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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP  
Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Migration  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Vamvakinou

On behalf of the ACT Government I would like to provide this submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration's Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia.

The ACT is a uniquely multicultural city, home to 126 diplomatic missions; and with a community made up of people from over 200 different countries who speak approximately 170 languages between them.

The *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013* outlines the ACT Government's vision that the ACT is recognised as a leader in multicultural affairs and human rights and we have numerous initiatives which aim to promote effective integration, participation and long term settlement in the nation's capital.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry and I look forward to considering the outcomes in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs  
April 2011

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



# **Australian Capital Territory Government**

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration

## **Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia**

April 2011



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## INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration's Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia.

The demographics of the ACT's population make it, by definition, a multicultural community and the ACT Government is a strong supporter of multiculturalism and its benefits.

### ***The ACT: a multicultural snapshot<sup>1</sup>***

- Canberrans come from over 200 different countries
- Approximately 22 per cent of the ACT population was born overseas
- Fourteen per cent of the population speaks a language other than English
- Approximately 170 languages are spoken in the ACT region
- Around 2 per cent of the population does not speak English well or at all
- The ACT community includes diplomatic representation from 126 countries
- The ACT and region is home to several active emerging humanitarian and refugee communities, including Sudanese (approx. 800); Burmese (Mon approx. 300, Karen approx. 170); Sierra Leonean (approx. 100); Liberian; and Rwandan.
- In 2010, the ten foremost countries of birth for new humanitarian arrivals in the ACT were: Burma/Myanmar; Iraq; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Afghanistan; Iran; Sierra Leone; Kenya; Pakistan; and Sudan.<sup>2</sup>

The ACT Government delivers numerous initiatives to support, strengthen and empower the multicultural community and undertakes a number of activities which promote multiculturalism, respect and intercultural harmony.

The contribution of Canberra's multicultural community to the economic, social and cultural life of the ACT is positive, vital and significant and the ACT Government is pleased to expand on these points below.

## MULTICULTURALISM, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND GLOBALISATION

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### ***Term of Reference 1***

#### **The role of multiculturalism in the Federal Government's social inclusion agenda**

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The ACT Government strongly supports Australia's social inclusion agenda and believes multiculturalism plays a key role in moving towards a truly inclusive society. The Australian Government's vision of a socially inclusive society is one in which all Australians feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our society, with the resources, opportunities and capability to learn; work; engage; and have a voice.

The ACT has initiatives, policies and legislation in place which promote social inclusion for all Canberrans, including *The Canberra Plan – Towards our Second Century; Building our Community: Canberra Social Plan*; the *ACT Discrimination Act 1991*; the *Human Rights Act 2004*; and the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013*.

#### **1.1 Social inclusion in the ACT<sup>3</sup>**

Principles for understanding community inclusion in the ACT

1. Community inclusion in the ACT is located with people and in the community. It starts with individuals feeling they belong and are valued.
2. Community inclusion is driven by the grassroots efforts of communities.
3. Government has a key leadership role and community inclusion is enabled by the policies, systems and services that are delivered or supported by governments.
4. Community inclusion simultaneously promotes social cohesion and addresses disadvantage.
5. Stereotypes and negative attitudes about other people are a serious impediment to community inclusion.

Principles for delivering community inclusion in the ACT

1. The ACT Government provides leadership and vision for an inclusive Canberra. This vision is encapsulated in documents such as the *Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* and the *Canberra Social Plan*.
2. An inclusive Canberra is one where each person belongs, can contribute and is valued.
3. Collaboration is a key to making community inclusion happen. It includes cross-government and cross-sectoral partnerships.
4. Data collection, evaluation and evidence are important tools in building collaboration.
5. Flexibility and responsiveness need to be part of a collaborative system.

6. Collaborative partnerships are built on sound governance and formal arrangements and sustained by respectful relationships, shared vision and persistence.
7. It takes time to work through the strategic, management and relational issues that underpin collaborative partnerships.
8. Service providers should be involved in the design and evaluation of policy and services in a collaborative system.
9. Service users should have the opportunity to be involved in design and evaluation processes and be supported in their development.
10. It is critical that services have strategies to engage so called 'hard to reach' groups.
11. Strategic and targeted place based approaches are an opportunity to be innovative while making a big difference for individuals and communities for generations to come.
12. Strategies must be in place to assist government, non-government and community organisations retain skilled and experienced staff.

### **1.2 Experiences of social inclusion in the ACT**

The propensity of people to feel isolated in Canberra can be linked to key life stage and demographic characteristics. There are groups within the community that are much less likely to experience exclusion (those working in some capacity; those with a car or not reliant solely on public transport; and those engaging in formal activities) and those that are at more risk (those not working; and those who must rely on public transport – particularly those who live in outer lying suburbs). Similar to Australia generally, there are sections of the Canberra community that are equally at higher risk of social exclusion, such as older people; people with a disability; people with a mental illness; and people for whom English is a second language.

For newly arrived migrants and refugees, isolation and social exclusion can occur if it is difficult for them to meet people and establish friendships beyond other migrants or people from the same cultural background. A lack of confidence in their own English language abilities presents another barrier.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.3 ACT Community Inclusion Board**

The ACT Community Inclusion Board was established in 2004 under the *Canberra Social Plan*. The role of the Board is to provide strategic policy advice to the ACT Government on community (social) inclusion.

Since its inception, the Board has worked from the premise that an inclusive community is one where everyone has the means and opportunity to belong, participate and contribute. The Board has undertaken a variety of research; consultation; and community engagement initiatives which have made explicit the communities beliefs, values and experiences of inclusion.

The Community Inclusion Board recognises that the Canberra community is, in many respects, a strong and vibrant one. The challenge for the community – and the Board – is to address disadvantage that does exist. In June 2008, the Board stated that, ‘...inequities that result are potentially stark [and]... people at risk of exclusion can be less visible in an affluent society’. Feedback from Board consultations is that, generally, to experience isolation in Canberra can be an even more difficult and lonely experience than elsewhere.

The Multicultural Summits of 2005 and 2008 and the Building Inclusive Communities forum of 2009 and others demonstrate that community ownership of inclusion in the ACT is strong. Another prominent theme arising from the Board’s community consultation is that the ACT Government is an important leader and enabler of community inclusion: leadership comes from key strategic policy statements such as *The Canberra Plan: Towards our Second Century* and *Building our Community: The Canberra Social Plan*, while enabling occurs through the policies, systems and services for which the ACT Government is responsible.

#### **1.4 Human rights and discrimination in the ACT**

The ACT is the first of only two Australian jurisdictions to develop human rights legislation. The community/social inclusion approach adopted in the ACT is underpinned by a human rights framework including, the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

The Act enshrines core civil and political rights such as:

- the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the law;
- the right to life;
- the right to protection of the family and children;
- the right to privacy;
- the right to personal freedoms (such as freedom of movement, thought and religion, expression, assembly and association); and
- the right to participation in public life; to enjoy their culture, practice and profess their own religion and use their own language.

The *Human Rights Act* requires that, as far as possible, all ACT laws must be interpreted and applied in a way that is compatible with human rights.

The ACT Human Rights Commission is comprised of the Children and Young People Commissioner; Disability and Community Services Commissioner; Health Services Commissioner; and Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner. The Commission provides a free, independent and accessible process for resolving complaints of unlawful discrimination, and complaints about health services, disability services, services for children and young people, and services for older people.

The Commission also promotes the rights of children and young people, older people, people with a disability, and health service consumers to be consulted in the design



and provision of services. The ACT Human Rights Commission provides opportunities for people to express their opinion on laws, policies and services in the ACT. Another primary piece of legislation that protects the rights of people from multicultural communities is the *Discrimination Act 1991*. The Human Rights Commission can act on complaints of discrimination in the public sphere for unfair treatment due to the following:

- aid of an assistance animal;
- age;
- breastfeeding;
- disability, including possible future disability;
- industrial activity;
- political conviction;
- pregnancy, including potential pregnancy;
- profession, trade, occupation or calling;
- race;
- relationship status;
- religious conviction;
- sex;
- sexuality;
- status as a parent or carer;
- gender identity;
- spent conviction;
- association with a person who has an attribute above;
- sexual harassment;
- vilification because of race, sexuality, gender identity, or HIV/AIDS status; and
- victimisation because of making a complaint.

### **1.6 Australian Capital Territory Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013<sup>5</sup>**

The *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013* is the Territory's key policy document in relation to multicultural affairs. It was the product of a comprehensive community consultation process, which included an ACT Multicultural Summit in 2008 and subsequent community consultations.

The vision of the Strategy is 'that the Australian Capital Territory is recognised as a leader in multicultural affairs and human rights'. The very nature of our multicultural Canberra was created on the foundation of the gentle and inclusive nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Strategy vision is inclusive of all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

There are six key focus areas of the Multicultural Strategy:

- Languages;
- Children and Young People;
- Older People and Aged Care;

- Women;
- Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Humanitarian Entrants; and
- Intercultural Harmony and Religious Acceptance.

The ACT Government remains accountable to the Canberra community with all government agencies reporting annually on their progress against the actions and key performance indicators of the *Multicultural Strategy*.

Having had a strong focus on multicultural affairs for many years, the ACT welcomes the Federal Government's new policy, *People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy* and supports its focus on diversity; inclusion; access and equity; tolerance; and the economic, trade and investment benefits of multiculturalism. Strong leadership is required from the Federal Government to promote the policy, multiculturalism and the benefits of cultural diversity to move toward Australia becoming a truly respectful, inclusive and cohesive society.

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### ***Term of Reference 2***

#### **The contribution of diaspora communities to Australia's relationships with Europe, the UK, Middle East and the immediate Asia-Pacific region**

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Canberra's diaspora communities have benefitted the ACT's relationships with other nations significantly. The ACT is fortunate to be the home of 126 diplomatic missions and is thus extremely well placed to build strong relationships with local diaspora communities and their diplomatic missions. This presence of the diplomatic community is unique amongst Australian jurisdictions and the active nature of the diplomatic community has also assisted in creating an understanding and appreciation of different cultures in the broader Canberra community. The ACT Government is fortunate to have local access to these missions and has built strong direct relationships with them. These diplomatic missions do not sit apart from the Canberra community, in fact, they are welcome and active members with strong connections to their respective communities and the broader ACT.

The National Multicultural Festival (*see 3.2*) not only forges links within and between Canberra's multicultural community, but also allows for opportunities to build relationships between the ACT and other countries. Over the years, various community groups have worked hard to bring performers from their home countries to participate in the Festival. This is a wonderful opportunity for all involved, whether it be the international performers who gain exposure to a whole new audience, as well as visiting and learning more about Australia and the ACT; the multicultural organisations and communities who experience pride and enjoyment from being able to showcase performers from their home country in their adopted home; or the broader ACT community which can experience authentic cultural performers while also increasing community cultural awareness.

This friendship and collaboration was exemplified through the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay. Canberra, sister city of Beijing, was proud to host the only Oceania leg of the Beijing Olympic Torch Relay on 24 April 2008. Canberrans and visitors to the city cheered on their Australian heroes and their 'Journey of Harmony' as they carried the Olympic flame through Canberra.

There was significant global media coverage of the Olympic Torch Relay while it was in Canberra. Widespread acclaim for event organisers, volunteers and participants, including torchbearers, entertainers and community groups was unsurpassed in the Relay's global journey to Beijing. A free community breakfast drew large crowds of spectators many witnessing a traditional welcome to country by the Aboriginal people of Canberra. As well as being an opportunity for the two sister cities to share the honour and excitement of the occasion, the visit of Olympic flame reaffirmed and strengthened the relationship between Canberra and Beijing, an important global partner.

## SETTLEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

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### ***Term of Reference 3***

### **Innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees, that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society**

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The ACT Government delivers several innovative programs directly to migrants and refugees that support their full participation and effective integration into their new ACT community. It also delivers programs indirectly by funding community organisations that support migrants and refugees.

