

TOOL: Collecting external data on cultural diversity

Make sure you use sources that are up-to-date and reliable. Some useful sources for data on community profiles, demographics and planning include:

- **ABS Census:** This shows the demographic make-up of geographical areas and communities. Here you will find language spoken at home, country of birth, educational attainments, proficiency in English, earnings and other information. Source ABS Census here: <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/data>
- **Settlement data:** This helps you find communities who have recently arrived and what visas they hold. You can source settlement data by completing a settlement data request form found at <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/form-listing/forms/1542.pdf> and submitting it to settlement.data.request@homeaffairs.gov.au

Surveys

Consumer surveys can be run online or face-to-face during service delivery. Staff need cultural competency to run face-to-face consumer surveys. The questions asked should follow basic ABS Census search terms for easier data comparison. The following questions capture the recommended minimum data set that you need:

- what is your country of birth?
- do you speak a language other than English at home?
- how proficient are you in English?
- when did you arrive in Australia?
- what is your religious background?

Interviews

Collecting qualitative data through interviews needs to be done in a culturally sensitive manner. Some important considerations are listed below:

- some clients may not be good at English and may need an interpreter



- others may not be literate in their first language, so consider this if a client is completing a written form in their language
- in some cultures, date of birth may not be clear. For example, many older people born in rural Iraq were given an official birth date of 1 July because their exact birthday was unknown. Some people may not be able to find their birth records in their country of origin, or may give the date according to a different calendar
- some people may be suspicious when you ask for personal information. Clearly communicate why you are collecting data and explain the measures taken to ensure confidentiality. Informed consent is important so people understand they have a choice in sharing personal information
- tell people exactly how their personal information will be used.

What to do after the data is collected

Analyse the data to find out what it is telling you. It may help you identify the following:

- what groups are accessing your service? Do any of them stand out?
- what groups are not accessing your service? Why?
- how do the different aspects of your consumers (age, language, English language proficiency etc.) intersect? Why might this be?
- can you identify any trends across the data?
- when will the data be updated?
- over time, has this data changed and is the gap between your potential and actual client base decreasing?

Consider how you will resource data updates to feed into internal planning. Who will be responsible for updating the data?

Mapping

Map all known community groups, ethno-specific organisations, community leaders and inter-agencies (groups of agencies) that may be relevant to your potential culturally diverse base. Consider these factors:



- how relevant or engaged are these stakeholders in providing knowledge or information regarding their community, and how engaged would they be in supporting your clients in ways that complement your services?
- rank stakeholders by their level of potential engagement
- use the strengths of your current staff by tapping into their knowledge of external stakeholders who are working with culturally diverse communities
- set up a working group with people skilled in collecting data who have specialist knowledge of diverse communities.

