equity, and fairness... regardless of background.'*

Respect was also described as a shared responsibility, setting clear expectations around mutual understanding and zero tolerance for racism and discrimination. This principle was extended to include cultural and religious freedom, *'the freedom to practice your own religion, faith and culture.'* Respondents linked recognition of Aboriginal peoples as Australia's First Peoples with the idea of respect as a core element of a multicultural society.

#### **Equality**

The principle of equality was most often expressed as a baseline expectation of fair treatment and equal opportunity. This was often framed in the context of ensuring people can access WA Government services and participate in community life regardless of background. One respondent expressed this in practical terms as *'fairness and equality—making sure everyone has equal access to services and opportunities, no matter their background,'* linking equality directly to the ability to participate in a democracy.

#### **Substantive equality and equity**

Some respondents used the language of equity and substantive equality to distinguish between equal treatment and equitable outcomes. This was often described as the idea that treating everyone the same is not enough if outcomes remain unequal. In practical terms, this was described as tailoring WA Government agency approaches so different communities can access the same opportunities, thereby upholding the principle of equity.


This was often linked to the importance of agency accountability and application of consistent standards to ensure the delivery of fair outcomes and measuring whether policies deliver on set outcomes over time, rather than relying on symbolic intent alone. One written submission called for an Act to *'enshrine a strong commitment to equity and substantive equality...'* noting that legislating it would *'create a consistent standard across all government agencies.'*

### **Inclusion and participation**

Inclusion was linked closely to the idea of participation and not just cultural recognition. A WA Government employee said an Act should *‘promote respect, inclusion, and social harmony’* and linked this directly to *‘participation and access to services.’* Youth feedback described inclusion as having a real say— *‘making sure everyone gets a say in decisions that affect them’*—alongside shared expectations of respect and fairness across cultures.

WA Government responses reinforced inclusion through both belonging and practical access, including listing “inclusion” and “belonging” as related principles. For example, one respondent described how inclusion and belonging can be fostered through access to appropriate interpreting and translating services, creating equitable pathways for participation to civic and community life.

There was a common view that an Act and its principles should be shaped within a strengths-based approach that views diversity as a strength and that they should highlight the importance of democratic participation.



**“Diversity as a strength — recognising that cultural differences enrich our society...and linking this to ‘Fairness and equality’ and ‘Democratic participation — ensuring everyone can take part in civic and political life.’ – Community member**

### **Anti-racism and discrimination**

Many respondents referred to racism and discrimination when describing the principles they expected an Act to reflect. This was frequently expressed as a commitment to addressing systemic racism and discrimination through education initiatives, stronger accountability processes, and culturally safe mechanisms for reporting and response, particularly in workplaces and schools. One community member referred to a need for “zero tolerance for racism and discrimination,” linking efforts to address racism with democratic participation and broader principles of fairness and inclusion.

### **Shared values**

References to Australian or shared values were typically articulated as respect, fairness, democratic participation and adherence to the rule of law. WA Government employees and CaLD community association leaders frequently described these values as compatible with cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, rather than in opposition to it. A small number of respondents expressed views calling for cultural conformity and a preference for a single, shared national culture.

Feedback from young people placed particular emphasis on respect for all cultures, fair access to services and standing up to racism and discrimination, while also referencing English as a shared communication language.

➤ **How could a Multicultural Act better reflect the WA Government's commitment to Aboriginal peoples as Western Australia's First Peoples?**

Respondents commonly suggested that recognition be expressed in the Act's opening framing, including through a preamble or introductory statements that recognise and acknowledge Aboriginal peoples as the First Peoples of Western Australia and their ongoing connection to Country.

Respondents also articulated that multiculturalism complements, rather than replaces, Aboriginal identity, rights and cultural continuity. This was frequently described as setting the context for multicultural policy in a way that reflects Western Australia's history and present-day community. Several respondents described commitment in terms of acknowledging historical dispossession and the impacts of past policies on Aboriginal peoples.

**Respect for distinct rights and governance**

Some respondents emphasised that recognition should not blur the distinct status of Aboriginal peoples or replace existing structures relating to legislative frameworks, decision-making processes, governance arrangements and consultation mechanisms. This was frequently expressed as ensuring multicultural legislation is complementary to Aboriginal specific frameworks, rather than subsuming Aboriginal identity or rights within broader multicultural concepts.

In some cases, recognition was linked to practical mechanisms, including co-design for programs affecting Aboriginal peoples, culturally safe engagement standards and ongoing commitment from government on decisions affecting Aboriginal communities. A WA Government respondent described this as including *'formal recognition... incorporating an Acknowledgement of Country,'* alongside *'co-design mechanisms,'* support for *'language and cultural continuity,'* and attention to *'ongoing impacts of past government policies.'*

This was also reflected in responses from local and WA Government employees, which emphasised the need to clearly distinguish how recognition of Aboriginal peoples as Australia's First Peoples within multicultural legislation interacts with existing legislative and governance arrangements, and the importance of alignment and scope.



Photo: Consultation activity at the Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework interagency meeting, Thursday 20 November 2025

## Definitions

The consultation revealed strong support for clear, plain-language definitions to underpin an Act and enable consistent implementation, measurement and public understanding. While there was broad agreement on the need for clarity and accessibility, emphasis differed. WA Government employees prioritised definitional consistency to align indicators and streamline reporting, while CaLD community association leaders and faith community members stressed the importance of explicitly recognising race, religion, language and lived experience within the definitions themselves.

Feedback from WA Government agency respondents highlighted that consistent definitions would reduce reporting burden, avoid duplication with other oversight requirements, and support expectations tailored to agency size, capacity and resources. They called for '*consistency of meaning and use*' and alignment with existing indicators, noting that shared definitions are essential for data collection, and reporting.