#### **3.1 Work Experience and Support Program**

The Work Experience and Support Program (WESP) is an ACT Government initiative designed to assist people from multicultural backgrounds who are experiencing difficulty gaining employment due to a lack of Australian work experience. Many participants hold qualifications at a postgraduate level from their country of origin, yet are unable to find meaningful employment commensurate with their skills and experience upon arrival in Australia.

The program comprises recognised training and practical work experience. The four week intensive training component is delivered by a Registered Training Organisation and leads to a Certificate I in Business and two units from the Certificate II in Government. The eight week work experience placement provides participants with opportunities to apply their skills; gain exposure, establish networks and build relationships; and gain practical work experience within the ACT Public Service. The program has proven to be successful, for example, of the twenty participants in 2010, fourteen (70 per cent) were offered employment (including one permanent position) at the conclusion of their work experience placements.

In the past five years, ten WESPs have been delivered for a total of 191 participants, including one program in 2008 which focused on Canberra's Islamic community. Approximately equal numbers of males and females participate in WESP and many have gone on to begin successful careers in Canberra.

The most recent group of WESP participants graduated in February 2011 and a diverse group drawn from Bangladesh; Belarus; China; India; Indonesia; Iran; Myanmar/Burma; Nigeria; Pakistan; Sri Lanka; Tibet; and Vietnam.

In 2011, the Office of Multicultural Affairs is working in partnership with the Sudanese Australian Community Association ACT and registered training organisation Capital Careers to deliver a targeted WESP for Sudanese young people. Due to begin in July 2011, the program is currently in the planning stage.

Approximately 20-25 of young people will participate in the program. Current planning indicates that the group will include some participants who have obtained tertiary qualifications in Australia but are having difficulties finding employment, plus some secondary school students who may be considered 'at risk'.

A community liaison officer from the Sudanese community will be engaged on a part time, non-ongoing basis to assist with community engagement and relationship building. The officer would be based in the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre and would also work with the Sudanese community on specific issues they are currently facing, such as family and intergenerational conflict.

Although the exact structure of the program is still to be confirmed, it will include a recognised qualification in Business and a work experience placement in an ACT Government agency. Special elements of this WESP tailored to the community may include personal development and leadership training; resilience training; and an Outward Bound experience.

### **3.2 National Multicultural Festival**

The *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013* recognises that the community is strengthened when people of multicultural backgrounds have equal access to opportunities for social, economic and political inclusion, achieved through protective laws, enabling policies and community connectedness. The National Multicultural Festival is Canberra's flagship multicultural event under the *Strategy*, promoting intercultural harmony by providing opportunities to showcase, celebrate and increase community understanding of Canberra's cultural diversity.

The National Multicultural Festival is the biggest event of its kind in the southern hemisphere and is growing in popularity every year. In 2011, the Festival attracted approximately 240,000 visitors, including around 10,000 interstate visitors. The Festival featured more than 200 cultural performances and 260 stalls, including fifty five diplomatic missions. The event was covered in live broadcasts by six radio stations, as well as South Korea's national television station. Approximately 91 per cent of Festival visitors surveyed indicated that the Festival makes Canberra feel like it has an active local community, is rich in culture and entertainment and values diversity.

The National Multicultural Festival brings countless benefits for the ACT. *Economic benefits* are created through:

- directly generating increases in economic activity through engagement with entertainers and cultural groups and through attraction of tourists to the region;
- contributing to quality of life in the ACT and attracting people to live, work and study here;
- attracting support and investment in cultural and community activities in the

- ACT; and
- providing brand awareness for Festival sponsors.

The Festival also brings important *social and community benefits*, including:

- strengthening communities; and building, bonding and bridging social capital;
- reducing social isolation and increasing social inclusion;
- contributing to generating a sense of identity and self-confidence;
- changing perceptions of the nature of the ACT community; and
- raising the profile of multicultural community groups.

### **3.3 Multicultural Grants**

The ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs administers the ACT Government's Multicultural Grants Program, Multicultural Radio Grants Program and Community Languages Grants. The most recent funding rounds of the three grants programs saw a combined total of \$325,000 made available to numerous multicultural community groups for projects as diverse as a 'Knit and Natter' migrant and refugee women's craft and conversation group; a weekly Chinese seniors' radio program; and *Krasnoludki*, a Polish playgroup.

The ACT Multicultural Grants Program supports the development of innovative projects that contribute to sustainable communities by highlighting and promoting cultural diversity and social harmony. ACT Multicultural Grants assist community organisations in developing initiatives that will advance multiculturalism in the ACT; promoting the ACT as a socially cohesive and harmonious community; and fostering opportunities for community groups to maintain, develop and express their cultural diversity.

The Multicultural Radio Grants Program assists multicultural broadcasters and community radio stations in the ACT. The ACT Government believes that community radio is an important medium for many groups; not only to distribute vital information to their members, but also to share their diversity in a forum open to all Canberrans. Community radio can also be a valuable service to people who may be disadvantaged in the community through their lack of English language skills and a great tool for helping them to overcome social isolation.

The Community Language Grants aim to assist community organisations by funding projects that facilitate the learning of languages other than English. The ACT Government recognises that people with the ability to speak more than one language are an asset to the ACT community. Languages provide the opportunity for the maintenance of cultural understanding and identity. Social and economic opportunities are also broadened for individuals who speak more than one language. Statistics from the 2006 Census indicated that approximately 170 languages are spoken in the ACT region. Community language schools play a vital role in assisting multicultural community groups to maintain their cultural identity, language and heritage.

### **3.4 Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre**

The ACT Government established a dedicated multicultural centre in Canberra in December 2005, the first of its kind in Australia. The decision to establish the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre came as a way to meet the needs of Canberra's multicultural community and has since been recognised as an example of good practice.

The Centre brings a diverse range of multicultural community groups, peak organisations and service providers together under the one roof to share resources and have ready access to a range of facilities. Accessibility concerns for migrants and refugees were taken into account with the Centre centrally located and close to ACT Government agencies, community organisations and public transport.

The Multicultural Centre is designed to provide a safe, supportive environment where people from multicultural backgrounds can meet formally and informally; access a range of relevant organisations providing information and advocacy; and participate in programs specifically designed to assist migrants and refugees. All Canberrans actually have the unique opportunity to broaden their cultural experiences and understanding through a range of programs that are undertaken at the Centre.

The Multicultural Centre is home to a number of peak organisations and service providers including the ACT Ethnic Schools Association; Canberra Multicultural Community Forum; Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT; Multicultural Women's Advocacy; Multicultural Youth Services; and the ACT Community Arts Office (which employs a Multicultural Arts Officer).

The Centre also provides office accommodation for new, emerging and established groups, such as the Australian Mon Association; the Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra (Italian); Bangladesh Australia Association of Canberra; and the Sierra Leonean Community Canberra and Regions. Flexible leasing agreements are negotiated at reasonable rates and groups have a choice of a single office, shared office, or 'hot desk' arrangement, where several groups share a desk using a roster, which allows them computer, internet, printing and fax access perhaps one day a week, if administrative needs are minimal.

The ACT Government's Office of Multicultural Affairs is also based in the Centre, which has seen relationships between government and community strengthened and grassroots communication flourish.

Other facilities at the Centre include a meeting room; large function room; adjoining servery; and full commercial kitchen. Many vibrant and successful functions have been hosted within the Centre by multicultural community groups since its opening in 2005. The Multicultural Centre also houses a gallery space, which has exhibited collections by

local and international, professional and amateur artists from multicultural, migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Since its inception, the ACT Multicultural Centre has allowed diverse multicultural communities to come together under one roof, breaking down barriers between different cultural groups; networking; and sharing resources and ideas. The Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre continues to be a vibrant and evolving space which brings communities together.

### **3.5 Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian Coordination Committee**

The ACT Government provides secretariat support to the Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian Coordination Committee, which comprises representatives from predominantly non-government service providers involved in the resettlement of asylum seekers, refugees and other humanitarian entrants in the ACT.

The purpose of the Committee is to bring key stakeholders together to facilitate settlement support. This is characterised by assisting with the identification of issues; facilitating the provision and exchange of information; and contributing to the development of policy advice to government.

### **3.6 ACT Muslim Advisory Council**

The ACT Muslim Advisory Council was established in November 2005 and acts as a conduit between the ACT Muslim community and the ACT Government. It provides advice and makes recommendations to the ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs regarding policy development and issues relevant to the Canberra's Muslim Community.

Recent activities of the Council aiming to promote social harmony and community connectedness have been jointly funded by the ACT Government and Department of Immigration and Citizenship under A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security. Projects have included:

- integrated sports programs;
- open days at the Canberra Mosque;
- a youth forum;
- 'My Life – My Photos' photographic exhibition;
- 'One World', a multicultural and multifaith concert; and
- the Two Way Media project.

Two Way Media is an innovative program designed to provide multicultural communities with strategies in dealing effectively with the media, while also assisting the media to gain a deeper cultural understanding of these communities. Leading media experts facilitate training which focuses on:

- engaging effectively with media outlets including print, electronic, radio, television and WEB2.0 technologies like blogs, wikis and twitter;



- preparing for media interviews so that your message is positively conveyed; and
- a fun, interactive session based on real media interviews and exchanges with journalists.

The final workshop is a forum to allow the community and media representatives to come together to discuss 'the big issues' in a safe and constructive environment. Topics can include:

- use of language by the media;
- potential misconceptions by the media of cultural and religious expressions;
- potential misconceptions by the community of the media;
- media tactics – ways they 'get the story';
- media sensationalism; and
- positive media-community relations.

Two Way Media has proven to be both a popular and successful project which empowers the multicultural community – including women, men, young people and humanitarian entrants – to engage effectively and positively with the media. It has lived up to its name and is truly a 'two way' dialogue and learning experience for the media and communities.

### **3.7 Non-government service providers**

The ACT Government funds several non-government organisations to provide settlement and outreach services to migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other humanitarian entrants. Two of the primary providers are Multicultural Youth Services (MYS) and Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT (MARSS).

#### **3.7.1 Multicultural Youth Services**

The ACT Government has worked with Multicultural Youth Services (MYS) to establish a multicultural youth services program to assist young people in the Canberra multicultural community who are at risk of social isolation or delinquency. Funding of \$105,000 over four years was allocated in the 2010 ACT Budget for outreach services directed at multicultural youth in the ACT to assist young refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants to gain access to appropriate services and programs.

In November 2010, Multicultural Youth Services ACT was engaged to:

- organise seven information sessions in the areas of young women, health, mental health, relationships, employment, business opportunities, legal obligations and lifestyle;
- refer the identified group to appropriate mainstream service providers;
- initiate contact with young multicultural people from a range of countries of origin and backgrounds;
- provide ongoing activities which will increase awareness of consumer protection among multicultural young people and increase financial literacy;

- coordinate multicultural young people's participation in tailored school holiday programs, Youth Week events and the National Multicultural Festival; and
- coordinate volunteer activities and playgroups for multicultural young parents.

MYS is co-located with other multicultural-focused service providers, community groups and ACT Government agencies in the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre (see 3.4). They provide a drop in centre, outreach and casework for multicultural young people aged 12-25 years; coordinate multicultural young people's participation in tailored school holiday programs, Youth Week events and the National Multicultural Festival; and coordinate volunteer activities and playgroups for multicultural young people.

MYS also provides a women's room – a unique, female-only space for young multicultural women to meet and talk in a safe environment.

