



# MULTICULTURAL NSW COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

2016-17

NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT  
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# Submission Letter

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It is a pleasure to submit the 2016-2017 report on the state of community relations in NSW for presentation by the Minister for Multiculturalism to the Parliament of New South Wales.

This report fulfils our annual obligation under Section 14 of the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000* which requires Multicultural NSW to prepare a report each financial year on the state of community relations in NSW and our cultural diversity. This includes an assessment of the effectiveness of public authorities in observing multicultural principles in the conduct of their affairs.



**Hakan Harman**  
Chief Executive Officer



# From the Chair and CEO

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Cultural diversity is one of our state's greatest strengths. It enables us to build a future where everyone feels that they belong and has the chance to achieve their potential. NSW has established itself as one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world, but we cannot take this for granted. We have worked hard for social cohesion and will need to work harder to uphold the balance of our multicultural society within a rapidly changing landscape.

The Advisory Board provides advice to the NSW Government to help promote social cohesion, harmony and cultural diversity. It also helps guide Multicultural NSW's strategic direction.

Advisory Board members bring a wealth and breadth of cultural backgrounds and professional experience. As well as bringing specific Aboriginal and youth perspectives, our expertise includes sociology, humanitarianism, health, law, academia and local government.

The board provides constructive advice and contributions to help Multicultural NSW safeguard and maintain our inclusive, peaceful and multicultural society. Our work is founded on principles established by the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000* and is guided by the Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan 2014-2017: *Harmony in Action*, as well as the Community Engagement Strategy.

In 2016-17, Advisory Board members had the following priorities:

- to be an ambassador for Multicultural NSW in the community, championing the agency's purpose and principles and listening to stakeholders
- to set and monitor priorities for Multicultural NSW
- to participate in an expert advisory capacity on committees and projects.

Our board members had an active year, chairing Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) across regional NSW and metropolitan Sydney, as well as representing on various forums and committees. During 2016-17, board members focused on community engagement, helping RACs identify community issues and working with government partners to develop local solutions. In all 48 RAC meetings were convened in 32 locations, involving some 1,000 participants.

The Advisory Board has a formalised structure of meetings each year that includes community visits. In November 2016, we visited several agencies in the Illawarra, including Sri Venkateswara Temple, Nan Tien Temple, University of Wollongong, Wollongong City Council and the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra.

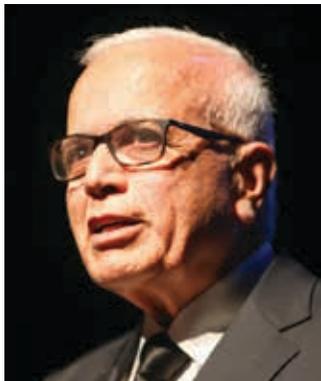
Board members also represented Multicultural NSW at a range of community events, festivals and other government and non-government forums. By building and maintaining community networks across the state, members continue to advocate for social cohesion, community harmony and resilience. In developing local networks, we help build capacity in regional communities, raise awareness of issues facing migrants, refugees and humanitarian arrivals, as well as advocate for a more harmonious multicultural society.

In helping to guide priorities for Multicultural NSW, the board has considered heightened challenges to advancing multiculturalism and social cohesion, with pressures created by international and national issues and domestic policy developments.

As part of our expert advisory role, board members reviewed and evaluated applications for the Multicultural NSW Grants Program. In 2016-17, this received a total of 491 applications for \$4.372 million worth of projects. We endorsed priority areas for projects that build strong intercultural and interfaith networks, combat racism, address social isolation, support new arrivals, refugees and humanitarian entrants, build common values and help emerging communities.

During the year, the Advisory Board introduced a series of sub-groups to enhance the way we use our members' expertise. In 2017-18, Advisory Board members will continue to leverage opportunities to work more closely with Multicultural NSW, allowing for direct engagement on projects that would benefit from their skills and experience.

We thank our key stakeholders for their commitment to safeguarding our social cohesion in NSW and look forward to working with everyone to build a resilient society that truly reflects our wonderful diversity.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. K. Harinath'.

**Dr G. K. (Hari) Harinath OAM**  
Chair Multicultural NSW  
Advisory Board



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hakan Harman'.

**Hakan Harman**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 2016-17 A Year in Review

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In reporting on the state of community relations in NSW during 2016-17, we draw on the following:

## ■ *WHO WE ARE*

Analyses the current population makeup of NSW, including changes and trends based on the 2016 ABS Census, and summarises how NSW is shaped by migration and cultural diversity.

## ■ *SETTLEMENT AND MIGRATION IN NSW*

A more detailed overview of the impact of settlement of migrants and humanitarian entrants, highlighting the NSW Government's proactive policy response to ensure the newly arrived have a positive experience.

## ■ *SOCIAL COHESION IN NSW*

Highlight of some of the work of the NSW Government towards social cohesion and a broad overview of social cohesion in NSW.

## ■ *PARTNERS OF NSW GOVERNMENT*

Some key stakeholders of Multicultural NSW share their views on issues affecting social cohesion in the community, as well as suggested solutions that government and community can adopt.

## ■ *MEDIA SUMMARY*

An outline demonstrating the impact media has on cultural diversity and its capacity to be a positive influence.

## ■ *MULTICULTURAL NSW INITIATIVES*

Highlights some Multicultural NSW activities during 2016-17 to promote and strengthen social cohesion and community harmony in NSW.

# WHO WE ARE

NSW is the one of Australia's most diverse states. This is reflected in the 2016 Census results (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS]). NSW's reputation as a beacon for multicultural settlement continues, with an ever-growing number of people from overseas calling the state home. In the last five years, increasing numbers of people from China, England, India, New Zealand and the Philippines have settled in NSW. The following statistics illustrate NSW's rich demographic mix.

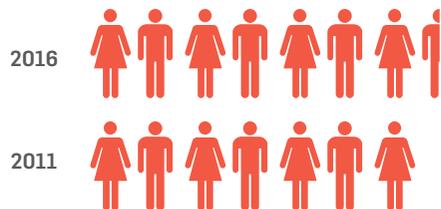
1. People from 225 birthplaces have made NSW their home.



2. 1 in 5 speak a language other than English at home.



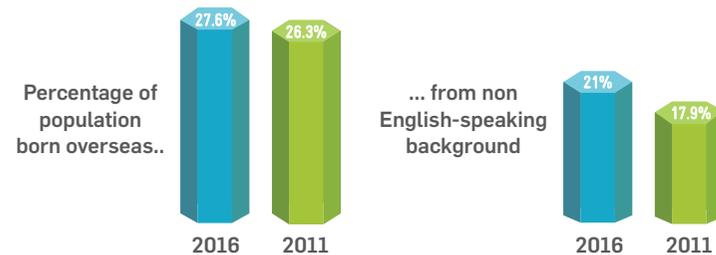
3. Population of NSW as per the 2016 Census was 7,480,228 an increase of 562,627 (8.1%) from 2011 Census (6,917,601).



4. Ancestry<sup>1</sup>: The largest changes in the reported ancestries of the population between the 2011 and 2016 Censuses were:

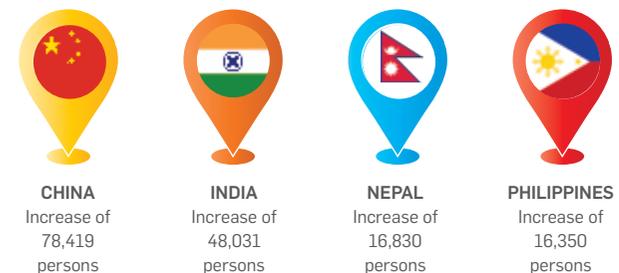


5. Overseas born population: In NSW, 27.6% of the population was born overseas and 21% came from a non-English speaking background, compared with 26.3% and 17.9% respectively for the Australian population.



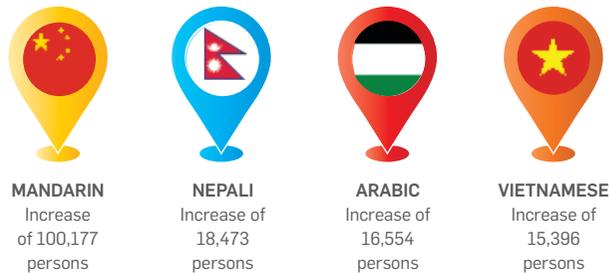
6. Changes in overseas born population (2011 and 2016): Based on a comparison of the 2011 and 2016 Census data, the number of people born overseas increased by 292,597 (16.5%), and the number of people from a non-English speaking background increased by 283,264 (22%).

The largest changes in countries of birth for NSW between 2011 and 2016 Census dates, were for those persons born in:



7. Year of arrival in NSW: Overall, 52.6% of the overseas born population arrived before 2001, and 20.5% arrived during or after 2011, compared with 50% and 21.5% respectively for Australia.
8. Language spoken at home in NSW: Between 2011 and 2016, the number of people who spoke a language other than English at home increased by 330,011 or 21.3%, and the number of people who spoke English only increased by 113,283 or 2.3%.

The largest changes in spoken languages for NSW between 2011 and 2016 were for those speaking:



9. Proficiency in English: In NSW, 68.5% of people spoke English only and 4.5% spoke another language and English not well or not at all, compared with 72.7% and 3.5% respectively for Australia.



The most significant changes in English proficiency between 2011 and 2016 were in those speaking:

- another language and English well or very well — an increase of 263,930 persons
- English only — an increase of 113,313 persons
- another language and English not well or not at all — an increase of 64,718 persons

10. Religion: In 2016, the largest single religion in NSW was Western (Roman) Catholic, with 24.1% (1,801,768) respondents.

The largest changes in religious affiliation between 2011 and 2016 were for:



11. Components of population change (year ending 31 March 2017)<sup>2</sup>:

- Natural increase:

**Births** Compared with the previous year, the total number of births decreased in all states and territories with NSW recording the largest decrease of 4.2% (4,100 births).