As noted by one in-person consultation participant, '*clear definitions are essential for robust data collection*,' a view echoed by community respondents. Participants also emphasised that definitions should be written in plain English, supported by infographics and, where relevant, translated to support community understanding. Several noted that definitions should be reviewed on a scheduled basis to ensure they remain current as demographics and agency usage evolve.

### ➤ What words do you think would be important to define in a Multicultural Act?

#### **CaLD (culturally and linguistically diverse)**

CaLD was the most frequently referenced term in the consultation. Participants consistently expressed concern that the term is used inconsistently across government, often relying on outdated or incomplete indicators. Clear definitions were seen as critical to determining scope, ensuring consistent data collection, targeting services appropriately, and avoiding exclusion or misclassification of communities. There was also a strong view that the term 'CaLD' requires a definition that reflects the Western Australian context, avoids deficit framing, and clarifies how ancestry, country of birth and language indicators are used.

**“Definition of CaLD needs to be clear and inclusive, not just country of birth or language spoken at home.”**  
– Community member

**“CaLD definition should reflect WA context, not just ABS standards.”  
– WA Government employee**

WA Government employees highlighted current inconsistencies between the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Public Sector Commission usage of the term and asked for a ‘shared understanding’ to enable coherent reporting across agencies. Community contributors also highlighted this point.

### **Equality, equity and substantive equality**

Equality and equity were both frequently mentioned, with strong emphasis on the concept of substantive equality. Participants highlighted the need to distinguish between equal treatment and fair treatment that recognises systemic barriers. Defining substantive equality was viewed as essential to justify targeted measures, allocate resources appropriately, and ensure an Act supports outcomes rather than purely formal or symbolic equality.

Many respondents asked that an Act distinguish equality from equity and to define ‘substantive equality’ in a way that acknowledges systemic barriers and supports tailored responses. A community member expressed a common sentiment, saying that, *‘substantive equality must be explained in the Act, not just formal equality.’* CaLD community association leaders frequently framed “substantive equality” with anti-racism and self-determination, and some urged explicit recognition of intersectionality within the definition.

### **Discrimination, racism and systemic discrimination**

Discrimination and racism featured prominently, often qualified by the terms systemic or institutional. Participants emphasised that racism is not limited to individual behaviour and must be understood as embedded within systems, policies and practices. Clear definitions were considered necessary to support accountability, enforcement, and consistent reporting, and to ensure racism is explicitly named rather than obscured by vague language.

**“Racism needs a clear definition, including systemic and institutional racism.”  
– Community member**

Respondents sought explicit, plain language definitions of racism and discrimination, including recognition of systemic or institutional forms, and requested that ‘religious vilification’ be clearly defined to reflect experiences reported by diverse faith communities. There was also a call for explicit recognition of antisemitism and Islamophobia

noting that clear and unambiguous recognition would provide important normative and policy clarity, assist government agencies to better prevent and respond to religious hatred, and affirm that Western Australia stands firmly against all forms of religious discrimination.

CaLD community association leaders frequently linked these definitions to practical expectations around accountability and redress. They highlighted the importance of definitions that explicitly recognise religious identity and protection from religious vilification,

and that situate anti-racism within an Act's objectives. They also linked definitions to everyday inclusion—such as language services, intercultural communication and ensuring that equity concepts translate into service design.

### **Ethnicity and race**

Ethnicity and race were frequently raised as concepts requiring careful and explicit definition. Participants noted confusion and discomfort around these terms but stressed that avoiding them altogether weakens policy responses to racism. Clear definitions were seen as essential for accurate data collection, meaningful disaggregation, and effective design of anti-racism and inclusion measures.

### **Diversity, inclusion and cohesion**

Diversity, inclusion and cohesion were commonly described as over-used but under-defined. Participants stressed that without clarity, they risk becoming aspirational slogans rather than practical obligations. Definitions were sought that link diversity to recognition of difference, inclusion to participation and influence, and social cohesion to belonging, shared values and social harmony, with clear implications for policy and practice.

### **Multiculturalism**

Participants highlighted uncertainty about the scope and meaning of multiculturalism and its relationship to intercultural engagement. Definitions were sought to clarify whether multiculturalism refers to coexistence, interaction, or a shared civic culture, and how it aligns with social cohesion and Western Australia's specific demographic and geographic context.

Respondents commonly framed multiculturalism as an active practice that encompasses culture, language and faith—beyond celebratory or symbolic statements—and called for a statutory definition to reduce ambiguity in policy and service delivery. Community members articulated this in plain terms, noting that, *'multiculturalism should be defined to include religious diversity and substantive equality,'* and that *'the Act should define multiculturalism as more than ethnicity—include faith, language, and culture.'*

Respondents across Ministerial CaLD community forums, CaLD faith umbrella association sessions, and Jewish and Muslim community leader consultations consistently emphasised that multiculturalism must be defined as more than ethnicity alone. Participants called for explicit inclusion of religion/faith, language, and culture within the definition of multiculturalism, and for an Act to reflect substantive equality, recognising that different communities experience different barriers and require tailored responses.

### **Intersectionality, cultural safety and cultural responsiveness**

Safety emerged as an important concept, particularly in the context of cultural safety. Participants emphasised that safety extends beyond physical harm to include psychological, linguistic and cultural dimensions, especially in service delivery and institutional settings. Defining safety was viewed as critical for setting standards, building workforce capability, and ensuring accountability.