### ***3.7.2 Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT***

Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT (MARSS) are also co-located in the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre (see 3.4). MARSS has a service funding agreement with the ACT Government for approximately \$207,000 over four years to provide a range of programs which fill identified gaps in service provision, including:

- English language, conversation, pronunciation and singing classes and tutoring;
- computer classes;
- Program for After School Studies (PASS) homework help for secondary and tertiary students;
- women's art and craft group;
- African Chef, designed to assist African men and women with basic food preparation and cooking skills, as well as teaching important nutritional and budgeting skills;
- African Dance classes for young women from new and emerging communities;
- assisting clients to access driving lessons; and
- organising information sessions on the topics of housing, aged care and youth.

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## ***Term of Reference 4***

### **Incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole**

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Motivations that underpin successful long term settlement are universal to all members of Australian society, regardless of their background. If people are able to secure stable housing; ongoing employment with a living wage; access support and other services; and feel safe and connected in their community, then they are more likely to remain in that community. Clearly, this is easier said than done; however, the ACT has a number of initiatives in place which promote long term settlement patterns.

#### **4.1 Housing**

The Refugee Transitional Housing Program is a joint initiative between the ACT Government and non-government service providers. The program matches refugees with vacant public housing properties listed for redevelopment, offering up to six months temporary housing while families seek permanent accommodation. As a result, these families have been able to begin the resettlement process without the added burden of finding affordable accommodation immediately upon their arrival. As part of the program, exit plans are prepared for refugee families for their transition into more permanent accommodation and, eventually, independent living in the ACT community.

Although properties under the initiative will be redeveloped, they are subject to normal health, safety and security repairs and regulations, and their use by refugees does not impact on the housing waiting list. In fact, having the properties occupied helps to act as a deterrent to vandals and squatters. Access to affordable housing has been a major barrier to refugee settlement in the Territory and since the program's inception in 2008, the number of houses available has almost doubled from eight to fifteen.

Despite this and other initiatives, housing continues to be a significant problem for many ACT families from multicultural backgrounds, particularly newly arrived migrants and refugees. The ACT currently has the most expensive rental market in the country, making the rental market inaccessible for many. Compounding the problem for increasing numbers of new humanitarian entrants are large family sizes of up to ten people – there are very few five bedroom or larger properties in the ACT and those that do exist have very high rents. Housing affordability, availability and size continue to be major barriers to long term settlement patterns in the ACT.

#### **4.2 Employment**

People from multicultural backgrounds experience disproportionate levels of unemployment and underemployment. This is particularly true for those from new and emerging refugee communities. Barriers to employment can include limited English language skills or a lack of confidence in English skills; lack of transport options; lack of Australian work experience; non-recognition of overseas training and qualifications; and simple discrimination. Many migrants with high level qualifications gained overseas experience 'underemployment', able to find work only in unskilled positions. An added complication for this group is that once such employment is found, it can be difficult to then access services and support to help secure a more appropriate position. Stress can be experienced due to being unable to find employment at all; being unable to secure employment that matches skills and abilities; or securing employment with an irregular and/or insufficient living wage.

As well as support provided by many non-government service providers, the ACT Government provides two programs which assist the multicultural community in

finding meaningful employment.

The first is the Work Experience and Support Program (WESP) (*see 3.1*). Providing migrants and refugees with nationally recognised qualifications and practical work experience in the ACT Public Service is just the opportunity that many migrants and refugees need. Agencies are under no obligation to offer WESP participants paid employment at the completion of their work experience placement, yet a consistently high percentage of participants are offered additional employment; highlighting the competence and capability of many migrants and refugees who would be otherwise locked out of the job market.

Another service that benefits many migrants in the ACT each year is the Overseas Qualification Unit. Like most other jurisdictions, the ACT provides this service free to ACT residents seeking employment, assessing their overseas tertiary qualification to determine its Australian equivalent. The ACT Government considers this an important tool for many migrants that potential employers tend to pass over through not valuing or 'trusting' qualifications gained overseas.

#### **4.3 Support, safety and connectedness**

If migrants and refugees feel safe, supported and connected to their community they will be more likely to remain in that community and participate as active citizens. The ACT assists new migrants and refugees in several ways to help them adjust and feel supported, safe and connected.

The Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre (*see 3.4*) is a safe space purpose-built for Canberra's multicultural community. The multicultural community feels a sense of ownership about the Centre; they come there to meet, work and socialise; and the co-location of several settlement services – as well as the ACT Government's Office of Multicultural Affairs – makes it a vibrant multicultural hub which facilitates the seeking and provision of support.

The National Multicultural Festival (*see 3.2*) is a much-loved event for all Canberrans which continues to grow in size and popularity each year. The Festival is an opportunity for multicultural communities to showcase their culture with a sense of pride, as well as providing them resources to undertake other projects throughout the year. The Festival symbolises the coming together of all Canberrans to share, learn, experience and enjoy the cultural heritage of the more than 200 countries that make up the nation's capital; fostering community connectedness and pride.

## NATIONAL PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

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### ***Term of Reference 5***

#### **The role migration has played and contributes to building Australia's long term productive capacity**

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Migration continues to play a positive and vital role in building Australia's productive capacity. The ACT has amongst the strongest economy of any jurisdiction in Australia with extremely low unemployment.

While the actual numbers of skilled migrants sponsored by the ACT are not large compared to the overall numbers sponsored under Australia's general skills stream, the business migrants who do successfully establish a business or invest in Canberra have a significant impact on the ACT economy. In 2009-10, twelve highly successful business people were sponsored to invest \$22 million into the Territory. The ACT Government does not support a cap on the planning level (7,800) for the Business Skills migration program in 2010-11 and into the future because of the economic benefits it generates for each jurisdiction.

While the ACT has not adopted a population target to date, there is a growing recognition that population growth may be necessary to maintain economic stability. As the ACT population ages, new workers will be needed to replace retirees and support an older demographic. While promoting labour force participation may help reduce future fiscal pressures caused by an ageing population, the ACT already has a high labour force participation rate which may be difficult to maintain or increase.

Population projections have been developed for the ACT on a policy neutral basis, meaning they incorporate reasonable expectations around fertility, mortality and migration that are broadly consistent with our long term average. These fifty year age-by-sex and ten year suburb population projections are used by Government agencies for planning purposes, and are available on the Chief Minister's Department website ([www.cmd.act.gov.au](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au)).

In the decade to December 2009, natural increase accounted for 72 per cent of the ACT's growth while net overseas migration accounted for 34 per cent. Overseas migration is increasingly becoming a higher proportion of the ACT's growth. Over the year to 31 December 2009, the ACT population grew by 1.8 per cent (6,396 persons). Natural increase, overseas migration and interstate migration accounted for 50.3 per cent, 59.1 per cent and -9.4 per cent of the total population growth, respectively.

The ACT would strongly support an Australian population policy which would allow for better measurement and projection of population growth to occur. Overseas migration

is of great importance to the ACT, which is greatly impacted by decisions made by the Commonwealth in regard to migration, particularly student and skilled migration.

The ACT also supports an increase in the number of humanitarian entrants to Australia. Noting the modest increase in overall numbers in the Humanitarian Program in recent years, for which the Commonwealth is to be commended, a broader view would indicate that Australia – as a stable and prosperous nation – has the capacity to support a greater number of humanitarian entrants.

The total number of humanitarian entrants has remained more or less static for several years while the size of other elements of Australia's migration program, such as the skilled migration stream, has seen a marked increase. While the ACT clearly acknowledges and supports the need for skilled migration in the Territory for the economic, social and other benefits it brings, it also recognises the valuable positive contribution that humanitarian entrants make to their communities.

An increase in humanitarian entrants settling in the Territory would enhance our already rich cultural diversity and bring countless social and economic benefits and opportunities to the community.

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### ***Term of Reference 6***

## **The profile of skilled migration to Australia and the extent to which Australia is fully utilising the skills of all migrants**

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### **6.1 Profile of skilled migration to the ACT**

The ACT has amongst the strongest economy of any jurisdiction in Australia and extremely low unemployment, which has led to skill shortages in some areas.

Between 30 June 2000 and 30 June 2009, the estimated resident population of the ACT grew from 315,215 to 351,182 – an increase of 11.4 per cent in ten years, or an annual growth rate of 1.2 per cent. Eighty five per cent of growth during this period can be attributed to natural increase. Net interstate migration has fluctuated widely over the last decade, but has been generally negative.

Since 2006, net overseas migration to the ACT has exceeded historical levels of approximately 1,000 persons per annum. From 351 persons in 2000, net overseas migration grew to 3,775 in 2009, with a net gain for the period 2000-2009 of 13,476.

In net terms, the majority of the ACT's overseas migrants are in the 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34, that is, students and younger working age individuals. It is also clear that a number of overseas families are moving to the ACT, as evidenced by the net increase in children.

Although skills shortages do currently exist in various sectors of the ACT economy, ACT Government projections point to a steady increase in the total labour force over the next twenty years. State Migration Plans are an important initiative of the Australian Government and have enabled the ACT to identify, target and sponsor skills that are needed within the Territory.

Under the State Migration Plan Memorandum of Understanding, the ACT has utilised the *Skills Demand Survey 2009* as the research methodology which underpins the list of occupations that are experiencing skill shortages and visa numbers for the purpose of ACT sponsorship of visa applications through the General Skilled Migration program. The ACT Skills Demand List identified that 4008 skilled positions would be in demand in Canberra in 2010-11. This figure is made up of both replacement demand (estimates of people exiting the workforce) and growth demand (new jobs driven by growth).

The ACT supports the Commonwealth's recent initiatives to enhance the temporary and permanent skilled migration programs, including the review of the Skilled Occupation List, the increased English language criteria and the job ready test for trades. These initiatives will ensure that that the ACT's sponsored skilled migrants are employment ready.

A snapshot of some of the professions currently in demand in Canberra include:

- musicians, singers; painters and sculptors;
- architects, surveyors and civil engineers;
- teachers, veterinarians, anaesthetists , and psychologists;
- locksmiths, carpenters, motor mechanics and bakers.

## **6.2 Utilisation of the skills of migrants**

As discussed at 3.1, many highly skilled migrants who arrive in Australia are unable to find employment commensurate with their knowledge, skills and experience. It is clear that their valuable skills are not being fully utilised. Despite tertiary qualifications and extensive experience, so many struggle to ever reach interview stage and resort to taking low-paying, unskilled jobs such as cleaners or service station attendants – if they are able to find employment at all.

Being in this situation can be difficult, demoralising and disheartening for migrants. They can experience stress due to a number of factors, such as to being unable to find employment at all; being unable to secure employment that matches skills and abilities; securing employment with an irregular and/or insufficient living wage; feeling isolated; or not feeling accepted or valued in their new home.

There are several things that can be beneficial to migrants and refugees seeking employment. One is résumé assistance – these documents can be like a secret code to new arrivals. Unfortunately, résumés are used by most employers as a major 'culling point' and those who don't know the code are unlikely to be considered.

Interview training is another strategy that can improve the chances of migrants and refugees in securing employment. Interviews can be daunting for those who have lived in Australia all their lives, but for migrants and refugees who have had little or no exposure to them; who may have limited English proficiency; or who culturally are uncomfortable 'bragging' about their skills, knowledge and experience; interviews can be especially difficult.

Essentially, there are thousands of capable migrants and refugees in Australia who simply need a chance. The ACT Government's Work Experience and Support Program (WESP) has repeatedly shown that just one opportunity is all migrants need – many ex-WESP participants have gone on to forge successful careers in the ACT Public Service and elsewhere. The combination of practical Australian work experience and training that covers, amongst other things, résumé writing and interview practice, is just one example of a program that can make a real difference in fully utilising the skills of all migrants.

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### ***Term of Reference 7***

#### **Potential government initiatives to better assist migrant communities establish business enterprises**

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Initiatives that assist skilled migrants to settle in a community are of mutual benefit to both the migrant and the area in which they settle. When migrants are able to successfully settle in a region, they generally remain for a significant period and add to the productive capacity of both the jurisdiction, and by extension, the nation.