**Deaths** The total number of deaths increased in all states and territories except the Northern Territory (down 6.2%) and NSW (down 0.7%).

- Net overseas migration (NOM): For the year ending 31 March 2017, NSW (up 2.6%), Victoria (up 7.6%) and Western Australia (up 4.9%) recorded an increase when compared with the previous year. All other states and territories recorded decreases in NOM when compared with the previous year.

**NOM arrivals** The largest percentage increase in NOM arrivals was recorded in Victoria at 15.7% followed by NSW (up 15.2%).

**NOM departures** Compared with the previous year, NOM departures increased in Tasmania (up 7.0%), Victoria (up 4.8%), NSW (up 4.6%), the Australian Capital Territory (up 4.4%) and South Australia (up 3.0%).

- Net interstate migration: States recording migration gains were Victoria (18,600), Queensland (15,700), the ACT and Tasmania (both 700 people) while NSW recorded the highest loss (13,900 people).

# SETTLEMENT AND MIGRATION

The 2016 Census provides insights into how our state continues to be shaped by migration.

Of the 270,820 migrants who settled permanently in Australia in 2016-17, over one third (98,099) made their home in NSW. Of these, the majority settled in the Sydney basin. Ten local government areas accounted for 43,950 of migrants (Figure 01), predominantly in the south-west and west of Sydney, with 8,000 settling in the Fairfield local government area.

Australia offers migration under four main classes of visa: skilled occupation, family, humanitarian and student. Skilled occupation visas aim to attract workers against specific needs and based on their level of education. Family visas are normally granted based on family ties within Australia. The humanitarian program includes refugees under a United Nations treaty and people subject to high levels of discrimination or violation of human rights in their home country. Unlike student visas, these three visa classes offer direct avenues to citizenship, and have been included in the settlement data in this section.

Skilled migrants represent the largest category of visa holders, at over half of NSW's intake (54,341). The next largest category included family visa holders at 31,901, then humanitarian visa holders at 11,857. These patterns were skewed in some areas, notably Fairfield, where 75% of arrivals were humanitarian entrants, and only 4% skilled occupation visa holders. In the Liverpool local government area, 50% of arrivals were on humanitarian grounds.



Figure 01: Of 10 local government areas, Fairfield had the largest number of migrants in 2016-17



## A snapshot of the NSW humanitarian intake for 2016-17

From 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, NSW settled around 11,190 humanitarian arrivals including approximately 6,500 of the additional intake of Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

While the Australian Government decides where refugees initially settle, refugees have the freedom to choose where they live. There are six existing primary settlement locations across NSW, increasing to seven following the Australian Government's decision to trial Armidale as a settlement location from early 2018.

The pattern of settlement has been heavily influenced by the type of visas and locations of established communities. About 90% of NSW's 2016-17 intake were settled in Western Sydney, particularly in the Fairfield and Liverpool local government areas where large numbers of Syrians and Iraqis already live. This is primarily because almost 75% of the total humanitarian visas granted in 2016-17 were sponsored visas. In these instances, newly arrived families often choose to live with or near their sponsoring family, among communities that share their ethnic and religious identity.



Table 01: Humanitarian intake 2016-17

<b>TOTAL NSW 2016-17</b>	Approximately 11,190
<b>AGE ON ARRIVAL</b>	59% WORKING AGE (18 TO 64 YEARS) 13% PRIMARY SCHOOL AGED (6 TO 11 YEARS) 11% HIGH SCHOOL AGED (12 TO 17 YEARS) 10% PRESCHOOL AGED (0 TO 5 YEARS) 7% MORE THAN 65 YEARS
<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>	51% IRAQ 38% SYRIA 2% AFGHANISTAN 1% LEBANON 1% IRAN 7% OTHER
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RESIDENCE</b>	90% SYDNEY 3% WAGGA WAGGA 2% WOLLONGONG 2% COFFS HARBOUR 2% NEWCASTLE AND SURROUNDS <1% ALBURY <1% OTHER

## Non-government organisations and government departments worked together to achieve positive settlement outcomes

The NSW Government develops, and sustains, meaningful working relationships to achieve the best possible outcomes for new arrivals in our state. The NSW Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement, Professor Peter Shergold AC, established a Joint Partnership Working Group in late 2015 comprising settlement service providers, NSW and Australian Government representatives, as well as community organisations. During 2016-17, the Coordinator General and the NSW Government worked together to embed a sustainable collaborative approach between government, non-government, corporate and community sectors.

Government services, programs and policies greatly benefit from putting the citizen at the centre and truly listening to the voice of community, as well as the end-users of these services. It has been a key priority for the NSW Government to ensure the voice of communities, refugees and service providers are reflected in the design, implementation and evaluation of services that support refugees.



### COFFEE WITH A COP

This initiative is a strong example of a NSW Government agency prioritising social cohesion and harmony, and incorporating this into its ways of working.

*The Police want people to reach out and speak what's on their mind and get to know their local police. We have officers from different commands, including general duties, highway patrol, youth liaison officers, domestic violence and crime prevention and many of them speak a second and a third language.*

*The campaign began in Fairfield around 2013 and has been held more than 30 times in different areas of the Fairfield Local Government Area. The feedback has been tremendous, and turnout is increasing. In February 2017, the Police held a NSW-wide event with more than 70 local area commands taking part.*

*The initiative is part of the **We Are You** strategy that the NSW Police have used in Fairfield and South West Sydney for quite some time. The message is that the police are part of the community and that community safety is a shared goal that we can work towards together.*

# NSW 2016-17 BUDGET INITIATIVES

In 2016-17 saw the implementation of several state-funded settlement initiatives as announced in the NSW 2016-17 Budget. The funding was allocated primarily to NSW Government agencies, as well as a smaller number of non-government organisations (Figure 02).

In 2016-17, the Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW facilitated the development of a youth peer mentoring program for refugee youth. The network worked with refugee youth and the Department of Family and Community Services to co-design the program, which will be administered by the department and rolled out in 2017-18. This program is intended to support and build the capacity of youth of refugee background to achieve positive settlement outcomes and active citizenship.

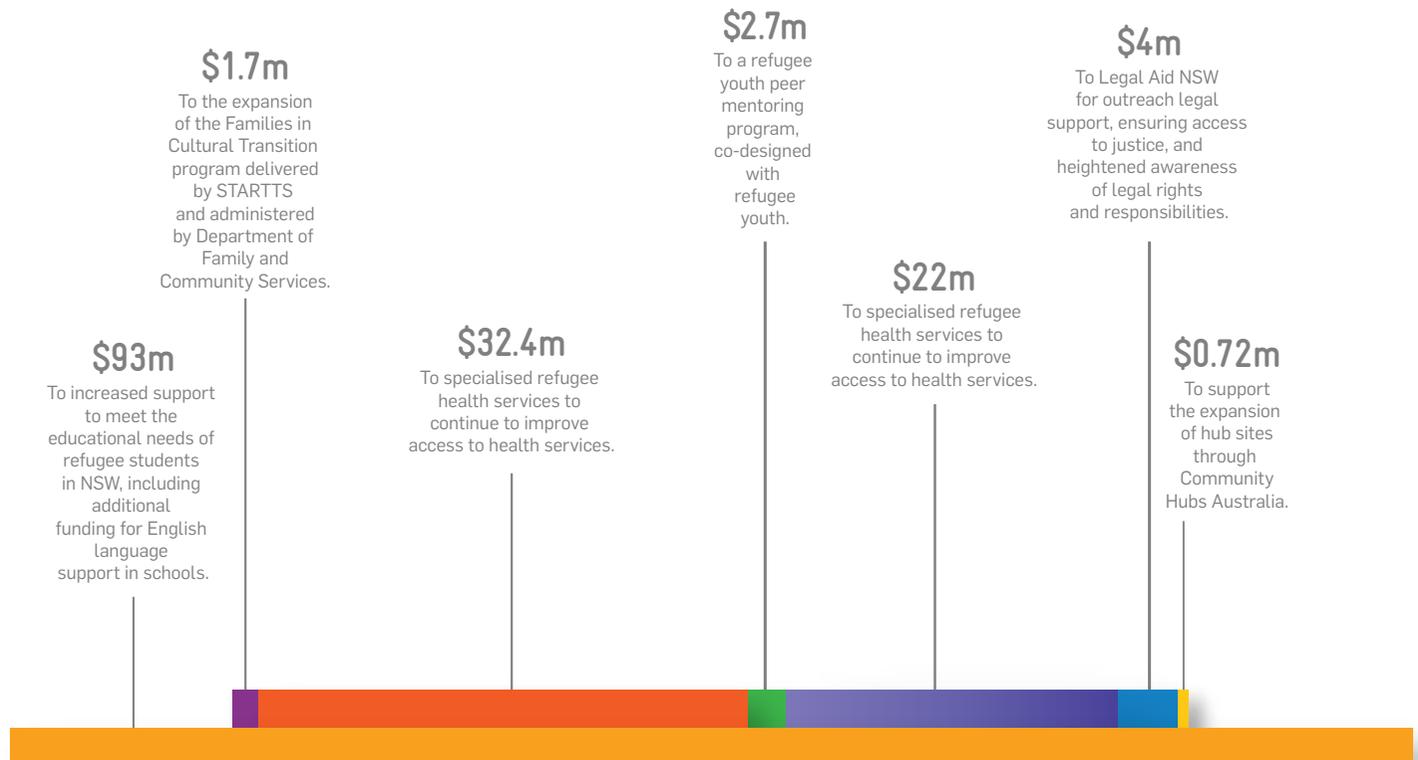


Figure 02: Settlement initiatives in 2016

## SOCIAL COHESION IN NSW

While NSW is recognised as having an enviable degree of harmonious social diversity, there is evidence that levels of social cohesion are declining.

The NSW Government has been active during 2016-17 working to maintain the State's strong level of social harmony.

### REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN NSW

To ensure a smooth and successful settlement of the additional refugee intake, for the first time, the NSW Government has initiated a whole of community approach through the NSW Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement. This initiative fostered dialogue and collaboration between government and non-government agencies in the planning and preparation for refugees settling in NSW. Extra resources announced in the 2016-17 budget enabled the right services and supports in education, community services including housing, health, legal aid and employment are in place to improve the experience of the newly arrived refugees.

### CULTURAL COMPETENCE PROGRAM

The Minister for Multiculturalism launched a Cultural Competency Program in October 2016 to support organisations to train people in cultural competence, diversity and inclusion.

The program, developed through a collaboration between Multicultural NSW, SBS and International Education Services, offers an online user-friendly resource that helps to make everyday interactions in the workforce more efficient, productive and ultimately lead to better service delivery.

The program has been successfully adopted by organisations in the government, corporate and non-corporate sectors.

### COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Language skills are important for cognitive and cultural reasons and as Australia's economy depends on extensive international trade networks, community languages can help connect us to the wider world.

The NSW Government is keen to cultivate the language potential of young people and to promote and strengthen language learning in NSW.

In May 2017, the Premier announced an additional \$10.9 million to be provided through the Department of Education to build the capacity of the Community Languages Schools Programs.

To further enhance the program, Multicultural NSW has committed to provide a \$35,000 annual grant from 2016-2019 to the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools to employ a part-time worker to give quality support to language education in NSW.

### COMMUNITY HUBS

Community Hubs Australia is a not for profit organisation that oversees community hubs within schools, and some community centres. The Community Hubs Program aims to reduce social isolation, particularly of hard to reach migrant and refugee women and children, by encouraging new friendships and support networks. The grassroots, citizen-centric approach of the Community Hubs Program has proven to be a sound strategy to engage and build trust. Activities enhance opportunities for volunteering, employment and improving English language proficiency. Skills-training and English classes aim to increase job readiness and self-confidence. Community Hubs also act as an important gateway for accessing local services.

### NEW ARRIVALS ENGLISH PROGRAM

As part of the NSW Government's commitment to assisting recently arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants, the NSW Department of Education provides intensive English tuition for newly arrived students at the beginning and emerging levels of English language proficiency through its New Arrivals Program (NAP). The program provides additional teaching support to schools enrolling eligible students in primary schools, high schools and Intensive English Centres, including schools in rural and regional areas, in order to develop students' English language skills so they are able to participate in learning with their peers in mainstream classes.

### NSW HEALTH

In 2017 the Make Healthy Normal campaign engaged Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese communities, and services that work with them, to raise awareness of healthy eating and active living strategies. Campaign activities have included: culturally and linguistically diverse media, community and stakeholder engagement activities; providing culturally-specific resources and website content; and qualitative evaluation with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The key objective of the Make Healthy Normal campaign for culturally and linguistically diverse communities is to establish new healthier habits by promoting increased fruit and vegetable intake and adequate physical activity.

### CANCER INSTITUTE NSW

The Cancer Institute NSW's Multicultural Equity Framework was adopted in 2017 to guide the Institute on integrating multicultural principles and initiatives in planning and service delivery. The framework's equity measures include engaging with multicultural communities and ensuring cultural safety within Cancer Plan initiatives. The framework has informed a more strategic approach to multicultural equity. For example the Institute is working to embed cancer screening and prevention activities in the NSW Bi-Lingual Community Education Programs, which have a significant reach into new and emerging migrant communities (such as the Nepalese and Dinka-speaking communities).

### CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The NSW Government recognises the significant role of migrants and refugees in shaping the state and making it the best performing state in Australia. The Government actively leads and encourages celebrations of cultural diversity of our state.

#### *Premier's Harmony Dinner*

The annual Premier's Harmony Dinner hosted by the Minister for Multiculturalism in the presence of the Premier is an important event that celebrates and recognises the cultural diversity of NSW.

In March 2017, over 1,500 community members attended the dinner, representing more than 60 diverse cultures. During the dinner, The Premier's Multicultural Community Medals and Multicultural Honour Roll were awarded to highlight the outstanding contribution of migrants, and those who work in the multicultural field.



### *Parramasala*

Supported by the NSW Government through Multicultural NSW, Parramasala is a major annual cultural event in the City of Parramatta and is the largest arts festival that occurs in Western Sydney. In 2017, more than 30,000 people attended the festival.

Originally celebrating South Asian Arts and Culture in 2010, Parramasala has now evolved into a contemporary arts festival that celebrates the global impact of the arts and cultures of Western Sydney's communities.

The NSW Government has committed an additional \$600,000 over three years to support Parramasala and showcase the evolving arts and cultural scene of Greater Western Sydney, taking total support across 2016-17 to 2019-20 to \$2.2 million.

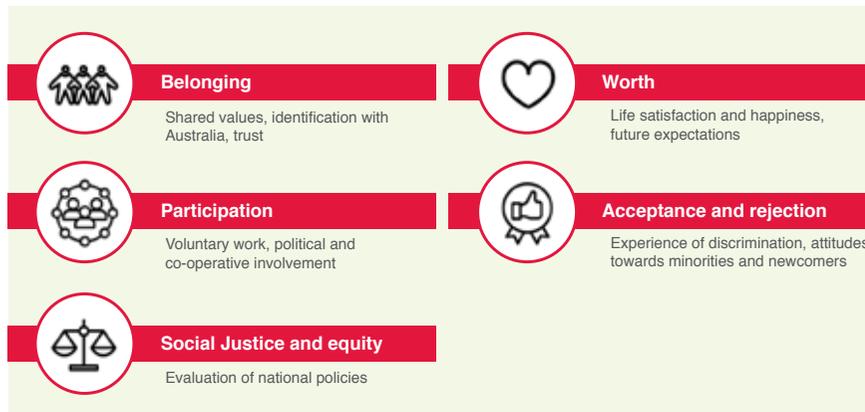


## Scanlon Monash Index, 2007-2017<sup>3</sup>

The concepts of social cohesion and what constitutes social cohesion are complex and multi-dimensional.

The Scanlon Foundation has undertaken 10 national surveys (2007, 2009-2017) that track patterns of change in Australian opinion, with a series of data on social cohesion, immigration and population issues.

A key component of the Scanlon Monash surveys is the Scanlon Monash Index of Social Cohesion (SMI), which measures the concept of social cohesion in terms of five core domains:

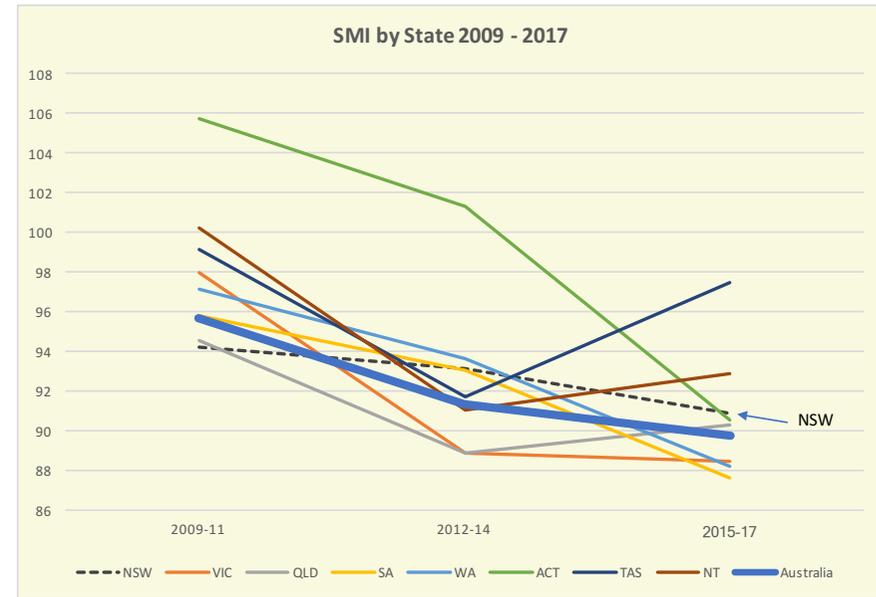


These components are aggregated to form the SMI, which provides a summary measure of the overall state of cohesiveness of Australian society. Following the benchmark 2007 survey, which set the overall index at 100.0 points, the SMI increased marginally in 2009 but has declined since 2010. In 2017, the SMI was at 88.5, down 0.8 index points compared to 2016. The index is now at the equal lowest point registered, matching the level in 2013.

Overall, the SMI shows an average decline in social cohesion, though not markedly so. Since 2009, the SMI has declined by 12.7 index points.

Reflecting the national result, most jurisdictions have recorded a fall in the SMI. NSW is down by 3.3 index points, while Victoria is down by 9.6 points. The Northern Territory and Tasmania both reflected increases in measured social cohesion.

Figure 03: SMI by state, 2009 to 2017



Results in the table have been grouped by three-yearly survey outcomes to reduce the impact of margin of error in sample size for each sub-group or state.



# Partners of NSW Government

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Multicultural NSW partners with government, non-government, community and sport sectors to promote approaches and initiatives that advance social cohesion. To help us provide a 360-degree report on the state of community relations, we asked some of our strategic partners from these sectors to share their observations and experiences about social cohesion in NSW.

## HOW OUR PARTNERS FEEL ABOUT SOCIAL COHESION

- Social cohesion is strong in the community despite a small number of people expressing extreme views.
- There have been shifts in social cohesion recently due to:
  - a perception that a large number of migrants and refugees are concentrated in certain areas such as Fairfield
  - the challenge of finding suitable and affordable accommodation
  - a lack of job opportunities
  - positive or negative influences from media
  - communities having to compete for resources and advocacy
  - political debate on immigration and refugees.
- Local and international public discourse affects people's attitudes and behaviour.
- The coordinated NSW response to refugee resettlement is a successful model of collaboration across sectors to achieve good outcomes.
- The government must affirm its commitment to achieving social cohesion and community harmony.
- Communities need to develop and implement succession planning and training for future leaders to ensure commitment to social cohesion.
- Partners called for a central point for organisations to share success stories and more positive promotion of successful migrant stories in the media.