Some respondents proposed definitions for intersectionality, cultural safety and cultural responsiveness/competency, noting that these concepts are central to designing services for people whose experiences reflect multiple, overlapping identities, including faith, gender, disability and migration background. This was often expressed by faith community members as a call for definitions that *'acknowledge intersectionality, [and] faith-based discrimination.'*

### Other terms

There was consistent feedback supporting a clear definition of First Peoples / Aboriginal peoples to distinguish multicultural policy from Aboriginal rights, self-determination and governance frameworks, while avoiding inappropriate conflation between these policy domains.

In addition, respondents suggested a range of further terms to support effective service delivery and protections, including 'heritage language', 'religious identity and practice', 'cultural safety or responsiveness', 'language services and interpreters', and 'marginalised communities.' While raised less frequently, these terms were viewed as important for operational clarity, access and safeguarding against exclusion.



Photo: Consultation session with CaLD not for profit organisations, Monday 9 February 2026

## Multicultural advisory body

Across stakeholder groups, respondents expressed strong support for establishing a multicultural advisory body in legislation as a core mechanism to strengthen accountability and ensure community perspectives inform the implementation of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. Feedback consistently emphasised the importance of the body being independent, having genuine influence on decision-making, and being adequately resourced, while avoiding unnecessary duplication with existing advisory structures.

Respondents commonly linked the effectiveness of such a body to its ability to maintain strong and ongoing connections with CaLD communities across metropolitan and regional Western Australia through regular engagement and accessible communication. The advisory body was widely viewed as a key conduit between government and community, providing informed advice to the Minister and government agencies that is grounded in lived experience and contemporary community needs.

A recurring theme across submissions was the importance of the advisory body reflecting the diversity of Western Australia, including representation across cultural backgrounds, regions, genders, ages and intersecting identities. This diversity was seen as essential to the body's legitimacy, credibility and capacity to provide meaningful advice that responds to the varied experiences of CaLD communities across the State.

### Do you think a Multicultural Act should include a multicultural advisory body?

Overall, there was strong support for establishing a multicultural advisory body to strengthen accountability and transparency and ensure WA Government decision-making is informed by the lived experience and needs of CaLD communities across Western Australia.

Respondents emphasised that the body must have the capacity to effect change, avoid duplication with existing structures, and be designed to have genuine influence on government and build trust.

Many also highlighted the importance of enshrining the advisory body in legislation, with a clear and enduring role that extends beyond political cycles.

#### **Accountability and transparency in implementation**

Respondents frequently referred to an advisory body as a mechanism to strengthen accountability and transparency for how commitments to support multiculturalism are applied in practice. This was frequently described as the advisory body having oversight of initiative implementation and ensuring public visibility of progress. One respondent stated, *'Yes, this would be essential to ensure accountability, transparency, ensure the promotion of the principles embedded within the Act, ensure community voice is reflected and expert advice is provided where required.'*

#### **Community voice and representative input**

An idea often expressed was that an advisory body could provide a structured channel for community perspectives to inform WA Government decision-making. Respondents commonly linked this to ensuring that a range of CaLD communities are represented, including across metropolitan and regional areas and demographic groups. In group consultations particularly, an advisory body was described as a way to *'strengthen the voice*

of *CaLD communities*,’ emphasising the inclusion of lived experience and representation across geography and community diversity.

### **Independence and real influence**

Many respondents who supported an advisory body framed its effectiveness in terms of independence and influence. During the facilitated consultation sessions, some participants expressed concern that a body could become symbolic unless it had clear remit and standing: *‘not... a symbolic advisory body but a real advisory body that has real influence in government decisions.’* Similarly, some respondents emphasised that the body should have the standing to provide input to services and policies delivered by the WA Government.

## **What responsibilities do you think an advisory body should have?**

Across stakeholder groups, respondents described a consistent set of responsibilities focused on advising government, maintaining community connection and supporting accountability for implementation. Organisational and group consultation feedback tended to emphasise system-level functions such as monitoring, evaluation and reporting, while individual respondents more often highlighted the role of ensuring community needs are heard and reflected in decision-making.

### **Advising the Minister for Multicultural Interests and WA Government agencies**

Respondents commonly described the advisory body’s core responsibility as providing advice to the Minister for Multicultural Interests and relevant WA Government agencies on issues affecting CaLD communities. This role was often articulated as identifying emerging issues, providing informed input into policy development, and advising on practical implementation, including *‘how best to implement the Multicultural Act.’* Some respondents described responsibilities relating to identifying systemic barriers to equal access and advising on service responsiveness and improvement initiatives.

A recurring view was that members should act as a bridge between government and community, grounded in day-to-day realities and lived experience. One consultation response captured this clearly, describing members as needing to be connected through *‘networking... lived experience,’* and able to engage directly with organisations and community leaders to link community perspectives with government decision-making.

### **Monitoring implementation, compliance and outcomes**

A prominent view was that the advisory body should monitor implementation of an Act and assess whether commitments and outcomes are being met. Some respondents explicitly linked this to independent evaluation and reporting, describing the advisory body’s responsibilities as monitoring implementation and assessing compliance with an Act. Reporting was framed as a key mechanism for accountability.

### **Connecting government to lived experience and community priorities**

Advisory body responsibilities were frequently linked to maintaining active engagement with CaLD communities and ensuring that lived experience informs government decision-making. This was often described as listening to communities, conveying concerns and aspirations, and ensuring feedback is taken seriously. A leader of a CaLD community association reflected this by describing a responsibility as, *‘Speak to people in their communities and make recommendations and to follow up on whether those recommendations are incorporated.’*

Respondents repeatedly emphasised that the advisory body should engage beyond peak/umbrella organisations, maintaining a direct connection to grassroots communities through partnerships, grassroots consultations, and mechanisms (such as subcommittees/working groups) that ensure community priorities are captured and reflected. One community member captured this sentiment suggesting *‘[i]nclude both peak bodies and grassroots voices—balance organisational leadership with direct community participation.’*

### **Promoting understanding and addressing racism and discrimination**

Some respondents also linked advisory body responsibilities to broader public functions—promoting unity and understanding and raising awareness of racism and discrimination—often alongside responsibilities for advice and accountability. Where raised, this tended to be framed as supporting social harmony and informing government responses to discrimination through evidence and community insight.