##### **7.1 ACT skilled migrant settlement support**

The ACT Government has implemented the following strategies to assist Government sponsored skilled migrants settle in Canberra:

Upon *approval of Government nomination*, the following settlement support is offered to the potential migrants while they are still overseas:

- email communication to answer questions about life in Canberra; and
- regular newsletters providing information about the Canberra lifestyle, special events and upcoming activities in Canberra.

Once the *skilled migration visa is granted*, the migrant is granted access to the Canberra Information Portal, a dedicated online settlement site to assist them to research their new life in Canberra before they actually move based on their personal lifestyle, housing, education and budget needs, for example:

- suburbs and schools
- real estate and properties



- understanding the cost of living
- exploring child care options
- information regarding many general relocation related issues

*On arrival in Canberra*, skilled migrants can access the ACT Government funded Canberra Settlement Service, which assists sponsored skilled migrants to effectively settle in Canberra, find skilled employment and become active participants in the Canberra community.

The Canberra Settlement Service program is intended to ease the settlement anxiety that many people feel during the immigration process by providing advice and support and job support assistance to the sponsored skilled migrant.

The type and breadth of settlement service provided depends on the individual needs of the migrant. Some new arrivals will be completely organised with employment opportunities and accommodation already sourced. Other migrants need more advice and support, especially in the areas of job support and recruitment.

Specifically, the Canberra Settlement Service provides the following settlement services as required:

- a meet and greet service at Canberra airport/bus/ terminal and transfer to accommodation (during business hours and only if required);
- a brief guided tour of Canberra, to assist with choosing an area in which to live, select schools etc;
- on arrival phone call or initial meeting to discuss settlement needs (week 1);
- follow up call (within 6-8 weeks);
- settlement support, advice and assistance in accordance with the migrant's needs;
- regular Job Ready Seminars, which feature a panel of experts to answer questions and cover employment topics, including:
  - an overview of Canberra's labour market per industry sector;
  - how to prepare for work in Canberra;
  - cultural awareness;
  - how to write a curriculum vitae for Canberra employers; and
  - introduction to relevant industry recruiters.
- referrals to real estate professionals for assistance with finding accommodation;
- support in finding potential employers and recruitment agencies, for example, curriculum vitae referral;
- referrals and linkages to community/cultural organisations; and
- invitations to 'LiveinCanberra' welcome events and activities.

## **7.2 Business development in the ACT**

The ACT Government provides services and support for business development in Canberra, including start-up advice, export assistance and capital partnering. This range of business assistance programs is also available to help migrants set up and develop a

business and includes:

- Canberra BusinessPoint, the ACT Government's business mentoring and advisory service. It provides business operators in the ACT region with advice and support in the establishment, operation and development of their business
- The Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre is a joint initiative between the ACT Government and the Canberra private sector. The Centre is positioned to attract both high-growth business and early stage investment opportunities from existing local industry, research institutions and individual entrepreneurs in ICT and creative design sectors.
- The ACT's Business Licence Information Service lets prospective businesses deal with the ACT Government through a single point of access. It provides a quick, convenient way to find the complete range of business licences, registrations, permits and approvals needed to set up a business in Canberra
- The ACT Government also offers a range of programs to fund specific projects and activities that assist business development. These include:
  - TradeConnect (Tcon): Building Global Opportunities;
  - InnovationConnect (Icon): Accelerating Creative Ideas; and
  - Investment Facilitation Program: Supporting Strategic Investment.

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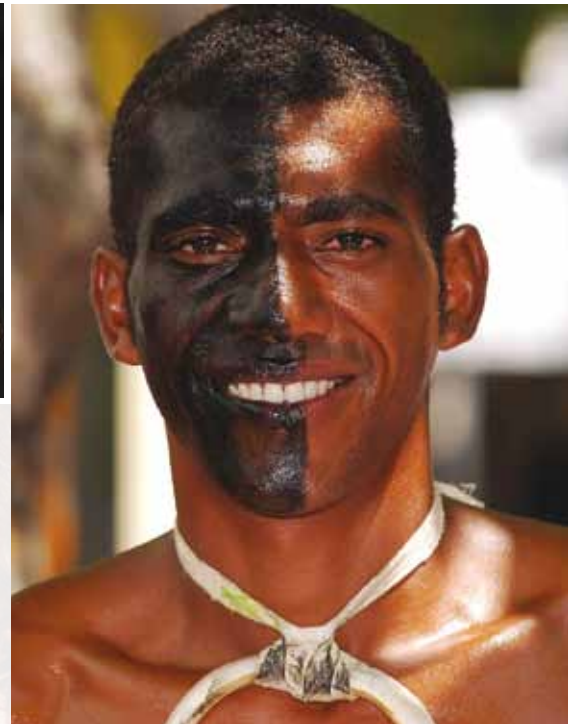
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AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

# MULTICULTURAL STRATEGY

2010-2013





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A glossary of the terms and abbreviations used in this document are available at **Appendix A**.

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# Acknowledgement of Country

## **The Australian Capital Territory is Ngunnawal country.**

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra region. The region was also an important meeting place and significant to other Aboriginal groups.

The ACT Government acknowledges the historical dispossession and its continuing legacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and also acknowledges their vital contribution to the ACT community.





**Joy Burch MLA**  
Minister for  
Multicultural Affairs  
December 2009

## Message from the Minister

**Welcome to the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013*.**

**Created and debated by hundreds of individuals representing our city's diverse population, the strategy is a vibrant and innovative plan that will lead our community into the new decade.**

**As we all know, the Canberra community is a welcoming one and I am so proud that the many cultures, languages and religions represented in the territory are thriving in such a harmonious way.**

**This new strategy will only enhance that.**

It is the product of a comprehensive consultation process which brought together voices from all corners of the capital.

Borne out of the Multicultural Summit in August 2008 and subsequent community consultations, it is a continuation of the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2006–2009*.

The new four-year plan will continue to embrace all first, second and subsequent generations of Canberrans who have multicultural backgrounds.

In developing the strategy, not only have we listened to the community, but we have acted on suggestions put forward.

An example is our response to improve accountability on the ACT Government's approach to multicultural affairs.

I have committed to publishing annual reports against the key performance indicators specified in the strategy and I am confident that a great deal will be achieved through its implementation.

Over the next four years we can anticipate Canberra cementing its place as a recognised leader in multicultural affairs, a place known for providing real opportunities for people to reach their potential, fully participate and share the benefits of our multicultural way of life.

I firmly believe the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013* will set the direction for our community to work together to continue to nurture and enhance the lifestyle that we all enjoy here in the ACT, and from which we all benefit.





# Canberra – a multicultural city

## Vision

**That the Australian Capital Territory is recognised as a leader in multicultural affairs and human rights.**

The Canberra community is fortunate in that it is both enriched and strengthened by its diverse and multicultural population.

In celebrating a multicultural city, we need to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we live.

The original owners have contributed to our region for over 20 000 years and we need to acknowledge this ongoing contribution to Canberra and its region. We need also to pay our respects to their elders past and present.

The very nature of our multicultural Canberra was created on the foundation of the gentle and inclusive nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The vision of this strategy is inclusive of all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The ACT Government is committed to implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery framework, which will assist ACT Government agencies to *Close the Gap* on Indigenous disadvantage.



# Multicultural snapshot

The demographics of the ACT's population make it, by definition, a multicultural community. Figures in the table below highlight Canberra as a unique multicultural city.<sup>1</sup>

## About us

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>ACT population</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Canberrans come from over 200 different countries</li><li>■ Approximately 22 per cent of the ACT population were born overseas</li><li>■ The ACT community includes diplomatic representation from 94 countries</li><li>■ Approximately 4000 people living in the ACT identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with just over 36 per cent of this population being children under the age of 14 years</li></ul> |
| <b>Languages</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 14 per cent of the population speaks a language other than English</li><li>■ There are approximately 170 languages spoken in the ACT region</li><li>■ Around 2 per cent of the population does not speak English well, or at all</li></ul>  |
| <b>Children and young people</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Approximately 10 per cent of 0–24 year olds were born overseas</li><li>■ 35 per cent of 0–24 year olds have at least one parent born overseas</li></ul>   |
| <b>Older people and aged care</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Approximately 17 per cent of Canberrans aged 65 years and over were born overseas</li><li>■ The main countries of birth and languages spoken at home for these individuals are: Italy (900 people), Germany (680 people) and Croatia (510 people)<sup>2</sup></li><li>■ 14 per cent of people in retirement accommodation have at least one parent born overseas</li></ul>  |
| <b>Women</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 22 per cent of ACT women were born overseas</li><li>■ 41 per cent of ACT women have at least one parent born overseas</li></ul>   |

1 Statistics from ABS 2006 Census except for information on Humanitarian Entrants, International Students, Diplomatic Community and the ACT Public Service

2 Data sourced from ACT Health; *Cultural Diversity in the ACT and Australia: An ACT Health presentation* (source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2006) 2008.



## About us

### Refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants

- The 10 foremost places of birth for humanitarian arrivals are: Sudan, Former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, China, Burma, Croatia and Myanmar<sup>3</sup>

### Intercultural harmony and religious acceptance

- Approximately 60 per cent of Canberrans identify as having a religious affiliation
- The most common ACT faith communities include Christianity (195 000 people), Buddhism (7000 people), Islam (4000 people), Hinduism (3000 people), Judaism (500 people) and other religions (2000 people)

### International students

- There are 7314 overseas born students enrolled in ACT educational institutions<sup>4</sup>
- There are 920 international students taking intensive English language courses
- 1000 international students are in vocational education and training courses
- 4400 international students are enrolled in higher education courses

### Diplomatic community

- The presence of the diplomatic community—which currently has representation from 94 countries in Canberra is unique amongst Australian jurisdictions
- The active nature of the diplomatic community has assisted in creating an understanding and appreciation of different cultures in the broader Canberra community

### ACT Public Service

- 11 per cent of ACT Government employees identify as having a first language other than English<sup>5</sup>
- Of these almost 60 per cent are permanent full-time employees
- Almost 50 per cent of these employees have a tenure of greater than five years

3 Data sourced from DIAC's Citizenship Settlement Database 2009. DIAC obtained this data via the country named on clients' passports. This data does not reflect country name changes. Hence Burma and Myanmar are listed separately.

4 Data provided by ACT Department of Education and Training, 2009.

5 ACT Public Service Workforce Profile 2007–08



# Strengthening multicultural Canberra

**The ACT is strengthened when people of multicultural backgrounds have equal access to opportunities for social, economic and political inclusion. This is achieved through protective laws, enabling policies and community connectedness.**

## Protective laws

The *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT) and the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) are key protective laws. These laws provide rights for all Canberrans.

Within the law, in the ACT all individuals have the right to:

- participate and contribute socially, culturally and economically
- equitable access to quality ACT Government services and programs
- practice and maintain faith, language and cultural heritage.

With these rights come individual responsibilities, which include:

- accepting the rights of others
- respecting the languages, faith and cultural expression of others
- protecting the privacy of others.

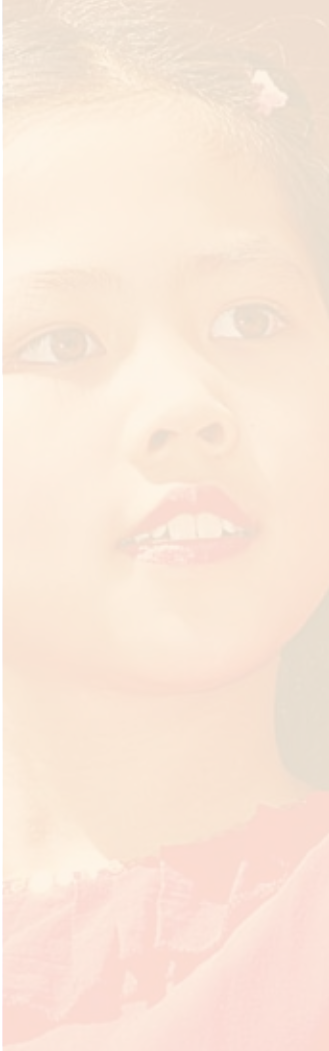
## Enabling policies

There is a whole-of-government commitment to implementing policies that will provide a better future for all Canberrans.