*A GREAT EXAMPLE OF USING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH, WAS THE CO-DESIGN OF A YOUTH PEER MENTORING PROGRAM WITH REFUGEE YOUTH FACILITATED BY THE MULTICULTURAL YOUTH AFFAIRS NETWORK NSW.*

*THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES WILL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM, WHICH WILL BE ROLLED OUT IN 2017-18. THIS PROGRAM IS INTENDED TO SUPPORT AND BUILD THE CAPACITY OF YOUTH OF REFUGEE BACKGROUND TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE SETTLEMENT OUTCOMES, AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP.*

## Multicultural community groups

Ethnic and multicultural community groups are member-based community organisations that deliver a range of programs and services and work towards an inclusive society that embraces, celebrates and values cultural diversity.

### ISSUES AFFECTING SOCIAL COHESION

The groups have noted the challenges faced by communities, service providers and policy makers in catering for the needs of new and emerging communities as well as the established population.

The groups see that communities are concerned with planning for the future to ensure they thrive and meet the needs of their ageing populations, helping them become less isolated.

### HOW DOES THIS AFFECT POLICY DECISIONS?

- Succession planning and training for next generation leaders in the communities
- Promote cross community activities, events and programs to facilitate relationship, collaboration and harmony
- Develop initiatives for established groups whose needs are not regarded as high profile as the emerging groups, such as the older migrants and international students.

*EMPLOYMENT IS A BIG ISSUE ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, NOT ONLY FROM THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES, IN THE REGIONAL AREAS. THERE IS A NEED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN ASPIRATIONS AND LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES.*



## Settlement service providers

Settlement service providers help clients build the skills and knowledge they need to become self-reliant and active members of our society, through a needs-based, case management approach. The providers must deliver settlement services to all clients referred to them by the Department of Social Services through the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP).

These organisations help refugees and migrants become self-reliant and active members of Australian society. They work with refugee clients to identify their needs and goals, developing individual case management plans. They aim to help their clients with essential aspects of settlement such as housing, health, language services, education and training, and employment.

### ISSUES AFFECTING SOCIAL COHESION

Organisations contacted acknowledge the overall positive tone of community relations in NSW, quoting research studies conducted by themselves or others, such as the Scanlon Foundation surveys. They also commended the NSW Government's coordinated approach in working together with community and service providers to successfully settle refugees.

*Who we spoke to:*

*Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, Hunter Multicultural Communities Inc, Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra, Multicultural Communities Council of Wagga Wagga Inc, Settlement Services International, Navitas, NRL (National Rugby League), AFL (Australian Football League), FFA (Football Federation Australia)*

## Sporting bodies

Sports in Australia contribute greatly to many aspects of social cohesion and help participants feel they belong in a community. All codes of the four organisations interviewed incorporate strategies of building communities, recognising diversity and promoting inclusivity within their corporate structure.

### ISSUES AFFECTING SOCIAL COHESION

The organisations run educational programs in schools and communities, and have seen positive shifts in social cohesion and more awareness of cultural diversity as a result. More businesses are starting to see cultural diversity as a priority and recognise the benefits this brings. It is however noted by the organisations that the increasing public discourse in media, social media and politics, has encouraged some groups to think it is legitimate for them to express extreme views.

All four organisations agree that government's commitment to promoting social cohesion and multicultural inclusion through sport is vital.



## MEDIA AND SOCIAL COHESION

### Introduction

NSW residents get their information about cultural diversity and its impact not only from their daily interactions and personal networks, but also from the media. The media provide narratives about how their audiences should interpret events around them. They play an important role in maintaining and building social cohesion and facilitating social participation.

### Media's role

In part, news media inform the tenor of the Australian political conversation and public perceptions about our cultural diversity. They can provide minority voices and communities with a platform, facilitate greater awareness of diverse cultures and communicate the benefits of multicultural policy. Entertainment and popular media also have the power to reflect our culturally diverse society and to normalise diversity on screens, pages and sounds. Media are often a bridge for the public to engage with people from diverse cultural, ancestral and linguistic backgrounds.

### ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Australians from diverse cultural backgrounds increasingly rely on alternative media, including social media and multicultural media, to source their news. Social media facilitates global real-time networking and connections, which is of particular importance to diasporic and migrant communities. A 2017 study by Usha Rodrigues and Yin Paradies found social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter had increasingly gained status as the 'first' or 'main' source of news, particularly for international events and issues.<sup>4</sup>

The study further found people from diverse cultural backgrounds born overseas used social media as a news source more than respondents who were born in Australia. The authors concluded it was imperative mainstream media reflected the multicultural nature of Australia by giving culturally diverse Australians their own voice and covering transnational issues in more depth.

Experiences of cyber bullying and racism are particularly prevalent among young people. In 2017, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner revealed 50% to 60% of young Australians aged 12 to 17 had witnessed racist or hateful comments about cultural or religious groups online. The research also found people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were more likely to be the targets of online hate.

Multicultural media, publishing in a language other than English or catering to a specific multicultural community, are also gaining in relevance as our society continues to become more culturally diverse. There are hundreds of multicultural media outlets in NSW alone across print, radio, television and online. Multicultural media outlets play a valuable role in contributing to our society by connecting culturally diverse people to their culture, identity and language.

**THE MEDIA PROVIDE NARRATIVES ABOUT HOW THEIR AUDIENCES SHOULD INTERPRET EVENTS AROUND THEM.**



# Multicultural NSW Initiatives

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Multicultural NSW's purpose is to build and maintain a cohesive and harmonious society that enriches the lives of all the people of NSW. Cultural diversity makes us strong, prosperous and confident. It contributes to our success as a state, our sense of belonging and our common connection as the people of NSW.

Our vision is to contribute to a stronger NSW through excellence in promoting and advancing cultural diversity, social cohesion and community harmony. We work to achieve our vision by:

- leading multicultural policy and practice, as well as contributing to and leading the NSW Government's agenda for cultural diversity, social cohesion and community harmony
- collaborating with partners, communities and all sections of society for greater participation inclusion and positive social impact for all the people of NSW
- fostering best practice in efficient, equitable service delivery in a culturally diverse society across all activities and with all our partners.

The NSW Multicultural Principles enshrined in the Multicultural NSW Act underscore all our endeavours and frame the planning of all public sector agencies. The principles are based on:

- Shared values — Shared democratic values are at our core. We believe in a fair go for all, and a unified commitment to Australia — irrespective of an individual's cultural, linguistic, religious and ancestral background.
- Valuable asset — Cultural diversity is a strength and an asset that opens global opportunities and gives NSW a creative edge.
- Respect — All people of NSW are free to profess, practise and maintain their beliefs and heritage, within the rule of law. English is the common language, and all languages are respected and valued.
- Engagement — Strong relationships across all sections of society enhance participation and build social cohesion.

In this section we highlight some of our activities that actively strengthen social cohesion and community harmony in NSW during 2016-17.

## REGIONAL NSW

Multicultural NSW Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) are established under section 10 of the Act. RACs are central to our community engagement strategy, enabling us to connect with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in both metropolitan and regional NSW.

The 12 RACs provide the NSW Government with valuable information about issues affecting diverse communities in local regions. Throughout 2016-17, each RAC held four meetings (a total of 48 meetings throughout the year), where community and government representatives came together to discuss the wide range of experiences, challenges and aspirations held by communities. Recognising each region's differences, RACs identify and respond to their individual local needs in an inclusive manner, to inspire social cohesion and community harmony.

Creating a welcoming community for migrants and refugees has been commonly identified across the RACs as a key priority. A growing number of regional centres and small towns continue to actively voice their desire to have new arrivals settle in their local communities, indicating positive community attitudes towards fostering a culture of inclusiveness and commitment towards a multicultural NSW.

The Murray Lower Darling RAC also observed a community meeting in Deniliquin, hosted by *Intereach*, to bring together community members from different cultural backgrounds and representatives from key service providers and local government to explore the challenges, strengths and opportunities in growing cultural diversity in the town.

## RACS - THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUTH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

West Sydney RAC youth community member Tanith Chippendale was born in South Africa. She arrived in Australia when she was just six years old, first living in Perth and then in Broken Hill, before moving to Western Sydney.

Tanith shared her experience of being a part of the West Sydney RAC, saying that it allows her to shed light on multicultural youth issues and to be a pragmatic voice for positive change. She says it has given her an opportunity to not only write about issues, but to take an active role in challenging them.

Through facilitated networking with government and non-government organisations, as well as with community groups, Tanith feels RAC members are empowered to implement plans, and are given the opportunity to approach situations involving youth issues with more clarity about how to do so effectively.

As active representatives within their communities, RAC youth community members give voice to those that aren't always heard. At the age of 17, Apajok Biar was inspired by two young people who had created real social change in their communities. Shortly after, she started running language classes for South Sudanese people in the Sutherland Shire.

Born 23 years ago in a refugee camp in Kenya, Apajok and her family were resettled in Sydney in 1997. She uses her upbringing, family and strong sense of community as a driving force to inspire change.

At 19, Apajok established and co-founded the South Sudan Voices of Salvation Inc. Over the last three years, she has been creating awareness of refugee youth, and the strengths and capacities they have, as well as highlighting the barriers they face.

Apajok is determined to keep pushing and fighting for equality. She wants to see a better future for her niece, one that affords her the opportunity to speak up and be heard. Apajok's ability to connect with other young people through the RAC has allowed her to encourage others to challenge the status quo.