## **What specific areas of expertise could be considered when selecting members for the advisory body?**

Overall, feedback emphasised the value of an advisory body in which membership is diverse, inclusive and representative of Western Australia’s cultural, regional and demographic breadth. Respondents emphasised lived experience and strong community connection as essential forms of expertise, alongside policy, governance and experience in relevant sectors to support effective engagement with government. There was also a clear expectation for transparent appointment processes, defined terms and the importance of balancing fresh perspectives with stability and continuity in operations.

### **Representation across communities, regions and demographics**

Many respondents emphasised the importance of membership reflecting diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with representation across metropolitan and regional areas. Diversity was commonly described in terms of countries of origin, age and gender, inclusion of newly arrived communities, and rural and remote perspectives. In relation to gender balance, respondents across stakeholder groups called for equitable women’s representation in advisory body membership.

### **Lived experience and community connection**

Respondents frequently identified lived experience as a core form of expertise for the advisory body, often placing it alongside professional skills. This was described as requiring strong community connection, the ability to listen and consult, and credibility derived from being known and trusted locally.

Lived experience was seen as essential to accurately raising community needs and translating them into advice government can act on, with suitable members described as, *‘Community leaders... already active in community, shown to be highly respected in community.’*

### **Advocacy capabilities and sectoral expertise**

Many respondents emphasised the importance of members having policy, governance and public sector experience to engage effectively with government processes and influence implementation. This was described as the need to balance *‘professional experience and lived experience,’* linking capability to practical impact. Some respondents also highlighted the value of advocacy-related and sector-specific experience in areas such as health, justice, legal and social policy. Where raised, this was typically framed as ensuring the

advisory body can respond to contemporary issues affecting communities and provide informed advice across sectors.

### **Transparent appointment processes and term limits**

Some respondents emphasised transparency in appointments, proposing approaches such as merit-based and publicly advertised selection, community-led processes, and expressions of interest. Respondents also noted the importance of clearly outlining membership terms and conditions, framing these as safeguards to maintain confidence in the body's integrity. Feedback highlighted the importance of balancing the introduction of new perspectives with operational stability, including consideration of staggered rotations to support both dynamic community input and continuity of membership and functions.



### **What's the best way for an advisory body to connect with CaLD communities?**

Respondents emphasised the importance of regular, direct engagement with CaLD communities through face-to-face forums, meetings and presence at community events to build trust, legitimacy and two-way communication. Working through community leaders and organisations was commonly identified as a structured and trusted approach to engagement. Online communication, including websites, social media and surveys, were viewed as a complementary channel to support accessibility and ongoing updates. Respondents also highlighted the need for deliberate engagement with regional communities to ensure outreach extends beyond metropolitan areas.

### **Regular direct engagement through forums and meetings**

Respondents repeatedly raised that the advisory body's connection to CaLD communities needs to be built and maintained through consistent face-to-face engagement, not just digital updates. Across consultations, *'going to the community'* and *'meeting people where they are'* was considered essential for trust, legitimacy and two-way feedback — particularly for communities that may not engage easily through formal government channels or online platforms.

In group consultations, participants described community forums, town halls, regular meetings and presence at community events as the practical mechanisms that could keep an advisory body grounded in lived experience and emerging issues. Some respondents structured frequency of meetings, so engagement becomes routine rather than ad hoc.

### **Working through community leaders and organisations**

Many respondents described connection occurring through community leaders, CaLD community organisations and representative groups. Some respondents, especially public sector respondents recommended an approach as *'Community leaders, targeted consultation, cultural organisations,'* reflecting a preference for structured engagement through trusted intermediaries.

### **Online communication and accessible channels**

Online communication was frequently raised, including social media and other digital platforms, to enable a broad reach and ongoing updates. Respondents described online channels as complementary to direct engagement rather than a replacement. Feedback received from young people from CaLD backgrounds described connection methods as including *'regular check-ins... online surveys or polls,'* reflecting a preference for accessible approaches with minimal barriers to engagement. Webinars and social media platforms were also identified to be options to connect with community.

### **Including regional communities in engagement**

Some respondents explicitly referenced the need to connect with communities outside metropolitan areas, often describing regional engagement as a deliberate requirement rather than incidental outreach. Where raised, this was generally expressed as ensuring the advisory body's engagement and representation extend beyond Perth-based networks.

### **➤ How could an advisory body share its activities and achievements?**

Respondents generally described public communication as requiring a mix of formal reporting and regular, accessible updates. Across stakeholder groups, respondents raised themes of transparency, and communication through platforms that communities already use.

### **Use of community-facing channels**

Respondents commonly identified newsletters and social media as practical tools to share activities, particularly for reaching diverse audiences. These included platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn and Snapchat. Alongside these social platforms, respondents also highlighted ethnic and traditional media as important channels for reach.

Feedback emphasised that different audiences require different channels, rather than a single standard approach.



Photo: Consultation session with community members in Geraldton, Wednesday 10 December 2025.