ACT Government policies embrace, amongst other themes, the concept of having a community which is socially inclusive. Key policies are:

*The Canberra Plan — Towards our Second Century* recognises the importance of our multicultural community. For example, part of its vision is for ‘an inclusive community that supports its vulnerable and enables all to reach their potential’ and that Canberra is a community which is ‘safe, inclusive and respectful’.

*Building Our Community — The Canberra Social Plan* is an expression of the ACT Government’s vision that Canberra is a place where ‘all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of our community’.



**Protective laws**



**Enabling policies**



**Community connectedness**



**Inclusive & harmonious multicultural Canberra**

The *Social Compact* (2004) complements *The Canberra Social Plan* and is a statement which sets out the relationship between government and community sectors. It establishes a vision of an inclusive community that enables all people to participate and lead purposeful lives—a community that is concerned with the common good as well as the rights and achievements of individuals.

*Your Guide to Engaging with the Community* (2005) and *Citizen Centred Governance* (2008) outline the ACT Government's commitment to better incorporate community engagement into priority and direction setting, service delivery and accountability.

## **Community connectedness**

Government policies alone do not alter the status quo. The ACT community took a lead in the development of this strategy and will be central to its successful implementation through ongoing engagement and open dialogue with each other. Systemic improvements in leadership and governance, capacity building and access and equity require a united and sustained effort.

Canberrans are encouraged to participate in planning, decision making and reviews of services. This may be through formal or informal channels such as feedback and complaint mechanisms at agency level or via the ACT Human Rights Commission. It may be through participation on committees and working groups or attendance at community forums.

To facilitate community connectedness, agencies are requested to ensure that interpreters are available on request, to utilise electronic communication techniques and existing multicultural networks. Through this and leadership by the business and community sectors the ACT will be widely recognised as a leader in supporting human rights and multicultural affairs.



## Achievements in multicultural affairs

The *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013* builds on the initial *Multicultural Strategy* which was released in 2006. The former strategy was based on community opinion received from a series of multicultural community forums and a Multicultural Summit hosted by the then Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Mr John Hargreaves MLA.

The key focus areas during 2006–2009 were:

- human rights
- access and equity
- ageing and aged care issues
- cultural and religious acceptance
- language policy
- leadership and governance
- migration of parents
- settlement services for newly arrived migrants
- terrorism
- young people.

This section of the document outlines some of the key achievements in multicultural affairs. A full list of ACT Government initiatives can be found at **Appendix B**.

### Achievements through protective laws

The *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT) is the first Bill of Rights in Australia. The ACT Government continues to support educational programs and will continue to advocate for the introduction of a National Human Rights Act.

From 1 January 2009, the Human Rights Act was changed to place specific obligations on public authorities such as government agencies and some contractors and community groups (which receive ACT Government funding to deliver services on behalf of the ACT Government) to ensure that they act and make decisions according to the ACT human rights laws. Community groups can 'opt-in' as human rights abiding organisations. Making this choice will support the vision of the strategy.

Human rights of particular relevance to multicultural community which are protected under the Human Rights Act include:

- recognition and equality before the law
- protection of privacy and reputation
- freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- freedom of peaceful assembly and association
- freedom of expression
- right to participate in public life
- rights of minorities.

## **Achievements through enabling policies**

ACT Government agencies responded to new laws and the previous strategy by developing policy which enabled people from multicultural backgrounds better access to services:

- ACT Health introduced a policy giving Medicare ineligible asylum seekers access to public hospital care in the ACT
- ACT Department of Education and Training curriculum requirements policy P-10 required that all students in years 3-8 learn a second language
- Cross-cultural awareness training was made mandatory for staff and new recruits of ACT Corrective Services.

*Facing up to Racism: a strategic plan addressing racism and unfair discrimination 2004-2008* was the cornerstone of action to counteract racism and human rights concerns. The key principles of *Facing up to Racism* were: respect; fairness; inclusiveness and multiculturalism. All ACT Government agencies reported against key actions outlined in the plan through a report card every two years. Report cards were produced in 2006 and 2008, which highlighted various initiatives undertaken by ACT Government agencies<sup>6</sup>.

6 *Facing up to Racism: a strategic plan addressing racism and unfair discrimination 2004-2008*. Report card 2008.

## Achievements through community connectedness

- The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) was established in 2006 to support good governance and leadership. The CMCF provides a voice for the multicultural community through advocacy and referral services for about 80 local cultural community groups.
- Advisory and consultative committees: ACT Muslim Advisory Council; and the Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian Committee (RASH) have been established to provide support to Canberra's new and emerging communities.
- The opening of Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, which now provides accommodation for representative groups from six peak bodies and 27 community organisations.
  - Multicultural Youth Forum in 2007, comprising more than 120 delegates from multicultural communities in the ACT.
  - Community forums held with various multicultural communities and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.
  - Multicultural Summit in 2008, comprising more than 400 participants discussing key issues of importance to the community, and playing an active role in policy development.
  - National Multicultural Festivals 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009—showcasing multicultural heritage and creative talent of our local communities.
  - The Work Experience and Support Program, supported 210 people from multicultural backgrounds to improve their workplace skills and confidence.
  - Funding available under the Multicultural Grants, Community Languages Grants Program and the Multicultural Radio Grants Program increased by 20 per cent.





# What will we focus on?

Consultations with the community identified six focus areas to be addressed over the next four years:

- Focus area 1 Languages
- Focus area 2 Children and young people
- Focus area 3 Older people and aged care
- Focus area 4 Women
- Focus area 5 Refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants
- Focus area 6 Intercultural harmony and religious acceptance

Focus area 1	Focus area 2	Focus area 3	Focus area 4	Focus area 5	Focus area 6
					
					

## Focus area 1 – Languages

Objectives	Key performance indicators
To provide opportunities for all Canberrans to value, acquire, utilise and maintain language skills for the benefit of the broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An ACT whole-of-government language policy is developed and implemented by 2012 (OMA, DHCS).</li> <li>■ All year 3–8 students at ACT Government schools study a language other than English by 2011 (DET).</li> </ul>
To ensure that services and programs are accessible to all Canberrans who do not speak the English language well or at all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 100 per cent of ACT Government publications<sup>7</sup> include ‘accessibility block’ information. That is, information in alternative formats such as other languages (All agencies).</li> <li>■ Number of direct interpreter events by language (Cantonese, Mandarin, Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Spanish and Vietnamese) undertaken at the Migrant Health Services (ACT Health).</li> </ul>

## Focus area 2 – Children and young people

Objectives	Key performance indicators
To provide children and young people of multicultural backgrounds with access to age appropriate support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of young people from multicultural backgrounds who participated in community consultation regarding age appropriate support services (DHCS, OCYFS).</li> </ul>
To enhance social participation of young people from multicultural backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of promotions of services for children and young people from multicultural backgrounds (DHCS, OCYFS).</li> </ul>
To improve access to services which support the mental health of children and young people of multicultural backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of young people born in countries other than Australia accessing Mental Health ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Services (ACT Health).</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> Notionally applies to printed ACT Government publications which have: more than one print run; greater than 1000 copies produced; and currency of greater than 3 months. To be agreed in the proposed ACT Language policy.

### Focus area 3 – Older people and aged care

Objectives	Key performance indicators
To optimise the positive ageing of older people from multicultural backgrounds by increasing recreational activities and opportunities for participation in community life including the provision of appropriate resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of ways in which Seniors Grants have been promoted to older people of multicultural background (OfA, DHCS).</li> <li>■ Number of training sessions provided through the Aged Care Rehabilitation Services (ACT Health).</li> </ul>
Support older people from multicultural backgrounds to achieve a positive sense of mental health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of groups for multicultural older people utilising the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre (DHCS, OMA).</li> </ul>

### Focus area 4 – Women

Objectives	Key performance indicators
To increase representation and recognition of multicultural women on boards, in leadership positions and in the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of women from multicultural backgrounds registered on the Register of Multicultural Advisors (ROMA) (DHCS, OMA).</li> </ul>
To provide and promote resources which meet the needs of women from multicultural backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of women from multicultural backgrounds attending WIRC sessions (DHCS, OfW).</li> <li>■ Proportion of women from multicultural backgrounds accessing crisis accommodation services (DHCS, Housing ACT).</li> </ul>
Address the health needs of women from multicultural backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of women born in countries other than Australia attending programs developed or adapted to help meet the mental health needs of women from multicultural backgrounds (ACT Health).</li> <li>■ Proportion of clients attending 'Well Women's Checks' at the Women's Health Service from multicultural backgrounds (ACT Health).</li> <li>■ Percentage of women with multicultural backgrounds in the 'BreastScreen' program (ACT Health).</li> </ul>

## Focus area 5 – Refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants

Objectives	Key performance indicators
Identify issues that are important to addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate a minimum of four meetings per year in which refugee, asylum seekers and other human entrant issues can be raised (DHCS, OMA).</li> </ul>
Develop and distribute resources to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of bed nights provided through the Refugee Transitional Housing Program (DHCS, Housing ACT).</li> </ul>
Increase participation in education, social activities and employment by humanitarian entrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in the Work Experience and Support Program by eligible humanitarian entrants (DHCS, OMA).</li> </ul>
To provide access to health and wellbeing services which meet the needs of humanitarian entrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop data sets to record the number of consultations provided by ACT public hospital services by 2011 (ACT Health).</li> </ul>

## Focus area 6 – International harmony and religious acceptance

Objectives	Key performance indicators
To provide opportunities to showcase, celebrate and increase community understanding about the cultural diversity of Canberra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase community satisfaction (survey conducted annually with attendees, stall holders and other participants) with the National Multicultural Festival (DHCS, OMA).</li> </ul>
Increase the capacity of the multicultural community sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of ACT Government staff attending cross-cultural training to assist with the culturally appropriate delivery of services and programs (All Agencies).</li> </ul>



## Accountability and reporting

In order to keep the strategy alive and relevant, ACT Government agencies will report against actions and key performance indicators in this strategy at the end of each financial year. These progress reports will be tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The progress reports may also provide contextual information; provide guidance for ongoing development and direction of this strategy; or capture additional activities agreed to or undertaken by the ACT Government.



I M P L E M E N T A T I O N   P L A N

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**MULTICULTURAL STRATEGY**  
**2010–2013**





## FOCUS AREA 1 LANGUAGES

**It is an asset for the ACT when people have the ability to speak more than one language. Such language skills contribute to the maintenance of cultural understanding and identity. Languages broaden individual opportunity, foster diversity and contribute to a vibrant community.**

Encouraging language skills upholds a key component of the 'Rights of minorities' outlined in Section 27 of the *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT), which requires that persons of linguistic minorities have the right to use his or her language. The *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT) also places obligations on public authorities to ensure equitable access to, and fair treatment for people in the ACT regardless of their language skills or cultural background.

Languages also play a significant role in making access to services equitable for all people through the translation and interpretation of information. As such, interpreters and translators have a key role to play in using languages to benefit the broader community.<sup>8</sup> Using interpreters and translators ensures that service delivery is responsive and of a high quality.

In addressing the principles of access and equity, the ACT Government also recognises that it is important for Canberrans who do not speak English well or at all to have opportunities to learn English.

### Objectives

- To provide opportunities for all Canberrans to value, acquire, utilise and maintain language skills for the benefit of the community.
- To ensure that services and programs are accessible to all Canberrans who do not speak the English language well or at all.