## OUR YOUTH AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Young people play a significant role in building social cohesion and harmony, while also being among the more vulnerable members of our society, exposed to the risk of being perceived as potentially dangerous and of actual radicalisation. At a time when they are forging their identity and building connections, it is important to ensure that they feel constructively connected and respected. Multicultural NSW aims to use young people's capacity as key social influencers in their communities and supports this with skills, resources and opportunities. Many of our programs and funding comprise a youth focus, including Grants Priority areas, the specific COMPACT program and membership of our Advisory Board.

## MULTICULTURAL YOUTH NETWORK

The Multicultural Youth Network is a forum for young leaders with a commitment to building a brighter future for cultural diversity. In October 2016, as part of mental health month, the network delivered a Sound Minds — Express Yourself through Art event at the Redfern Community Centre. The centre is part of The Redfern Street village, a culturally and ethnically diverse village with long-established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The event promoted greater understanding between the growing and diverse cultural groups in the area. It brought over 60 young people and their families together to exchange inspiring stories of hope, reflecting the diverse experiences and backgrounds of the community through food and the arts.

## IDEATION

IDEATION is a biennial Multicultural NSW youth engagement event. IDEATION 2017, delivered in partnership with the Advocate for Children and Young People, had a theme, Create Your Campaign.

The annual event took place at the State Library of NSW during National Youth Week in April 2017 and attracted 140 young people aged 12 to 24 from various backgrounds and experiences. Over 45% of these participants were from regional NSW.

A panel of young people spoke from real-life experience on diversity and inclusion. Their stories focused on how their religion, disability, refugee experience, ethnicity or sexuality had an impact on their access to opportunities.

Guided by peer-facilitated discussion groups, attendees also worked on a campaign to target belonging and inclusion among young people in NSW. The group discussions resulted in the following ideas:

- focus attention on changing negative attitudes towards diversity and help people embrace their own differences
- expose people to difference through sharing stories and experiences, focusing on the importance of hearing all sides of a story
- eliminate harmful stereotypes of race and social class
- reduce all forms of segregation
- normalise diversity

- address unfounded fears
- it is the responsibility of all sectors of our society, (the community, government, corporate organisations and the media), to educate the broader NSW community on diversity.

Attendees reported that the event was an eye-opening experience. Listening to ideas and stories from the diverse perspectives of other young people at IDEATION facilitated the growth of their appreciation and acceptance for all forms of difference.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2016–17, Multicultural NSW launched social media channels to engage with communities online. We also aimed to extend our reach to people in the community who would not necessarily engage with us by attending a forum or other face-to-face event. Our social media channels share stories, facts and statistics that aim to normalise cultural diversity.

Emerging trends during the year indicate many members of our online community enjoy reading profiles of people from culturally diverse backgrounds and about the history of multiculturalism in NSW.

However, these channels have also seen a small number of people in the social media community vocally express their dislike of multiculturalism through hate speech.

## MULTICULTURAL NSW GRANTS

The functions of Multicultural NSW include entering into agreements and helping to establish cooperative arrangements between organisations to promote the legislated multicultural principles and objectives.

Multicultural NSW does this through the Multicultural NSW Grants Program.

The Grants Program consists of four categories: Celebration, Unity, Support, and Partnership.

### *Supporting refugees with disability in NSW*

In January 2017, the Refugee Health Service and the Northcott Society, under a partnership arrangement, successfully obtained a \$15,000 Unity Grant to help support refugees with disability in NSW. This particular grant is one of many grants funded to ensure that refugees, and in particular, those with particular needs, are not left behind.

### *Kamilaroi stories — capturing history for future generations*

In 2015–16\*, a Unity Grant of \$20,000 helped the Narrabri Aboriginal Land Council and Narrabri Shire Council bring Kamilaroi stories to life. The Kamilaroi are the traditional owners of the Narrabri area. Traditionally the Indigenous people of Australia share their stories orally, as they have done for thousands of years.

The project allows these stories to be taken from their traditional place to the Narrabri Visitors Centre where visitors can experience them through interactive touch-screens. Now tourists and locals can experience Kamilaroi language, hear dreamtime stories and learn about age-old traditions. Twenty-one more stories were captured so the customs and traditions of the Kamilaroi can be shared with people from all around Australia and the world.

\*The project was funded in 2015-16 and implemented in 2016-17.

### *Dress for Success – Sydney Outreach Program*

Dress for Success Sydney empowers women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional clothing and career development tools to help women thrive in work and life. Dress for Success we were awarded a 2016–2017 Support Grant for \$10,000 The program was selected because it demonstrated exceptional capacity against the priority areas of:

- promoting the meaningful participation of women and girls in the community
- assisting regional communities where there are evident service gaps in meeting the needs of diverse communities.

The Dress for Success Outreach Program includes a 'Pack and Send' virtual styling service and a Regional Dressing and Styling Service, which provides dressing services to women from rural and regional NSW who are experiencing the greatest challenges and have fewer opportunities to achieve economic independence. Outfits aren't just for job seekers; they are also for court appearances, special occasions, and more generally for women who can't afford to adequately dress themselves. Leading Outreach referral partners are located in various regional locations, the majority are located in Western Sydney, the Central Coast and the Illawarra.

Dress for Success Sydney dressed 426 clients in regional NSW who otherwise would not have access to professional clothing. Culturally diverse communities typically represent around half of Outreach Program participants. The largest group are from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait background, at around a third of recipients, with other beneficiaries including women from Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, Iraqi, Iranian, Samoan, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, Afghani and Thai communities.

### *STRIVE – Western Sydney Multicultural Resource Centre*

A Support Grant of \$10,000 helped the Western Sydney Multicultural Resource Centre establish the STRIVE Women's Group for asylum seekers and refugees. This initiative helps women reduce social isolation and form new friendships.

The group also provides opportunities for the women to develop and practise English language skills and to participate in the broader community. For example, the women went on excursions to the Sydney Opera House, Manly Beach, Blue Mountains and Taronga Zoo. Learning how to buy tickets, check Opal Card balances and train timetables helped participants feel more comfortable with independent travel.

At Manly Beach, the women learned about beach safety. During the Blue Mountains excursion, participants heard about elements of Aboriginal culture, including the story and history of the Three Sisters. The excursion to Taronga Zoo provided an opportunity for the women to develop their English, listening to demonstrations and reading maps.

A total of 376 women participated in 38 group sessions. They reported that the group meetings and excursions made them feel more confident, socially connected and able to make new friendships. They felt respected. Feedback from participants indicated:

- 80% felt more socially connected and more self-confident
- 76% gained new knowledge
- 75% felt they improved their English 'a lot', while 25% felt they improved their English 'a little'
- 63% indicated they gained new skills.

### *Core Community Services – Refugees as Assets Project*

Core Community Services received a \$10,000 Support Grant to strengthen the capacity of asylum seekers and partner visa holders through a case management style service. This provided one-on-one job seeking support, resume preparation, opportunities to undertake mock interviews and connect with volunteering and paid work experience opportunities. Training and referral to other supports such as social and community services was also provided.

Through its case management model, the project was able to identify the unique needs of project participants and design tailor-made plans to address such needs. The project was delivered in a flexible way from the Fairfield and Cabramatta Libraries. The project partners – Fairfield City Council, CORE Community Services

and MTC Australia are well-connected in the community and are active in the main local interagency forums. The project utilised these connections to recruit and retain project participants. Project partners met regularly to discuss project progress and challenges as well as ways of improving the service.

Over 60 people received over 150 occasions of service through the project. 15 people secured jobs through services provided by the project. Other project participants also were referred and supported to access other services such as English language conversation classes, pathways for enrolling into TAFE courses, and how to obtain a NSW Driver Licence.

The project commenced in November 2016 and ran throughout the first half of 2017.

### *Ethnic and Multicultural Communities Councils*

Multicultural NSW entered a partnership arrangement with the Ethnic and Multicultural Communities Councils of NSW for three years, from July 2015 to June 2018.

The partnership grant helps the councils carry out their core business, including:

- settlement services for refugees
- health, wellbeing, social services and cultural activities
- representing the interests of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- a range of diversity services in aged care
- youth development
- community capacity building
- volunteering
- training.

Multicultural NSW works with these councils through the quarterly Ethnic and Multicultural Communities Councils Forum, as well as the Regional Advisory Councils.

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, the Hunter Multicultural Communities, the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra and the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga are covered by the partnership arrangement.

### Northern Settlement Services — pathways to volunteering

In 2016-17, a \$20,000 Unity Grant helped Northern Settlement Services promote and facilitate volunteering by members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Volunteers in the project obtained skills and experience to help with employability, and were also given opportunities to engage in the local community.

An important aspect of this project was to emphasise how volunteering can help people become connected with their communities, as well as increase employment prospects. The project also facilitated tailored volunteering opportunities for individual community members. Examples of successful volunteering pathways included the following:

- Northern Settlement Services was able to successfully match a volunteer with overseas qualifications and experience in environmental science to the Hunter Wetlands Centre. The volunteer was interested in using her skills and knowledge to help the community, and to gain work experience and contacts in Australia. The centre was developing a project that needed her particular skills and experience. This mutually beneficial arrangement allowed the centre to benefit from the volunteer's experience and expertise, while also providing networking opportunities and experience volunteering at an internationally recognised wetland.
- A Spanish woman was interested in volunteering to get experience in welfare and social justice, hoping to eventually study and work in these areas. The service linked her with Wesley Mission, assisting with a women's group. She is about to start in the emergency relief service that provides practical experience working with clients.

## NSW COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND RESPONSE PLAN

Established under the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*, the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan brings NSW agencies together to work more proactively to prevent and prepare for any potential threat to community harmony arising at the local or international level.

As part of the plan, Multicultural NSW established a dedicated forum for agencies to exchange information, identify risks, coordinate responses and develop best-practice approaches to building community resilience across the state and into the future. The plan sets out a practical work agenda for agencies and supports activities across four phases — preparedness, prevention, response and recovery.