## Public sector responsibilities

Across stakeholder groups, respondents expressed strong support for embedding public sector responsibilities within a Multicultural Act for Western Australia to strengthen consistency, accountability and continuity of multicultural practice across WA Government. Legislated responsibilities were widely viewed as a means to move beyond aspirational commitments and ensure obligations endure beyond political cycles, with clear expectations applying across agencies and, where appropriate, local government.

A recurring theme was the importance of aligning legislated responsibilities with existing frameworks to avoid duplication and administrative burden, while retaining flexibility to keep policies current. WA Government respondents often emphasised streamlined reporting and implementation consistency, while CaLD community leaders, faith groups and NGOs more frequently framed responsibilities in terms of practical equity outcomes, including improved access, stronger anti-racism measures and visible progress reporting.

Respondents consistently identified the Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework (WAMPF), the Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020 and the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality as foundational to a legislated approach. These frameworks were commonly described as providing the backbone for equitable access, culturally responsive service delivery and a coherent whole-of-government approach, with language access particularly emphasised as essential to participation and accountability.

### Do you think policies that require government authorities to respond to diverse needs should be included in a Multicultural Act?

There was strong support for including relevant policies in a Multicultural Act. Feedback from respondents across diverse sectors highlighted the value of legislating public sector responsibilities to ensure accountable, consistent and enduring practice. Responses noted the importance of clarity of obligations and transparent reporting by public sector agencies.

Respondents from WA Government agencies, specifically those responsible for implementing the WAMPF, emphasised the need for streamlined processes and alignment with existing frameworks, while CaLD community leaders, faith community members and NGO respondents frequently framed obligations in terms of equitable access, anti-racism and visibility of outcomes.

#### **Legislated obligations and continuity**

Respondents commonly supported embedding obligations in legislation to guard against policy variability and to promote consistency *'across all levels of government.'* CaLD community association leaders frequently described legislation as a means of ensuring obligations *'cannot be changed or removed,'* while WA Government agencies called for proportionality, so expectations reflect agency size and resources.

**“Voluntary compliance is insufficient; the Act should mandate obligations.”**  
– Community member

**“Yes, with full force of legal action.”**  
– CaLD community association leader

### Clarity of scope and alignment

Respondents often sought clarity on how incorporated policies would be updated and aligned with current frameworks, with repeated calls to streamline processes and avoid duplication. WA Government agency responses frequently linked support for flexibility to update policies over time and to simplified, centralised reporting.

**“There needs to be flexibility to update the Act and its incorporated policies over the years.”**  
– WA Government employee

### ➤ If yes, what policies do you think are the most important and should be included in a Multicultural Act?

Many respondents underscored the centrality of three existing policy frameworks—the WAMPF, the Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020, and the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality—emphasising their role as essential organising mechanisms for obligations, planning and accountability across government agencies.

**“All WA policies listed should be included (WAMPF, Language Services Policy and the Substantive Equality Framework).”**  
– CaLD community member

**“Include a power in the Act to make policies under the Act — gives legislative authority to policies while allowing updates over time.”**  
– Non-Government Organisation

Across submissions, the WAMPF was consistently described as the foundation of cultural responsiveness within the Western Australian public sector, with strong expectations that its role be strengthened through legislation. Respondents stressed that embedding the WAMPF within a Multicultural Act would provide a durable anchor for WA Government agencies’ practice, ensuring consistency, accountability and stability over time, and reducing vulnerability to policy shifts.

Combined with the feedback by sectoral bodies on the importance of the Western Australian Language Services Policy and Policy Framework for Substantive Equality, the three policies were widely viewed as the core infrastructure needed to uphold equitable access, culturally responsive service design and system-wide alignment. Feedback made clear that these three frameworks should form the backbone of a legislated multicultural system.

Responses from WA Government agencies and NGO stakeholders also framed the inclusion of these policies as fundamental to achieving clarity of expectations, consistency

across sectors and meaningful performance evaluation, reinforcing the importance of embedding a structured, whole-of-government approach.

### **Language services and multilingual communication**

While all three policies were strongly supported, the importance of the Western Australian Language Services Policy was frequently raised in terms of providing essential and accessible services to vulnerable people. This reflected views on how lack of English proficiency should not negatively impact people seeking government services, and provision of interpreters and translated material should be a requirement of all public sector. Many respondents described it as foundational to culturally responsive service delivery and emphasised that any future legislative framework should make these expectations clear, durable and transparent.

### **Anti-racism and equal opportunity**

Respondents commonly referenced the need for measures to be included that combat racism, through legislation and strategies, equal opportunity safeguards and cultural competency. Faith community members and CaLD community members frequently tied these to enabling safe participation in workplaces, schools and services.



“Zero tolerance policy for hate speech and racism in the workplaces, schools, shops, welfare places.”  
– CaLD community member

Together, this feedback presents a clear, strong expectation: a Multicultural Act must not only set obligations—it must be underpinned by the key policies that enable coherent, measurable and enduring multicultural practice across Western Australia.



**Do you think the WA Government is doing enough to support CaLD communities in WA? If not, what else should be done and how could this be reflected in a Multicultural Act?**

Consultation feedback highlighted several aspects that respondents see as important to effective WA Government support for CaLD communities across agencies, particularly in relation to consistency, cultural safety and accessibility. Respondents indicated that a Multicultural Act could help provide a clearer framework for equitable access, stronger accountability and culturally responsive practice across the public sector.

### **Accessible services**

Respondents frequently identified the ability to understand and navigate both Commonwealth and WA Government services as an important feature of effective support for CaLD communities particularly through interpreting, translations and clear communication. This was raised both as a service access issue and as a broader equity consideration, especially where people rely on language support to participate in civic life and access essential services. Organisational responses often framed this as an area that would benefit from continued system-level attention, including stronger planning, monitoring and quality assurance of language services.