<sup>8</sup> An interpreter is a person who conveys an oral message or statement from one language into another language.  
A translator is a person who makes a written transfer of a message or statement from one language into another language.

## Objective 1

To provide opportunities for all Canberrans to value, acquire, utilise and maintain language skills for the economic and social benefit of the community

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Develop a whole of government language policy for the ACT.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Use the National Multicultural Festival to promote languages.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Develop and strengthen partnerships with tertiary institutions, Diplomatic Missions and other community organisations involved in the teaching of languages.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Support community radio stations which broadcast in languages other than English in the ACT through the Multicultural Radio Grants Program.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Liaise with local universities to offer courses to up-skill teachers delivering languages programs in ACT public primary schools.	DET
■ Investigate provision of a range of staffing and resourcing models to assist students to continue studying the same language in ACT public primary and high schools.	DET
■ Continue to provide courses in languages other than English through the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT).	CIT
■ Provide funding to strengthen the capacity of the ACT Ethnic Schools Association to build the quality of community language schools in the ACT.	DET
■ Provide resource support direct to ACT community language schools through the ACT Multicultural Community Language Grants.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to operate the Introductory English Centres in ACT Public Schools.	DET
■ Continue to support the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) in ACT Public Schools.	DET
■ Continue to provide the opportunity to access childcare to humanitarian entrants undertaking English lessons at CIT.	CIT
■ Provide opportunities for ACT Government employees who wish to improve their English language skills to have access to appropriate support in the workplace.	All agencies
■ Promote the continuing development of multilingual skills to maximise the economic benefits for individuals and the whole community.	All agencies

### Key performance indicators

Keys outcomes which will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective are:

- An ACT whole-of-government language policy for the ACT is developed and implemented by 2012 (OMA, DHCS)
- All year 3–8 students at ACT Government schools study a language other than English by 2011 (DET)



## Objective 2

To ensure that services, programs and resources which are accessible to Canberrans who do not speak or write the English language well or at all

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Enhance access to information for people who live with disability from multicultural backgrounds.	DHCS (Disability ACT)
■ Continue to develop and undertake effective teacher retention strategies in ACT Public Schools to assist with the teaching of languages.	DET
■ Provide targeted programs of professional development and web-based teaching support resources for language teachers in ACT public schools.	DET
■ Network with local, national and international educators of modern languages to ensure best practices in ACT public schools.	DET
■ Facilitate access to accredited interpreters when delivering services to people who do not speak English well or at all.	All agencies
■ Continue to provide free and confidential interpreters for Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish and Vietnamese speaking people.	ACT Health (Migrant Health)
■ Provide translated information about key services and programs, as well as providing information in alternative formats such as large print or audio.	All agencies
■ Promote and distribute, in partnership with DIAC, 'I need an interpreter' cards through ACT Government agencies and key locations, such as ACT Government Shopfronts.	DHCS (OMA)
■ The Emergency Services Agency will work with multicultural communities, including the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum, to establish a database of contact information for the provision of warning information or advice about any impending or current major emergency in the ACT.	JACS (ESA)
■ Invite community organisations to make relevant publications that have been translated available at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.	DHCS (OMA)
■ All agencies will provide the Office of Multicultural Affairs with details of public information they have had translated, so that a knowledge bank can be established.	All agencies

### Key performance indicators

Keys outcomes which will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective are:

- 100 per cent of ACT Government publications<sup>9</sup> include 'accessibility block' information. That is, information in alternative formats such as other languages (All agencies)
- Number of direct interpreter events by language (Cantonese, Mandarin, Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Spanish and Vietnamese) undertaken at the Migrant Health Services (ACT Health)

<sup>9</sup> Notionally applies to printed ACT Government publications which have more than one print run; greater than 1000 copies produced; and currency of greater than 3 months. To be agreed in the proposed ACT Language policy.



## FOCUS AREA 2 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**This section should be read in conjunction with the *ACT Children's Plan* and the *ACT Young People's Plan*.<sup>10</sup>**

The ACT Children's Plan guides decisions by government and community sectors about policies, programs and services for children up to 12 years of age. The ACT Young People's Plan targets people aged 12–25 years, and provides a flexible and responsive context to support improved outcomes for young people.

The ACT's *Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014*, is a plan inclusive of multicultural children and young people. It commits the ACT Government to: implement the ACT Government Policy *Framework for Children and Young People with a Disability and their Families* including implementing the ACT Government response to the Special Education Review; preparing curriculum support material and trialling a Youth Civics Program to raise student awareness of the needs of people with disability.

The *Human Rights Act 2004*, Section 11 (2) asserts that children have the right to protection because they are children and that they should be afforded this right without distinction or discrimination of any kind. Providing a safe environment for children is paramount for our community. Children and young people<sup>11</sup>—including those from multicultural backgrounds—must be protected and nurtured because of their age and vulnerability, and because they are the future members and leaders of our community.<sup>12</sup>

The ACT Government is pursuing a process for making Canberra a 'Child-Friendly City'. The concept of child-

friendly cities is linked to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Convention), of which Australia is a signatory. Being a 'Child-Friendly City' is about making a commitment to children's rights and participation in the community and having a plan to progress this commitment.

Developing Canberra into a truly Child-Friendly City will have enormous benefits for children and young people from multicultural backgrounds.<sup>13</sup> Community consultation for the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013* showed that key issues faced by multicultural young people were in the areas of health (particularly mental health), consumer protection, legal awareness, homelessness, education, intergenerational conflict and cultural understanding. These factors can lead to social isolation of children and young people of multicultural background.

### Objectives

- To provide children and young people of multicultural backgrounds with access age appropriate support services.
- To enhance social participation of young people from multicultural backgrounds.
- To improve access to services which support the mental health of children and young people of multicultural backgrounds.

<sup>10</sup> See: [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/publications](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/publications)

<sup>11</sup> The *Children and Young People Act 2008* defines 'child' as 'a person who is under 12 years old' (Section 11) and a 'young person' as 'a person who is 12 years old or older, but not yet an adult' (Section 12). The ACT youth sector considers a child a person who is aged under 12 years and a young person aged 12–25 years.

<sup>12</sup> See also the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its general comments, particularly Article 10 which relates to the right of the child to be in the same country as his or her parents, Article 12 which states that children and young people should be listened to and their views seriously considered and Article 30 which relates to the right of the child 'to enjoy his or her culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her language'.

<sup>13</sup> The Centre for Multicultural Youth (2008). *National Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (NMYAN) Multicultural Youth Briefing Paper*. Melbourne; Victoria.

## Objective 1

Age appropriate services are accessible to children and young people from multicultural backgrounds

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Appropriately consult with children and young people of multicultural backgrounds, including from humanitarian backgrounds, through existing mechanisms, in relation to development of policies and programs that will affect them.	DHCS (OCYFS)
■ Review existing internal funding allocation arrangements for youth and family services.	DHCS (OCYFS)
■ Provide support to youth centres to meet the needs of young people from multicultural backgrounds, highlighting provision of drop-in centres and opportunities for young people to freely access the Road Ready course.	DHCS (OCYFS)
■ Promote opportunities for young people from multicultural backgrounds to obtain driving skills, including through Youth InterACT; youth centres; and Catholic Care (formerly Centacare).	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to enhance services which provide support, information and assistance for young people who are experiencing emotional or mental health stressors.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT) & DHCS (OCYFS)
■ Work in partnership with community organisations to provide housing for young people experiencing homelessness.	DHCS (Housing ACT)
■ Promote the Child and Family Centres to the multicultural community sector.	DHCS (OCYFS)

### Key performance indicator

A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:

- Number of young people from multicultural backgrounds who participated in community consultation regarding age appropriate support services (DHCS, OCYFS)

## Objective 2

Enhance social participation of young people from multicultural backgrounds

Actions	Lead agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Enhance participation for young people from multicultural backgrounds during annual Youth Week and associated community events.</li></ul>	DHCS (OMA & OCYFS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ensure relevant representation of children and young people from multicultural backgrounds on panels, committees and other advisory roles.</li></ul>	DHCS (OCYFS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Continue to provide opportunities for young people from multicultural backgrounds to access the arts through the art programs and services offered by ACT Key Arts Organisations.</li></ul>	CMD (artsACT)

### Key performance indicator

**A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:**

- Number of promotions of services for children and young people from multicultural backgrounds (DHCS ,OCYFS)

## Objective 3

Improve access to services which support the mental health of multicultural children and young people

Actions	Lead agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Advocate for young people who have multicultural backgrounds to have a voice through the ACT Transcultural Mental Health Network.</li></ul>	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Develop and deliver a broad-based, age appropriate social marketing campaign which takes an integrated approach to promoting mental and physical health and wellbeing.</li></ul>	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Increase information provision, including translated documents for children, young people and their families from multicultural backgrounds about mental health services.</li></ul>	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Consider ways to support progress of the <i>headspace ACT</i> program and its integration with CAMHS and adult mental health services as a way to improve early intervention for young people with multicultural backgrounds.</li></ul>	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Investigate mechanisms to train those working with young people in the detection and identification of anxiety disorders and post traumatic stress disorders.</li></ul>	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Extend services for young people to include the pilot of <i>Stepping out of the Shadows</i> services and a dedicated inpatient unit.</li></ul>	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)

### Key performance indicator

**A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:**

- Number of young people born in countries other than Australia accessing Mental Health ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Services (ACT Health)



## FOCUS AREA 3 OLDER PEOPLE AND AGED CARE

This section should be read in conjunction with the *ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing*<sup>14</sup>.

This plan is set within a framework of social inclusion and aims to provide a blueprint for a coordinated approach across the ACT Government and the community to support positive ageing for Canberrans. This will nurture a community where older people are respected, valued and supported to actively participate.

Older people from multicultural backgrounds can experience particular barriers, such as social isolation, difficulty accessing government services and the cultural appropriateness of services.<sup>15</sup> These findings mirror the main concerns raised at the 2008 Multicultural Summit and during subsequent community consultation on the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013*.

### Objectives

- To optimise the positive ageing of older people from multicultural backgrounds by increasing recreational activities and opportunities for participation in community life including the provision of appropriate resources.
- Support older people from multicultural backgrounds to achieve a positive sense of mental health and wellbeing.

<sup>14</sup> See: [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/ageing](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/ageing)

<sup>15</sup> Cultural & Indigenous Research Centre Australia (2009). *Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services: Comparative social isolation amongst older people in the ACT: Final Report*. Sydney; New South Wales.