## COMPACT — COMMUNITIES, IN PARTNERSHIP, TAKING ACTION

The four-year, \$8 million Community Partnership Action (COMPACT) program supports an alliance of grassroots community organisations, peak non-government organisations, private sector partners, schools, universities, government agencies and police. The COMPACT Alliance is committed to safeguarding Australia's peaceful and harmonious way of life against hate, fear, violence and division.

COMPACT supports 14 youth engagement projects, involving 34 community organisations. In the first year of delivery, it directly engaged with more than 8,000 young people.

One example was the *In League In Harmony* leadership program. This project united youth from different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds to develop young leaders that promote respect and responsibility in their communities.

The six-week program consisted of workshops, skills sessions, harmony festivals and a youth leadership program. COMPACT also invited selected participants to take part in a *Youth Ambassadors* program. This aims to inspire and empower young people with the determination and confidence to promote respect, inclusiveness, courage, resilience and teamwork within their communities.

At the end of every school term, *In League In Harmony* participants gathered in a one-day outdoor sports celebration with other schools.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIRST YEAR INCLUDED:

- more than 1,800 young people participated in the six-week *In League In Harmony* program
- five celebration Harmony Gala Days hosted over 1,500 youth
- five Harmony Walks delivered at NRL *In League In Harmony* Gala Days
- more than 210 values workshops were delivered to 38 groups including schools, juvenile justice centres and intensive English centres
- COMPACT selected 78 youth ambassadors for their positive contribution to community
- four Youth Ambassador induction workshops
- three Youth Ambassador Unite meetings
- *In League In Harmony* Youth Summit held in December 2016 and attended by 29 youth ambassadors
- participated in the Sports in Harmony Festival at Fairfield Youth and Community Centre
- COMPACT hosted a cohort of sports officials, including AFL and Football United, to recognise the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

The COMPACT Alliance also implemented a program of joint activities to strengthen its position as a responsive network, and to support the development of a community of practice. The inaugural COMPACT Alliance Summit was held on 20 July 2016, and the alliance continued to come together throughout 2016-17 to build a community of practice.

The core message of the COMPACT Alliance is 'communities standing united against hate, fear and division'. COMPACT Alliance members aim to project this message beyond the Alliance and empower community partners to be more effective in countering hateful and divisive narratives in the public domain.

The COMPACT Alliance played a key role in advising the direction and content of the recently launched Remove Hate from the Debate online anti-hate campaign. The campaign aims to help a team of credible community influencers and role models deliver a strong, public message against extremist hate, fear, division and conflict. The program will also develop resources to assist communities to effectively counter extremist hate both online and offline.

## RELIGIOUS LEADERS' FORUM

The Multicultural NSW Religious Leaders' Forum provides an avenue for the NSW Government to hear the perspectives of faith leaders on topical issues important to their communities. During 2016-17 the forum met in October, February and May. It expressed concerns about the current state of public debate around cultural and religious diversity, and is interested in exploring ways to better communicate positive and practical examples of interfaith cooperation and harmony.

## SETTLEMENT

We need to engage with communities to understand where to target services and programs to foster social cohesion and maintain harmony in our society. In 2016-17, Multicultural NSW, along with the Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement, visited several key community and religious leaders supporting new arrivals from Syria and Iraq. These leaders identified key issues, which formed a core element of the NSW Government's investment in supporting humanitarian settlement:

- **Youth engagement** — some community and religious leaders identified the importance of engaging youth (especially those between 17 years and the early 20s) who are in a transitional phase in their lives. The Youth Peer Mentoring Program is expected to be a vehicle to address issues of youth disengagement.
- **English language proficiency** — most stakeholders emphasised the importance of learning English as the first step to gaining meaningful employment. One of the components of the Refugee Employment Support Program (overseen by the NSW Department of Industry) includes steering participants towards appropriate English language courses and training.
- **Employment** — was one of the most important issues for new arrivals. Meaningful employment opportunities were seen as vital to steer new arrivals away from cycles of informal employment and exploitation in the workplace. The Refugee Employment Support Program is also expected to be a vehicle to address this.
- **Cultural transitions and family relationships** — with settling in a new country comes unique stresses that can cause tension within families. The Families in Cultural Transition Program (delivered by STARTTS) was funded to include additional Arabic and Assyrian speaking facilitators, extend to regional areas and deliver targeted services to Syrian and Iraqi refugee families.

## COMMUNITY HUBS

The NSW Government committed \$720,000 over four years, led by Multicultural NSW to support the school community hubs program in NSW.

The Community Hubs Program is administered by Community Hubs Australia, who focuses on engaging with and supporting migrant and refugee women with pre-school children. The grassroots, citizen-centric approach is a sound strategy to engage and build trust with hard-to-reach migrant and refugee women, families and their young children and establish connections for them within their school communities.

## ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NSW LANGUAGE SERVICES INDUSTRY

Multicultural NSW is working with the language services industry in NSW to ensure sustainable provision of quality interpreting and translation services. We are committed to ensuring all people of NSW enjoy equal access to services, programs and opportunities.

In June 2016, Multicultural NSW established a *Language Services Forum* to advise the Minister for Multiculturalism on strategies and issues relevant to providing language services in NSW.

The forum aims to:

- generate ideas, strategies and actions that contribute to the sustainability of the industry in NSW
- share information on existing programs, best practice and new initiatives, as well as foster relationships within the NSW language services industry
- provide advice and feedback to Multicultural NSW on issues relating to the NSW language services industry.

Industry-wide consultation has identified many key issues that both the government and the broader industry need to address to ensure sustainability. We have prioritised three key areas:

- Develop a best-practice language services policy framework and issue a language services guideline to all NSW Government agencies and funded organisations.

## LANGUAGES IDENTIFIED AS MOST DIFFICULT TO SERVICE

Khmer	Assyrian	Bengali	Chaldean	Tamil
Pashto	Punjabi	Nepalese	Burmese	Samoaan
Tongan	Somali	Farsi	Rohingya	Kurdish
Greek	Italian	Portuguese	Vietnamese	Thai

Table 02: Languages identified as having a lack of qualified interpreters



- Undertake an extensive data collection exercise to identify languages across metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW that are most difficult to service with qualified interpreters. Identify strategies to respond to this need.
- Improve the current use of interpreting services by government agencies and the non-government sector to enhance access to government services for migrants and refugees.

The forum is actively developing and implementing strategies to respond to these priorities, and, in particular, ensure there is an ongoing supply of qualified interpreters in all languages in demand in NSW.

Multicultural NSW has finalised Language Services Guidelines to be distributed to all NSW Government departments and funded agencies. These guidelines, the first of their type in NSW, will provide information on how and when agencies should use language services.

An extensive data collection exercise has enabled us to identify the languages in NSW – both in metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW – that are the most difficult to service with qualified interpreters. The data demonstrates that it is likely that a number of NSW residents speaking a language other than English have had insufficient access to important services because of a lack of qualified interpreters. Table 02 outlines the top 20 languages identified as the most difficult to service due to a lack of qualified interpreters.

Feedback indicates that community members, family members and bilingual workers act as interpreters for these languages. This impacts on the quality of some services, including access to courts and health services. We need a solid plan to ensure a future supply of interpreters to meet the needs of NSW citizens. This is particularly important to support the future intake of refugees and migrants.

We identified a range of issues in relation to the use of interpreting services by government and non-government agencies in NSW. In general, there was a lack of understanding of:

- service providers on the benefits of engaging credentialed interpreters
- the role of an interpreter, and when it is appropriate to use interpreters
- how to best use an interpreter's services (telephone and face-to-face)
- how to introduce interpreter services to clients and their families.

Feedback from the Multicultural NSW Language Services Advisory Forum identified that non-government organisations are a priority for training in this area. This is reinforced by the need for NSW service providers to effectively support the recent intakes of Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

We are considering strategies on how best to provide government and non-government agencies with the skills to effectively use interpreting services.



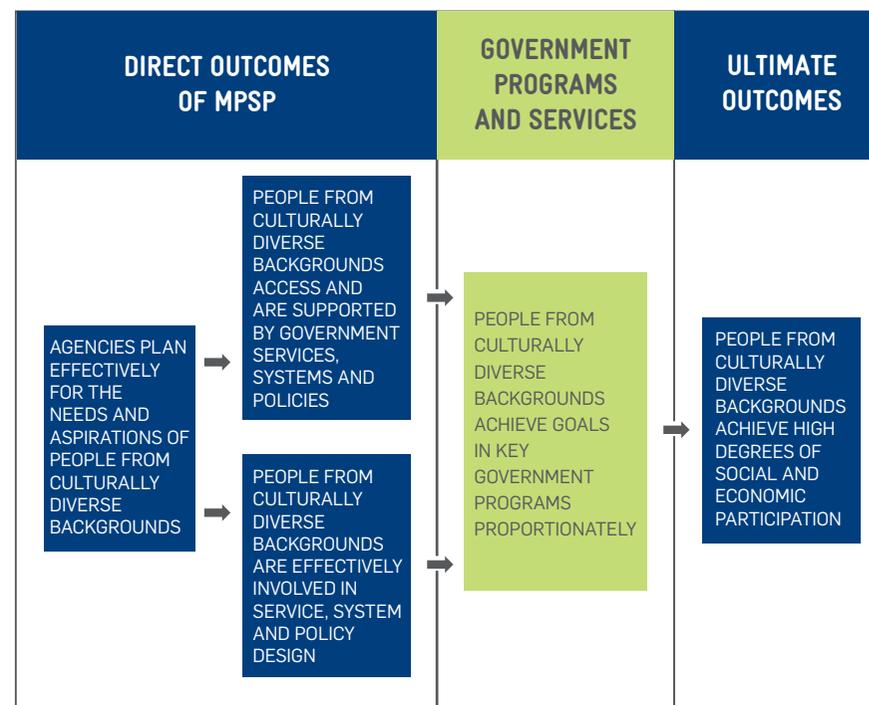
# Multicultural Policies and Services Program

All NSW government agencies incorporate multicultural principles in planning and delivering services, under a policy, legislative and reporting framework outlined through our Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP).