### **System support and accountability**

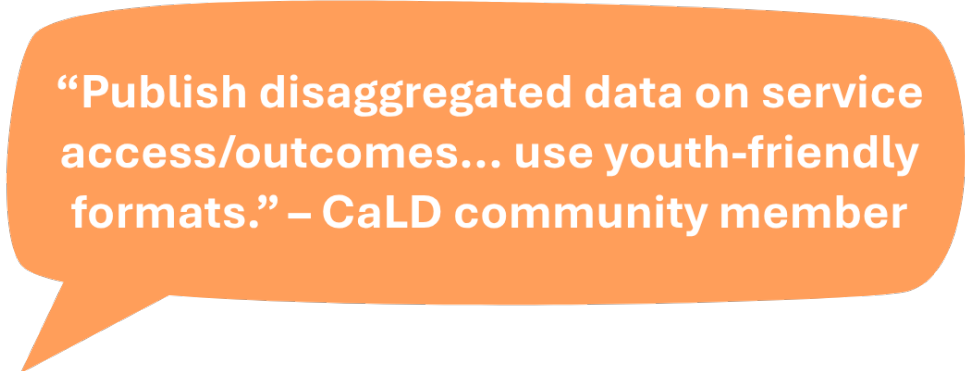
CaLD community association leaders, particularly in stakeholder discussions, highlighted the importance of accessible grant processes, flexible funding arrangements, and the value of stable support for community organisations and facilities.

A further theme was that support for CaLD communities was seen as extending beyond service provision to include systems that prevent and respond to discrimination, racism and social exclusion. Some respondents highlighted the importance of promoting safety, participation and equal access. Several responses linked this to education and public awareness. Cultural education and anti-racism measures were described as important contributors to long-term social cohesion. Online abuse was also raised as an area of concern, with respondents noting the importance of protections and responses continuing to evolve alongside digital harms.

Many respondents described WA Government support in practical terms, including services and programs that respond to cultural context and address barriers to participation across key systems. Responses referenced a wide range of service areas where cultural responsiveness is seen as particularly important, including education, health, justice and policing, housing, employment, mental health, family and domestic violence supports, transport, aged care, and recognition of overseas qualifications.

### **Data, evaluation and transparency**

Participants also highlighted data, evaluation and transparency as important enablers of effective multicultural policy and service delivery including through disaggregated data on service access and outcomes, routine public reporting, publicly accessible online dashboards, and youth-friendly formats such as short-form videos on social media, infographics and visual summaries. WA Government agency respondents also recognised the value of sustained, cross-government investment, noting that a legislated framework could support more consistent commitments over time.

A quote is presented inside an orange speech bubble. The text is white and bold. The bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom left.

**“Publish disaggregated data on service access/outcomes... use youth-friendly formats.” – CaLD community member**

 **What sectors do you think should be responsible for implementing a Multicultural Act (for example, public sector, local government)?**

Respondents commonly framed implementation as a shared responsibility across the public sector and delivery partners. Feedback referenced all levels of government, with roles also described for non-government service providers and, in some cases, large private sector employers given their service reach and employment influence.

**WA Government**

There was strong support for the WA Government as having a system-leading role in implementing a Multicultural Act. As the lead public authority, respondents considered that the WA Government should be responsible for setting the minimum standards for implementation of a Multicultural Act, mandating multicultural plans be developed by agencies and clearly outlining reporting obligations, and aligning sector regulators such as the Public Sector Commission and other agencies like the Equal Opportunity Commission to drive compliance and public transparency.

**Local Government**

Local Government was repeatedly referenced—often alongside the WA Government—for place-based implementation (such as local service access, community facilities, grants and local engagement) and sometimes ‘to enforce’ aspects locally.


Respondents considered Local Government authorities should also have embedded duties under a Multicultural Act. Suggested duties included developing local multicultural actions plans, implementing interpreting service standards, providing inclusive facility access, and public local reporting. Respondents believed that this should be carried out under the guidance and support of the WA Government in terms of capacity guiding and consistency across local governments.

**Private sector**

Although there were several responses referencing the private sector (i.e., businesses, employers, corporations, mining companies), this sector was not considered as an important driver of implementation of a Multicultural Act but rather as a critical lever for workforce inclusion, service accessibility (e.g. utilities, venues), and community sponsorships or partnerships. Responses collectively suggest that the private sector also align to WA Government standards to improve language access and cultural competency capabilities.

**Non-government organisations  
(includes not-for-profit and community  
service providers)**

NGOs were considered by respondents as essential partners of Western Australian public and private sector entities in the co-design, outreach, capacity building and delivery of CaLD-focused services. Responses also acknowledged the strengths of NGOs as advisers with lived-experience proximity and other specialist capabilities but were not considered as statutory duty-holders.



“The Act could help by guiding supports, processes, and implementation tools that enable NGOs...to meet expectations.... This approach keeps responsibility with government while strengthening the ecosystem that supports culturally safe... services across Western Australia.”  
– WA Government employee

## Regional communities

Across the consultation process, respondents from a wide range of stakeholder groups conveyed a consistent view that a Multicultural Act would need to explicitly recognise the different circumstances, needs and experiences of people living in rural, regional and remote Western Australia. Respondents highlighted that regional context shape access to services, community connections, infrastructure and opportunities, and noted that any legislative framework would need to ensure equitable outcomes regardless of location.