## Objective 1

Supporting older people from multicultural backgrounds to participate in recreational activities and opportunities to participate in community life including the provision of appropriate resources

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Support family connectedness by providing relevant information, programs and activities.	All agencies
■ Promote the ACT Seniors Grants to enable organisations to promote social inclusion.	DHCS (OfA)
■ Consult with multicultural groups through existing mechanisms in the design of services and programs for multicultural seniors.	All agencies
■ Continue to provide and promote an ACT regional mini bus service to improve the community engagement of people—including members of the multicultural community—experiencing social isolation as a result of a lack of transport options.	DHCS
■ Continue to provide funding for crisis accommodation services for older people and ensure they are accessible to older people from the multicultural community.	DHCS (Housing ACT)
■ Implement the Recommendations of the Steering Committee of the Affordable Housing Taskforce, relating to accommodation for older people.	DHCS (Housing ACT)
■ Continue to cater for the educational needs of older people from multicultural backgrounds through adult and community, vocational and higher education.	DET
■ Continue to translate key ACT Government information about its services for older people.	All agencies DHCS (OfA)
■ Promote the use of interpreter services to seniors to assist seniors who have reverted to their original language.	ACT Health (Aged Care Assessment & Liaison Unit)
■ Continue to educate/raise the awareness of service providers of the barriers and issues of multicultural community in accessing aged care services.	ACT Health (Aged Care Assessment & Liaison Unit)
■ Continue to educate/raise awareness of service providers of the special needs of the multicultural communities who had been through torture and trauma.	ACT Health (Aged Care Assessment & Liaison Unit)
■ Ensure that key ACT Government health information that is translated also exists in audio format.	ACT Health (Aged Care Assessment & Liaison Unit)

### Key performance indicators

Keys outcomes which will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective are:

- Number of ways in which Seniors Grants have been promoted to older people from multicultural backgrounds (OfA, DHCS)
- Number of training sessions provided through the Aged Care Rehabilitation Services (ACT Health)

## Objective 2

Support older people from multicultural backgrounds to achieve a positive sense of mental health and wellbeing

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Advocate for older people from multicultural backgrounds to have a voice through the ACT Transcultural Mental Health Network.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Increase information provision, including translated documents, to older people from multicultural backgrounds about mental health services.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Develop and deliver a broad-based social marketing campaign which takes an integrated approach to promoting mental and physical health and wellbeing.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Increase the availability of training on mental health literacy to multicultural communities.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Embed the consultation and liaison role of the MHACT Transcultural Mental Health Liaison and Community Development Officer within the Mental Health sector.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Continue to provide space for multicultural older people to conduct activities at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.	DHCS (OMA)

### Key performance indicator

A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:

- Number of groups for multicultural older people utilising the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre (DHCS,OMA)



## FOCUS AREA 4 WOMEN

**This section should be read in conjunction with the *ACT Women's Plan*.<sup>16</sup> This plan promotes the ACT Government's vision for women in the ACT to reach their potential, be recognised for their contribution and to share in the benefits of our community.**

The ACT Government is committed to valuing and investing in women and promoting and safeguarding the freedoms necessary for all women and girls to live lives of dignity. The plan provides a framework that supports Government agencies and the community to better meet the needs of all women and girls.

The ACT's *Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014*, also commits the ACT Government to enhance employment opportunities for women with disability and women who care for children with disability through implementation of the *Women's Plan* for the ACT.

Human rights and the principles of access and equity require special attention by ACT Government agencies, as well as the community sector, when providing services and programs for women of multicultural backgrounds, particularly those who have moved to Canberra as refugees or as other humanitarian entrants.

Women of multicultural backgrounds, experience discrimination and racism, especially in the workplace<sup>17</sup> and they experience barriers to social connectedness<sup>18</sup>

due to factors such as their mental health and wellbeing; domestic violence; limited leadership opportunities; and intercultural difficulties. Lack of English language skills is considered one of the most significant barriers for women to achieve social connectedness.<sup>19</sup> These findings mirror the main concerns raised at the 2008 Multicultural Summit and during subsequent community consultation on the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013*.

### Objectives

- To increase representation and recognition of multicultural women on boards, in leadership positions and in the workforce.
- To provide and promote resources which meet the needs of women from multicultural backgrounds.
- Address the health needs of women from multicultural backgrounds.

<sup>16</sup> See: [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/women](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/women)

<sup>17</sup> Submission from Women's Centre for Health Matters on draft *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013*.

<sup>18</sup> See Brewer, B. (2009) *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women in the Australian Capital Territory: Enablers and Barriers to Achieving Social Connectedness*

<sup>19</sup> Submission from Women's Centre for Health Matters on draft *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013*.



## Objective 1

To increase representation and recognition of multicultural women on boards, in leadership positions and in the workforce

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Promote and support ACT Women's Day Awards.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Encourage women of multicultural backgrounds to enroll on the Register of Multicultural Advisors (ROMA).	DHCS (OMA)
■ Establish a micro-credit program to empower and develop women's potential.	DHCS (OMA,OfW)
■ Distribute relevant information for women of multicultural backgrounds on the Multicultural Community e-news Bulletin.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to provide and promote the Work Experience Support Program (WESP).	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to provide free assessments of overseas tertiary qualifications obtained by Canberra residents through the overseas Qualifications Unit.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Provide a skills recognition service to assist people who do not hold formal qualifications.	CIT

### Key performance indicator

**A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:**

- Number of women from multicultural backgrounds registered on the ROMA (DHCS, OMA)

## Objective 2

Provide and promote resources that are available to address the social needs of women from multicultural backgrounds

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Continue funding for housing and homelessness services for women, ensuring they are accessible to women from the multicultural community.	DHCS (Housing ACT)
■ Facilitate information exchange with community organisations that work directly with women from multicultural backgrounds.	DHCS (OfW/OMA)
■ Advertise and promote women's grants and services for women on the Multicultural Community e-news Bulletin.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Ensure publications on pathways to address domestic violence are available at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.	DHCS (OfW)
■ Support women of multicultural backgrounds to attend courses run by the WIRC, WCHM and others.	DHCS (OMA)
■ WIRC will undertake measures to gather data for multicultural women attending courses run by WIRC and adapt its Client Satisfaction Surveys to enable collection of data for multicultural women.	DHCS (OfW/WIRC)

### Key performance indicators

**Keys outcomes which will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective are:**

- Number of women from multicultural backgrounds attending WIRC sessions (DHCS, OfW)
- Proportion of women from multicultural backgrounds accessing crisis accommodation services (DHCS, Housing ACT)

## Objective 3

Address the health and wellbeing needs of women from multicultural backgrounds

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Continue to provide 'Well Women's Checks' at the Women's Health Service from multicultural backgrounds.	ACT Health
■ Continue to promote BreastScreen to women over 50 years who have multicultural backgrounds.	ACT Health
■ Advocate for women from multicultural backgrounds to have a voice through the ACT Transcultural Mental Health Network.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Increase information provision, including translated documents to women from multicultural backgrounds about mental health services.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Develop and deliver a broad-based social marketing campaign which takes an integrated approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing.	ACT Health

### Key performance indicators

**Keys outcomes which will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective are:**

- Number of women born in countries other than Australia attending programs developed or adapted to help meet the mental health needs of women from multicultural backgrounds (ACT Health)
- Proportion of clients attending 'Well Women's Checks' at the Women's Health Service from multicultural backgrounds (ACT Health)
- Percentage of women with multicultural backgrounds in the 'BreastScreen' program (ACT Health)



## FOCUS AREA 5 REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS

**Article 14.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”<sup>20</sup>**

This principle formed the basis of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.<sup>21</sup> Australia is a signatory to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.<sup>22</sup> Further information on the definition of refugees and asylum seekers is available at Appendix C.

Refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants often have significantly different life experiences leading up to their migration than other migrants. Refugees have often experienced trauma or tragedy and are forced to leave their countries of origin without having a choice about which country they settle in or when they can return to their country of origin.<sup>23</sup> For these reasons, the ACT Government is committed to assisting refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants access appropriate services and programs.

### Objectives

- Identify issues that are important to addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Provide resources to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Increase participation in education, social activities and employment by humanitarian entrants.
- To provide access to health and wellbeing services which meet the needs of humanitarian entrants.

<sup>20</sup> See the United Nations High Commission for Refugees website, Definitions and Obligations ([www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml#def01](http://www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml#def01))

<sup>21</sup> See the United Nations High Commission for Refugees website, Definitions and Obligations ([www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml#def01](http://www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml#def01))

<sup>22</sup> The *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* is available at: [www.unhcr.org.au/pdfs/convention.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org.au/pdfs/convention.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> ACTCOSS Submission on the Second Draft *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010–2013*.

## Objective 1

Identify issues that are important to addressing the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Continue to meet to assist with the identification of issues through the Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian (RASH) Coordination Committee including evidenced based assessment of the needs of young people.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Address actions arising from the RASH Coordination Committee.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to participate in the Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, and its associated Standing committee, meetings.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to participate at Community on Migration, Planning and Settlement Services meetings.	DHCS (OMA)

### Key performance indicator

**A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:**

- Coordinate a minimum of four meetings per year in which refugee, asylum seekers and other human entrant issues can be raised (DHCS, OMA)

## Objective 2

Provide resources to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Promote and distribute a brochure of useful settlement contact information for refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Promote Youth Centres to children and young people with refugee, asylum seeker and other humanitarian backgrounds.	DHCS (OCYFS)
■ Enhance the Refugee Transitional Housing Program to support newly arrived refugees.	DHCS (Housing ACT)

### Key performance indicator

**A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:**

- Number of bed nights provided through the Refugee Transitional Housing Program (DHCS, HousingACT)

## Objective 3

Increase participation in education, social activities and employment by refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Continue to provide programs for students with a refugee background.	DET
■ Continue to provide and promote WESP to refugees.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Provide free assessments of overseas tertiary qualifications obtained by Canberra residents who have refugee backgrounds or are asylum seekers through the Overseas Qualifications Unit.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to provide special English language help for children from multicultural backgrounds.	DET
■ CIT to continue to provide a comprehensive skills recognition service which can benefit people who lack formal qualifications.	CIT
■ Support initiatives by local settlement service providers that celebrate World Refugee Week.	DHCS (OMA)

### Key performance indicator

A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:

- Participation in the Work Experience and Support Program by eligible humanitarian entrants (DHCS, OMA)

## Objective 4

To provide access to health and wellbeing services which meet the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Medicare ineligible asylum seekers will continue to be given the same access as Health Care Card holders, to public dental and community health services (some of which may incur a cost).	ACT Health
■ Support free ambulance cover for asylum seekers as set out in the Attorney General (Fees) Determination 2009 and subsequent years.	JACS
■ Advocate for refugees and asylum seekers to have a voice through the ACT Transcultural Mental Health Network.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)
■ Provide contemporary and informed advice to government agencies on legislation, policies, practices and services that affect people with a mental illness who have been institutionalised.	ACT Health (Mental Health ACT)

### Key performance indicator

A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:

- Develop data sets to record the number of consultations provided by ACT public hospital services by 2011 (ACT Health).



## FOCUS AREA 6 INTERCULTURAL HARMONY AND RELIGIOUS ACCEPTANCE

**Promoting positive intercultural harmony and religious acceptance contributes to a socially cohesive community. This helps individuals feel comfortable about their identities and can increase a person's sense of belonging within the community.**

Australia is a party to the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, which notes that, “cultural diversity, flourishing within a framework of democracy, tolerance, social justice and mutual respect between peoples and cultures, is indispensable for peace and security at the local, national and international levels”.

The ACT Government will continue to promote and protect the multicultural diversity of Canberra by strengthening links between people of all backgrounds.

### Objectives

- To provide opportunities to showcase, celebrate and increase community understanding about the cultural diversity of Canberra.
- Increase the capacity of the multicultural community sector.