The MPSP requires all state government agencies to maintain a multicultural plan and account for it in their annual reports. Specific agencies are selected each year to prepare detailed plans.

The MPSP framework directs agencies to focus their planning on four areas:

Focus Areas	Outcomes
1. Service delivery	Mainstream services deliver for everyone
	Targeted programs fill the gaps
	People from culturally diverse backgrounds are aware of NSW Government (funded) services, programs and functions
2. Planning	Strong plans to deliver services
	Evidence driven planning
3. Leadership	Demonstrated leadership in culturally inclusive practices
	Increased recognition of the value of cultural diversity
4. Engagement	Collaboration with diverse communities
	Understanding the needs of people from diverse backgrounds



The MPSP provides a strong, flexible and multi-dimensional approach to respond to the needs of our culturally diverse community. It also provides a framework that can be used more broadly by the community, non-government and corporate sectors to better integrate inclusiveness in their approaches and delivery of services.

# Annual Reporting by Government Agencies

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Under annual reporting legislation, departments, statutory bodies and state-owned corporations are required to provide information in their annual report on implementing their Multicultural Policies and Services Plan.

Under the annual reporting Regulations, departments must include a statement of their multicultural strategies and progress in implementing their plans

A similar regulation applies to statutory bodies.

Small departments and statutory bodies can report every three years

All agencies are required to provide Multicultural NSW with an extract from their annual report, so we can assess compliance with these requirements.

Multicultural NSW evaluates reports for their approach to multicultural planning and discusses these with agencies. Further information about this evaluation can be obtained by contacting [MPSP@multicultural.nsw.gov.au](mailto:MPSP@multicultural.nsw.gov.au).



# Designated Agency Reports 2017

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Multicultural NSW identifies designated agencies that provide important functions to the culturally diverse community of NSW to develop more comprehensive multicultural plans. These agencies must report against the plans every two or three years and identify priorities for the next reporting period. In 2017, these agencies were:

- icare
  - LEGAL AID NSW
    - NSW FAIR TRADING
      - TRANSPORT FOR NSW



## icare (Insurance and Care NSW)

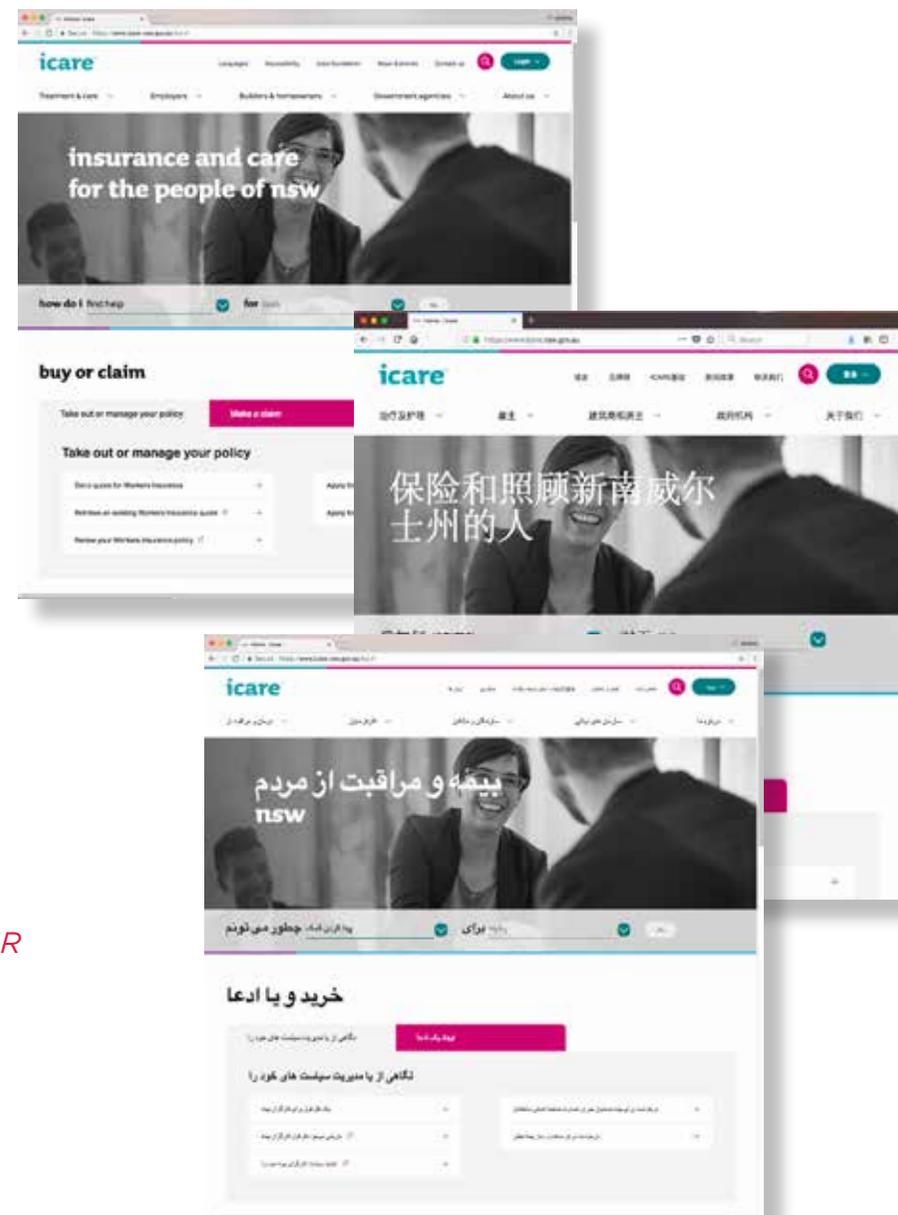
Established in 2015, icare delivers world-class insurance and care services to the businesses, people and communities that make NSW great. The organisation protects and insures the employees of NSW businesses and government agencies. It provides treatment, rehabilitation and personalised care for people severely injured in motor accidents. It also supports workers and their dependents affected by work-related dust diseases, and protects and insure the assets owned by the NSW government, such as the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge, as well as public hospitals and schools.

icare developed its first Multicultural Plan in January 2017 covering the period from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2019. The plan was developed in consultation with people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including government agencies and independent experts. icare recognises the need for inclusivity and has developed the plan across strategic areas that underpin its broader inclusion and diversity strategy. In 2017, icare provided a progress report outlining achievements against this plan from January to June 2017.

While the plan reflects icare's status as a relatively new organisation, it presents a strong template for future multicultural reports that will guide developments in each of the focus areas and enhance icare's approach to cultural diversity.

Reflecting the importance that the organisation places on inclusion, during 2017 icare established a senior leadership role to focus specifically on inclusion and diversity. It also created a dedicated health and community engagement team to build relationships with multiple communities in NSW. This ensures icare can remain agile, adaptive and responsive to emerging trends. icare has also developed a broad Inclusion and Diversity Strategy that aligns all areas of its inclusion and diversity work, including the Multicultural Plan.

*icare's WORKERS' INSURANCE EMPLOYER ASSIST AND WORKER ASSIST WEBSITES PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE FOR NSW EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS. THE EASY ONLINE TOOL GIVES INFORMATION ON HOW TO CALCULATE PREMIUMS, REPORT AN INCIDENT OR MAKE A CLAIM AND HAS ADVICE ON PAYMENTS, EXPENSES AND HOW TO RECOVER AT WORK. THIS INFORMATION IS IN 10 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.*



icare's approach to planning includes an increase in the disclosure by employees of cultural diversity data. This provides a solid basis from which it can extend its research into its customer base, which will contribute to the delivery of optimal outcomes for its customers.

In service delivery, icare recognises and caters for the diversity of the NSW community with 10 different languages available on its website. The agency encourages job applicants from culturally diverse backgrounds, and its inclusion and diversity strategy is available on its website.

icare's Workers' Insurance Employer Assist and Worker Assist websites provide an overview of workers' compensation insurance for NSW employers and employees. The easy online tool gives information on how to calculate premiums, report an incident or make a claim, and has advice on payments, expenses and how to recover at work. This information is made available in 10 different languages.

Over the past two years, icare has hosted a number of diversity events, including the Festival of People, giving employees the chance to experience and learn about different cultures, and discuss the importance of inclusion and diversity for the organisation, our customers and community. The organisation also launched its Graduate program in 2017, with 33% of the intake being women; and created multi-faith rooms and a baby care room to be available for use by our employees.

icare has established several initiatives as a platform to further develop its capacity for community engagement. Membership of the Diversity Council of Australia and the creation of a Culturally Diverse Employee Network provide a sound basis from which icare can further deepen and expand its engagement within the agency and its clients.



## LEGAL AID NSW

LEGAL AID NSW Legal Aid NSW is an independent statutory body established under the Legal Aid Commission Act 1979, reporting to the NSW Attorney General. It provides legal services across NSW covering criminal, family and civil law, as well as legal information, education, advice, minor assistance, dispute resolution and representation at court. Legal Aid NSW aims to improve access to justice for the most disadvantaged people in our society.

During the reporting period, Legal Aid NSW has improved its services for refugees and other recently arrived migrant communities through specialist services, collaboration with government agencies and community organisations, and better targeting of resources. As one example, it established a dedicated Refugee Service to provide specific services to the large community of Syrian and Iraqi refugees who are resettling in the southwest of Sydney.

The organisation's Diversity Action Plan 2016-2017 covers people from culturally diverse backgrounds as well as women, people with disability, young and older people, and gender and sexually diverse people. The action plan is aligned with the Legal Aid NSW Plan and structured under the same objectives. The Legal Aid NSW Plan 2016-2017 includes an action requiring the implementation of the Diversity Action Plan, effectively making diversity and inclusiveness an integral part of the corporate responsibility and business.