Participants described social and geographic isolation resulting from distance from services, community networks and culturally familiar supports. They reported limited access to key services, including interpreters, settlement services, culturally appropriate health and social supports, and translated information. In smaller regional communities, services were often not equipped to respond to cultural and linguistic diversity, creating additional challenges in accessing education, healthcare, employment and community services. These issues reflect day-to-day lived experience rather than abstract concerns, highlighting the need for tailored, place-based approaches in regional and remote areas.

### How could a Multicultural Act ensure the issues of rural, regional and remote communities are considered?

Consultation feedback highlighted that a Multicultural Act should embed dedicated regional representation and regular, place-based engagement to ensure rural, regional and remote voices are clearly heard and reflected alongside metropolitan priorities. Equity in access to services was a strong theme, with respondents emphasising that uniform, metropolitan-centric models fail to account for higher costs, service gaps and barriers in regional areas, and that substantive equality requires tailored funding, flexible delivery and region-specific policy settings. Strengthened partnerships with local governments, alongside improved region-specific data collection and reporting, were seen as essential to making regional issues visible and ensuring equitable outcomes across the State.

#### **Dedicated regional representation**

There was a strong call for formal regional representation within any structures established under a Multicultural Act. Many respondents articulated this as including named regional seats on multicultural advisory bodies, or ensuring regional voices would be systematically included through rotation or guaranteed membership arrangements. CaLD community members frequently expressed this was important to ensure the 'unique voice' of regional communities would not be overshadowed by metropolitan issues and to provide direct pathways for local concerns to be heard.

#### **Place-based engagement and consultation**

A strong theme from feedback received was the importance of regular, meaningful and place-based engagement with regional communities. Respondents described a desire for in-person visits, structured regional engagement calendars, and ongoing communication channels tailored to local circumstances. Community members in regional workshops emphasised the value of government presence in their areas and expressed the view that consistent engagement would encourage trust, enable an accurate understanding of local needs, and for communities to participate more effectively.

**“A Multicultural Act could ensure the issues of rural, regional, and remote communities are considered by requiring regular consultations with local organisations and community members. This would help identify specific needs, provide tailored support, and ensure that policies are inclusive and relevant across all areas of the State.”**  
– CaLD community member – Kimberley

It was also noted that engagement should include a mix of face-to-face and remote engagement methods, acknowledging the large geography of the State while still maintaining genuine interaction.

### **Equity in access to services and support**

Participants in the consultation expressed strong support for embedding equity within a Multicultural Act, particularly as it relates to regional areas. CaLD communities in regional areas identified persistent barriers—such as limited interpreter availability, a lack of culturally appropriate services, information gaps and long travel distances—as directly affecting participation, wellbeing and the maintenance of cultural practices and languages.

Respondents consistently noted that equitable access cannot be achieved through uniform or metropolitan-centric approaches. Service delivery in regional and remote areas involves higher costs and greater complexity, including extensive travel, workforce shortages, infrastructure constraints, limited economies of scale and reduced access to specialist and complementary services.

Equity was therefore framed as achieving fair outcomes rather than equal inputs. Stakeholders argued that universal funding, program settings or reporting requirements risk entrenching geographic disadvantage and inequities. Respondents emphasised the principle of substantive equality, noting that applying the same funding levels, program settings or reporting requirements across all locations can produce inequitable outcomes. Tailored funding models, flexible reporting and place-based service design were therefore viewed as essential.

### **Local government partnerships**

Some respondents emphasised the role of local governments as central community touchpoints in regional areas. CaLD community members described local governments as among the most accessible institutions in their towns, and service provider organisations noted that collaboration with local government could support culturally responsive planning, communication and service delivery.

“Local government is closest to communities and [this] needs to be [considered] if outcomes are to change on the ground.”

– CaLD community association leader

“Without clear expectations across State and local government, multicultural policy risks being uneven and dependent on goodwill.”

– Non-Government Organisation

While views varied on whether legislative obligations should be placed on local governments, respondents were generally supportive of mechanisms that would promote local-level engagement with communities in regional contexts.

### **Regional data, monitoring and reporting**

Several respondents identified that an Act could support better visibility of regional issues by requiring data collection and reporting that captures regional experiences. Participants discussed the value of region-specific information to inform service planning, measure outcomes and highlight gaps.



Photo: Consultation session with community members in Albany, Tuesday 3 February 2026

## Additional matters

Across responses from a range of stakeholder categories, participants raised several additional matters relevant to the proposed development of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia. These matters were commonly framed in terms of inclusion, clarity of scope, and the relationship between multiculturalism, migration status and shared civic life. While there was broad alignment across stakeholder cohorts on the need for an Act to recognise diversity within the community, emphasis varied depending on organisational role, lived experience and proximity to service delivery.

In addition to matters relating to scope and inclusion, respondents raised a further set of issues focused on rights, discrimination, language access and the role of government in implementation of a Multicultural Act. These issues were commonly expressed by respondents with direct experience of service systems, governance and community advocacy, and were framed as system-level considerations rather than individual concerns.

Respondents also raised sector-specific considerations and governance mechanisms relevant to the effective operation of a Multicultural Act. These matters were most frequently raised by stakeholders involved in service delivery, community leadership and advisory structures, and were framed around representation, implementation and system impact.

### **Inclusion of all Western Australians**

Respondents commonly framed the proposed Act as having relevance to all Western Australians, rather than being limited to CaLD communities alone. Across stakeholder groups, the proposed Multicultural Act was framed as a whole-of-community framework that recognises diversity as a defining feature of the State, while remaining responsive to the different barriers and starting points experienced by individuals and communities.

This whole-of-community framing was frequently linked to the need for clarity about the relationship between multiculturalism and Aboriginal peoples as Western Australia's First Peoples. Respondents emphasised that multicultural legislation should complement, not dilute, existing Aboriginal rights, recognition and self-determination frameworks, with clarity of scope viewed as essential to respectful and effective implementation.