## Objective 1

To provide opportunities to showcase, celebrate and increase community understanding about the cultural diversity of Canberra

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Promote the annual National Multicultural Festival as the premier celebration of multiculturalism in the ACT.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Work with Diplomatic Missions to promote and participate in cultural events.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Work with tertiary institutions in Canberra to encourage the participation of international students in cultural events, such as the National Multicultural Festival.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Remain proactive in celebrating cultural and religious diversity in ACT Government agencies.	All agencies
■ Continue to administer the Heritage Festival during a two-week period each year.	TAMS/DHCS (OMA)
■ Host meetings of the ACT Muslim Advisory Council, which acts as a conduit between the ACT Muslim community and the ACT Government.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Provide funding under the Multicultural Grants Program for projects that promote social harmony.	DHCS (OMA)

### Key performance indicator

**A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:**

- Increase community satisfaction (survey conducted annually with attendees, stall holders and other participants) with the National Multicultural Festival (DHCS, OMA)



## Objective 2

Provide opportunities to develop the capacity of the multicultural community sector

Actions	Lead agencies
■ Support Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) to work with ACT multicultural communities to build capacity and provide leadership.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to provide office and meeting spaces for multicultural community groups, with a focus on new and emerging communities in the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Work in partnership with the Diplomatic Missions to investigate developing public spaces (e.g. Latin American Plaza)	CMD
■ Maintain the ACT Multicultural Community Directory and ensure that it is readily available on the OMA website.	OMA
■ Redesign the Register of Multicultural Advisors (ROMA) to promote greater leadership opportunities for people from the multicultural community who are interested and qualified for appointment to boards and authorities.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Provide opportunities for cultural awareness training to ACT Government staff to assist with the culturally appropriate delivery of services and programs.	All agencies
■ Continue to administer the Multicultural Grants Program, which can help groups and individuals —including new and emerging multicultural communities—to undertake projects which showcase and mark their cultural diversity.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Work in partnership with the Australian Government to facilitate actions under the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security.	DHCS (OMA)
■ Continue to administer the ACT Heritage Grants Program to conserve and promote the heritage of the ACT.	TAMS (Heritage)
■ Provide support to the ACT Community Arts Office to employ a Multicultural Arts Officer.	CMD (artsACT)
■ Provide support to the multicultural community through the ACT Arts Fund including through the Project, Community Arts, Program and Key Arts Organisation funding categories.	CMD (artsACT)

### Key performance indicator

**A key outcome that will demonstrate an acceptable level of progress towards meeting this objective is:**

- Number of ACT Government staff attending cross-cultural training to assist with the culturally appropriate delivery of services and programs (All Agencies)

## APPENDIX A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Acronym
ACT Muslim Advisory Council	ACTMAC
ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs	OMA
Canberra Institute of Technology	CIT
Canberra Multicultural Community Forum	CMCF
Chief Minister's Department	CMD
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds	CALD
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services	DHCS
Department of Education and Training	DET
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	DIAC
Department of Justice and Community Safety	JACS
Department of Territory and Municipal Services	TAMS
English as a Second Language	ESL
Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services Inc	MARSS
Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs	MCIMA
Multicultural Mental Health Australia	MMHA
Office for Ageing	OfA
Office for Children, Youth and Family Support	OCYFS
ACT Planning and Land Authority	ACTPLA
Program for After School Studies	PASS
Refugee Review Tribunal	RRT
Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian Coordination Committee	RASH
Register of Multicultural Advisors	ROMA
Translating and Interpreting Service	TIS
Women's Information and Referral Centre	WIRC
Work Experience and Support Program	WESP

## APPENDIX B REPORT ON ACTIONS FROM THE MULTICULTURAL STRATEGY 2006–2009

Through the *Multicultural Strategy 2006–2009*, ACT Government agencies have implemented a wide range of initiatives that express its continued commitment to recognising multiculturalism as a positive force in our community.

### ACT Health

- Published health service-related information in languages other than English.
- Provided education/training for health staff in using interpreters, cultural respect, and equity and diversity.
- A multicultural-specific training package (for mental health clinicians) was revised in response to feedback, and now comprises three components—transcultural mental health assessment, a culturally specific perspective of mental health, and working with interpreters.
- Trained residential aged care staff and volunteers from multicultural communities in basic concepts of palliative and dementia care to provide better support for residents from multicultural backgrounds.
- Delivered ongoing training to support staff, volunteers and bilingual group leaders to enhance multicultural women's access to aged care services.
- The uptake of Well Women's appointments by women from multicultural backgrounds was reported as increasing in 2006, and again in 2007–08 to 28 per cent of all appointments.
- Supported participants in the Work Experience Support Program, which assists Canberrans from multicultural backgrounds enter the workforce.

### Chief Minister's Department (CMD)

- Supported participants in the Work Experience Support Program, which assists Canberrans from multicultural backgrounds enter the workforce.
- Coordinated the Canberra Nara Candle Festival in 2006, 2007 and 2008.
- The ACT Cultural Council included representation of people from multicultural backgrounds.
- Provided secretariat support to the Nara Sister City Committee and worked with community groups and the Nara Municipal Council to maintain the strong level of cultural exchange between Nara and Canberra.
- The *Live in Canberra* program provides marketing support to the Skilled and Business Migration Program in attracting skilled workers and their families to move to the ACT from overseas. Also includes 'Welcome' sessions to develop social networks and sample facilities and services offered in Canberra.
- Introduced the SBM Settlement Service which includes: a dedicated *Welcome to Canberra* team member providing advice and support; a meet and greet service on arrival; a two-hour guided tour of Canberra; accommodation assistance and employment support.
- Negotiated an agreement with the Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT to provide a Job Readiness program and a cultural awareness program.

- Develop a Canberra Information web portal to assist with the settlement of migrants in the ACT.
- Initiated *StudentConnect*, an international student internship pilot program, which introduces tertiary international students in their final year to a formalised and regular work situation that will have the potential to lead to ongoing employment opportunities.
- Investigated the re-commencement of the ACT International Student Ambassador Program which aims to assist international students studying or researching at ACT tertiary institutions to better familiarise themselves with Canberra's facilities and benefits, and leverage future global connections between these students and the ACT.

### Department of Education and Training (DET)

- Supported participants in the Work Experience Support Program, which assists Canberrans from multicultural backgrounds enter the workforce.
- The ACT Every Chance to Learn Curriculum Framework for P–10 schools was released in 2007 and requires schools to teach intercultural understanding and languages.
- Schools across Canberra celebrated Harmony Day, in recognition and celebration of our multicultural community in 2006, 2007, 2008, and in 2009.
- Continued support for programs via Adult Community Education Grants, including programs such as: Mon Community Bilingual Learning Classes; Asian Women's Friendship Association, and the home tutor program.

- Supported the Work Experience and Support Program (WESP) by providing a work placement for a minimum of one WESP student each year.
- International students enrolled in ACT public schools are supported by the International Education Unit to find host families and receive ongoing support, including personal and academic counseling.
- Assuring the provision of quality education services for overseas students through registration and audition of CRICOS providers against national standards.

#### **Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)**

- Administered the Work Experience and Support Program (WESP). Through this, a total of 170 participants from multicultural backgrounds became more job-ready for the Australian employment market from 2006 to mid-2009.
- The *ACT Multicultural Grants Program* provided \$420 000 funding as a contribution towards the implementation of over 450 projects in 2006 to 2009 that promoted the ethnic diversity and social harmony in our community.
- The OMA supported the use of community radio and multicultural broadcasters in the ACT through the administration of the *ACT Multicultural Radio Grants Program* with funding of \$400 000. The funding was allocated for over 160 projects to be undertaken by multicultural broadcasters and two radio stations during 2006 to 2009.
- The *ACT Multicultural Community Languages Grants Program* has assisted in the operation of community language schools in the ACT with a focus on schools in greatest need. \$190 000 was allocated to 26 schools and the peak organisation, ACT Ethnic Schools Association to support their activities in 2006 to 2009.
- Over 360 overseas qualifications from 34 countries were assessed by the Overseas Qualifications Unit.
- The ACT Multicultural Community News Bulletin was distributed weekly.
- International Women's Day 2008 had a multicultural theme and included a special category to honour the exceptional contribution women from multicultural backgrounds have made to the ACT community.
- The appointment of a multicultural representative on the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing has ensured that issues and concerns of older people with multicultural backgrounds have been heard at the highest level of the ACT Government.
- The Ministerial Advisory Council on Women is a body established by the Minister for Women in the ACT. The Council provides strategic advice to the ACT Government, through the Minister for Women, on issues affecting women in the ACT. The Council provides a link between the Minister and women in the ACT community. The 2008–2010 Council has 14 members, with a broad range of experiences and expertise,

including three members from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- Promoted the value of the migration of parents and other family members to the Australian Government at appropriate forums, including at the national level.
- Increased funding support for the Ethnic Schools Association as the peak organisation for community languages schools in the ACT.
- The ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs hosted an annual politically bi-partisan dinner to mark the beginning of Ramadan.
- Established the Refugee Transitional Housing Program in 2008.

#### **Department of Justice and Community Safety (JACS)**

- Started a project in conjunction with ACT Community Recovery to ensure emergency preparedness and current emergency information is provided to multicultural communities in the ACT.
- The Magistrates Court provided a document with a notice in 12 languages to be served on defendants in criminal matters when they are served with their summons to attend court.
- Commenced a review of policy and procedures relating to the provision and use of interpreters in court proceedings and in court registries.
- An issues paper on Racial and Religious Vilification was prepared by former Human Rights Office. Seventy-six responses were received on this paper.

## APPENDIX B (CONTINUED)

### Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS)

- Supported participants in the Work Experience Support Program, which assists Canberrans from multicultural backgrounds enter the workforce.
- Conducted management and leadership development, which emphasised the importance of considering the needs of individuals, including people with multicultural backgrounds when developing policies, programs and services.
- The ACT Library and Information Service holds more than 18 language collections, including bilingual picture books. Bulk loans are provided for small, new and emerging communities such as in Farsi, Tamil and Urdu.
- Every ACT public library holds a collection for learning English, as well as providing access to the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) in order to assist customers at counters.
- The ACT Library and Information Service supported English Conversation Groups, Advanced English Conversation Groups and an International English Language Testing System support group.
- Authoritative dictionaries for long-term loan and information in many languages about issues, such as health and parenting, were available at ACT public libraries
- The ACT Library and Information Service works in partnership with the ACT Ethnic Schools Association, providing programs, displays and resource materials and multicultural story time kits.

### Department of Treasury

- Supported participants in the Work Experience Support Program, which assists Canberrans from multicultural backgrounds enter the workforce.

### ACT Land and Planning Authority

- Supported participants in the Work Experience Support Program, which assists Canberrans from multicultural backgrounds enter the workforce.

### Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)

- Offered a broad spectrum of English language courses, ranging from English for Employment, Study and Life to advanced courses and customised training.
- Established the CIT Vocational College specifically for people, such as those from a non-English speaking background, to towards essential skills like Year 10, Year 12 and English while making a start on their work qualifications. The Vocational College offers individualised support and career advice.
- Established drop-in centres on each of its campuses where students can get support with their written work. This service especially benefits students with multicultural backgrounds.
- Provided a specialised migrant support and counselling service.
- Offered special support in specific courses for multicultural students, for example, in Financial Services courses requiring the Principles of Law subject.

## APPENDIX C INFORMATION ON REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

### Who is a refugee?

- Article 1 of the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* defines a refugee as a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”<sup>24</sup>

### Who is an asylum seeker?

- “An asylum-seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker.”<sup>25</sup> In the Australian context, asylum seekers are Protection visa (PV) applicants until his or her application has been finally determined by DIAC or the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT).<sup>26</sup>

### Support provided by the Australian Government to humanitarian entrants

- The Australian Government’s Humanitarian Program has a refugee component for people who are subject to persecution in their home country, and are in need of resettlement.<sup>27</sup> The Australian Government provides settlement assistance programs to assist eligible Humanitarian Program entrants to settle into the Australian community.<sup>28</sup> The Australian Government provides assistance for some asylum seekers whilst their applications for protection are processed.<sup>29</sup>

24 See the United Nations High Commission for Refugees website, Definitions and Obligations ([www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml#def01](http://www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml#def01)).

25 UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms*, June 2006. Rev.1. Online. UNHCR Refworld ([www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/42ce7d444.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/42ce7d444.html)).

26 See the DIAC’s Citizenship’s Fact Sheet 62 – *Assistance for Asylum Seekers in Australia* ([www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/62assistance.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/62assistance.htm)).

27 See the DIAC’s Citizenship’s Fact Sheet 60 – *Australia’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program* ([www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/60refugee.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/60refugee.htm)).

28 See the DIAC’s Citizenship’s Fact Sheet 60 – *Australia’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program* ([www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/60refugee.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/60refugee.htm)).

29 See the DIAC’s Citizenship’s Fact Sheet 62 – *Assistance for Asylum Seekers in Australia* ([www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/62assistance.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/62assistance.htm)).