Of particular note is Legal Aid NSW's use of publications and educational resources for clients. This reflects best practice in multicultural service delivery, with a range of materials in different languages to ensure that the needs of clients are considered. Legal Aid NSW recognises that culturally diverse groups need its services, and participates in initiatives such as the Multicultural Day at Wollongong Court House. This type of approach could form the basis for a broader strategic engagement with culturally diverse groups to communicate matters that may have stronger significance to specific communities.

Legal Aid NSW performed well under the planning focus area. Its strategic documents highlight the inclusion of diverse communities and how actions and services relevant to these communities are considered within its engagements. The agency has dedicated significant resources to use evidence-driven data to guide its planning. Of note is the agency's participation in the Settlement Action Plan Symposium and its recognition of the demand for legal services from the refugee intake under the NSW Government's Refugee Settlement Package. An evaluation of the Refugee Service

is due to release results in 2018, and will likely assist in the further development of planning across the agency.

The agency's leadership approach also rates highly. Legal Aid NSW has established an Equity and Diversity committee chaired by the CEO. Executive members are consulted with their senior management teams in the development of the Diversity Action Plan and contribute a wide range of actions. Further, the Refugee Service reflects the assessment of the cultural needs of the targeted clients with all employees from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

The commitment to diversity by Legal Aid NSW was exemplified by the previous CEO, Mr Bill Grant, AOM, who provided his views in an edition of the Verbals newsletter:

*DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES IN THE WORKPLACE HELP CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE AND WHERE NEW IDEAS, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION CAN FLOURISH. WE CAN BECOME A MORE EFFICIENT, PRODUCTIVE ORGANISATION BY EMBRACING DIVERSITY AND APPRECIATING AND RESPECTING DIFFERENCES, AND BY BEING INCLUSIVE, THROUGH OUR ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE, PRACTICES, PROGRAMS AND THE QUALITY OF OUR INTERACTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH EACH OTHER. THE ACTIONS IN THE CURRENT LEGAL AID NSW PLAN, DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN, RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN, AND THE EFFORTS OF THE EQUITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE DEMONSTRATE EXEMPLARY WORK IN APPLYING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.*

*NSW HAS THE MOST CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATION IN AUSTRALIA. AS A PROVIDER OF LEGAL SERVICES, THIS BRINGS WITH IT MANY CHALLENGES, BUT OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL. OUR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH SETTLEMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL IS A WONDERFUL EXAMPLE OF AN INSPIRING, PRACTICAL PARTNERSHIP THAT ALLOWS BOTH PARTNERS TO DELIVER INTEGRATED LEGAL AND NON-LEGAL SERVICES TO CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLIENTS IN MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRES. I AM PROUD OF THE RANGE OF OTHER WORK WE ARE UNDERTAKING AND ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO READ ABOUT THIS WORK ON THE EQUITY AND DIVERSITY PAGE ON THE INTRANET. AS CEO IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO CHAIR THE LEGAL AID EQUITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE, WHERE I WITNESS THE COMMITMENT AND ENERGY OF THE COMMITTEE AND APPRECIATE THE ENORMOUS WORK THAT HAS BEEN PRODUCED THROUGH DIVERSITY ACTION PLANS OVER THE YEARS.*



The participation by Legal Aid NSW in the Refugee Employment Program and the cultural awareness training are indicators of a solid commitment of its engagement with clients and within the agency. Engagements with other agencies such as Settlement Services International further illustrate its willingness to engage across a variety of sectors. Building on these existing commitments in the areas of co-design with clients could help to further embed engagement initiatives towards best practice as part of its MPSP commitments.

## NSW FAIR TRADING

NSW Fair Trading safeguards consumer rights, regulates specific industries and occupations, and advises traders on fair and ethical business practices. The agency mediates consumer complaints and enforces compliance through a range of licensing, inspection, investigation and disciplinary actions. Since NSW Fair Trading became a division of the Department of Finance Services and Innovation in 2003, NSW Fair Trading's Multicultural Plan has been incorporated within the department's overall Multicultural Plan, which builds on the strategies within the Corporate and People Strategy plans.

NSW Fair Trading has performed soundly in its adoption of multicultural principles in planning and implementing its services.



Watch short videos on  
My Consumer Rights  
in 11 languages



As an example, the agency's commitment to the ongoing development and implementation of its Think Smart education program demonstrates a benchmark model for service delivery to culturally diverse communities.

### THINK SMART MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION STRATEGY 2016-2019

As part of the Think Smart program, NSW Fair Trading has produced a Think Smart Multicultural Education Strategy 2016-2019 for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This outlines way in which NSW Fair Trading can provide tailored services to meet the needs of people from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly refugees and humanitarian entrants.

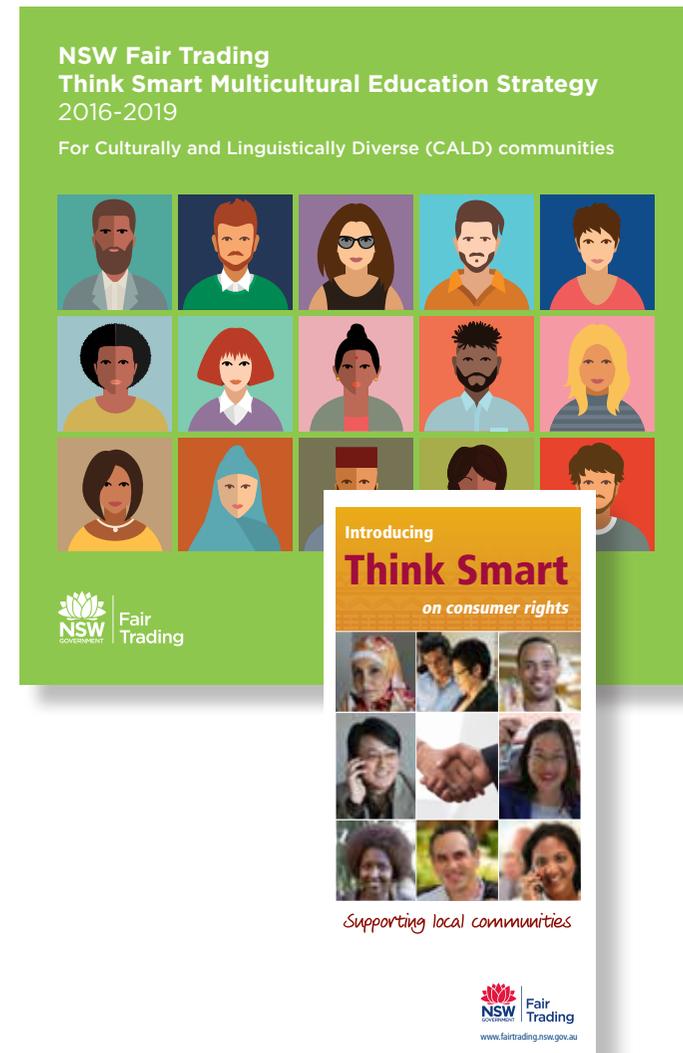
Fair Trading undertakes a range of activities to plan more effectively by integrating the needs of culturally diverse communities. This includes a variety of methods through which the agency gathers information related to planning, such as customer feedback and community consultation; and engagement with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including young people, seniors, people with disabilities and Aboriginal communities.

### CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE

NSW Fair Trading worked in collaboration with the Australia Nanhai Culture Media Group to develop educational videos to help Mandarin-speaking communities in NSW better understand their consumer rights and responsibilities under Australian consumer law.

The Mandarin video contains topical Fair Trading information delivered by a Mandarin-speaking staff member and a presenter. So far, six videos have been produced and are available through the WeChat channel, YouTube and from the NSW Fair Trading website. The Australia Nanhai Culture Media Group is the agency's newest Think Smart media partner.

WeChat is one of the largest and most popular mobile text and voice messaging application communication services in China.



## TRANSPORT FOR NSW

Transport for NSW is the lead agency of the NSW Transport cluster. The agency is responsible for strategy, planning, policy, regulation, funding allocation and other non- service delivery functions for all modes of transport in NSW including road, rail, ferry, light rail, point to point, regional air, cycling and walking.

Transport for NSW's report highlighted a number of significant initiatives by its agencies.

Roads and Maritime Services, an agency within Transport for NSW, demonstrated capability against the leadership focus area by implementing measures such as the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employee Resource Groups, and Regional Diversity and Inclusion Forum Committees. Roads and Maritime Services is also improving cross-cultural competency and training through the Conscious Inclusion programs.

### ■ INTRODUCING OPAL

As part of the Opal card roll-out, from 16 December 2015, asylum seekers in NSW were able to apply for transport concessions. The Gold Opal card is also available to eligible NSW residents with proof of their status as an asylum seeker. Transport for NSW is working with designated agencies to provide aid and support to asylum seekers in NSW.



*More than 16,000 Gold Opal Cards have been issued to asylum seekers since 2015.*



### *Footnotes*

- <sup>1</sup> The ABS uses the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG), 2016 (cat. no. 1249.0) to classify responses given to the ancestry question in the 2016 Census. The ancestry classification is based on the geographic area in which a group originated or developed, and the similarity of cultural and ethnic groups in terms of social and cultural characteristics. The ABS developed this classification to satisfy wide community interest in the ethnic and cultural composition of the Australian population and the characteristics of particular migrant community groups. It is intended to provide a standard to meet a growing statistical, administrative and service delivery need for data relating to these interests. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2900.0main+features100402016>
- <sup>2</sup> [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/3101.0Main%20Features15Mar%202017?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3101.0&issue=Mar%202017&num=&view=.](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/3101.0Main%20Features15Mar%202017?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3101.0&issue=Mar%202017&num=&view=)
- <sup>3</sup> <http://scanlonfoundation.org.au/socialcohesion2017/>
- <sup>4</sup> Usha M Rodrigues and Yin Paradies, News Consumption Habits of Culturally Diverse Australians in the Digital Era: Implications for Intercultural Relations, *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 2018 vol. 47, no 1, pp.38-51.