### **Title and framing of the proposed Act**

Several respondents raised the importance of the title of the proposed Act, viewing it as an indicator of scope and intent. Respondents frequently highlighted that the title must not blur or subsume Aboriginal peoples' distinct status as First Peoples. CaLD community association leaders and faith community members were more likely to comment on whether the title clearly conveyed inclusion, equity and recognition, rather than implying a narrow or program-based focus.

Some respondents, primarily from the wider Western Australian community, expressed concern that the title could be perceived as divisive or as implying preferential treatment, suggesting that the title should reflect a whole-of-community approach and be supported by interpretive material or a preamble that reflects shared values and recognition of Western Australia's diversity.

A small number of respondents cautioned against terminology they perceived as symbolic without practical meaning, emphasising the link between naming and implementation.

### **Temporary visa holders, asylum seekers, refugees and international students**

Several respondent groups highlighted that people on temporary visas, refugees, asylum seekers and international students experience distinct forms of vulnerability within existing systems. Community members, service providers and NGOs described barriers related to eligibility for services, insecure employment, language access, and limited understanding of rights and protections.

Concerns about exploitation—particularly in employment and housing—were raised across multiple consultation settings. Respondents noted that language barriers, insecure visa status and fear of repercussions can discourage people from reporting concerns. Participants emphasised that while migration status is a Commonwealth responsibility, a Multicultural Act for Western Australia could still support clearer guidance, safer access to services, and more consistent protections within State-based systems.

### **Role of local government**

There was broad support for local government having a role in implementation, particularly as a key interface between multicultural policy and community experience. Respondents described local governments as trusted and accessible institutions with strong insights into local communities. They highlighted local government's proximity to communities, its role in place-based service delivery, infrastructure, grants administration and inclusive engagement. Support was especially pronounced in regional, rural and remote areas, where local governments are often the main point of access to services and have deep local knowledge of diverse populations.

There was less consensus on whether this role should be defined through legislated obligations, as opposed to guidance-based or partnership approaches. Some Local Government representatives and community members raised concerns about capacity, administrative burden and uneven resourcing across councils, preferring flexible, non-statutory approaches. However, there was broad support for mechanisms that strengthen alignment, capacity and guidance. These included clearer expectations around engagement with diverse communities, access to language services, and partnership-based approaches that recognise variations in local government size, resources and community profiles.

### **Representation in leadership and decision-making**

Many respondents raised the issue of representation of people from CaLD backgrounds within leadership, governance and decision-making structures. This was framed not only as a matter of fairness, but as essential to legitimacy, trust and effective policy design. Participants frequently distinguished between participation and influence, emphasising the importance of pathways into leadership roles, transparent appointment processes, and decision-making authority rather than advisory presence alone. Calls for improved representation were often linked to broader discussions about workforce capability, accountability and long-term system change.

### **Implementation**

Respondents consistently cautioned that the impact of a Multicultural Act would depend on how it was implemented and resourced. Across consultation formats, participants expressed concern that without clear mechanisms, principles risk remaining aspirational rather than delivering practical change. Key implementation-related issues raised included the need for clear accountability frameworks, proportionate obligations based on agency capacity, and transparent reporting on progress and outcomes.

Adequate resourcing, workforce capability and access to multilingual services was viewed as essential to effective implementation, particularly in regional contexts and for agencies delivering frontline services.

### **Accountability**

Respondents frequently referred to the need for legislated review mechanisms. Key themes included statutory review clauses (often every three to five years), advisory body-led reviews, and the ability to amend an Act in response to demographic change, emerging issues and implementation experience. They emphasised evaluation focused on outcomes rather than activities. Suggested measures included key performance indicators linked to access, equity, anti-racism and representation; qualitative community feedback; longitudinal data; and regional impacts. There were expectations that evaluation findings inform policy refinement and the responsible Minister table regular reports in Parliament.

### **Long-term and future-focused**

Some respondents suggested an Act should be shaped so that it is responsive to demographic change and emerging communities. Where expressed, this was framed as an interest in an Act that remains relevant as community needs evolve.

## **Conclusion**

The consultation on the development of a Multicultural Act for Western Australia demonstrated strong and consistent support for establishing a legislative framework that formally recognises Western Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and embeds inclusion, equity and participation across government. Feedback reflected a clear expectation that multiculturalism be positioned as a whole-of-community framework—relevant to all Western Australians—while remaining responsive to the distinct experiences and needs of CaLD communities and Aboriginal peoples as Western Australia's First Peoples.

Participants valued legislation as a means of moving beyond aspirational policy toward enforceable, accountable and enduring commitments. Respondents consistently emphasised the importance of clearly articulated principles, plain-language definitions, and transparent governance arrangements that translate values into practice. There was strong agreement that substantive equality, anti-racism, and culturally responsive service delivery should be embedded through clearly defined public sector responsibilities, supported by consistent data collection, reporting and evaluation mechanisms.

The consultation also highlighted the importance of meaningful community engagement, including through an independent multicultural advisory body with real influence, strong links to grassroots communities, and representation across metropolitan, regional and diverse demographic groups. Attention was drawn to the distinct challenges faced by people in regional, rural and remote areas, reinforcing the need for place-based approaches, equitable resourcing and partnerships with local government to ensure statewide impact.

Taken together, the consultation findings provide a robust evidence base to inform key areas to further multiculturalism in Western Australia. They underscore a shared vision for a Multicultural Act that strengthens social cohesion, improves equity in access to services, and supports accountable, future-focused governance. These insights will help inform the development of legislation and guide future work.

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