



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

Agency Multicultural Plan for 2013–15

This Agency Multicultural Plan covers the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and the portfolio agencies of:

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
- Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)
- National Water Commission (NWC)

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) is completing a separate Agency Multicultural Plan.

Our vision for Multicultural Access and Equity Policy

Our vision is for the cultural diversity of all our clients and stakeholders to be recognised and effectively utilised as a key asset in pursuit of our mission to advance a sustainable Australia.

Our department and portfolio agencies

What is your department and portfolio agencies core business?

Our mission is “to advance a sustainable Australia: our environment, water, heritage and communities.” The department and portfolio agencies aims are to support and implement the Australian Government's policy initiatives for a number of important challenges facing the Australian community including helping to protect Australia's unique biodiversity; improving how water resources are managed particularly in the Murray-Darling Basin; adapting to the impacts and challenges of climate change; contributing to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. The department and portfolio agencies provide international leadership in Antarctic science, policy and environmental management.

How does the work of your department and portfolio agencies impact on Australia’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities?

The wide span of the department and portfolio agencies responsibilities across Australia and internationally means that to a large extent the work impacts on the whole Australian community. The department’s programs focussed on the biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources are delivered in regional communities within which there are “islands of ethnicity”. Similarly, the department’s responsibilities relating to national environment law, such as laws relating to illegal trade in wildlife, may be of particular relevance to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

How does your AMP support your department and portfolio agencies core business?

This first Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP) 2013-2015 supports SEWPaC’s core business of improving sustainability across our environment, water, heritage and communities. This first Plan focuses on creating a baseline understanding of the diversity of the department and portfolio agencies clients and stakeholders and of our current multicultural and access actions. It also focuses on developing the capability of our department and agencies to take account of this diversity in our policy, planning, research, regulation, project and grant management responsibilities.

Our Agency's Multicultural Plan

Who is the Senior Executive Officer responsible for your AMP internally?

The Senior Executive Officer responsible for the SEWPaC AMP is First Assistant Secretary, Policy and Communications Division.

Who was involved in your AMP working group?

Corporate Strategies Division has taken major responsibility for development of the Plan drawing on information and expertise across the department and portfolio agencies. A more formal senior governance group will be identified to assist in implementing, monitoring and if needed, modifying the actions in the plan, over this initial two year period.

Outline what your Department and agencies seeks to achieve through your AMP?

The Plan provides a framework for SEWPaC and portfolio agencies to reflect on the diverse interests and needs of our multicultural clients, stakeholders and to plan a range of responses that will make SEWPaC and portfolio agencies increasingly responsive to the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse community who are impacted by our work.

Focus area

For this first Plan the department and agencies will focus on two areas that will lay the groundwork for future plans:

- Leadership
- Capability.

1. Leadership

Demonstrable and visible leadership will ensure that the multicultural access and equity commitments set out in the SEWPaC Agency Multicultural Plan 2013-15 are fully realised.

Minimum obligations:

- 1.1 Executive accountability:** Department to assign a Senior Executive Officer to be responsible for implementation of multicultural access and equity obligations.
- 1.2 Department or agency commitment:** Department and agencies leadership to ensure that staff understand and are committed to multicultural access and equity implementation.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
1.1 Executive accountability	1.1.1. Appoint a Senior Executive Service officer with overall responsibility for embedding multicultural access and equity in the organisational culture and ensuring that commitments identified in the AMP are fully realised and delivered.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	October 2013	Senior Executive Service officer appointed.
	1.1.2. Identify a senior internal governance group to support the oversight and implementation of the AMP.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	December 2013	Group established.

			December 2013 and ongoing	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications includes progress on the implementation of the Plan 2013–15 in regular reporting to the Department and Secretary.
1.2 Department and agencies commitment	1.2.1. Develop a strategy to raise awareness with staff about the aims of the SEWPac AMP.	Assistant Secretary Public Affairs Branch	December 2013	SEWPac and portfolio agency staff, particularly those in Public Affairs is aware of the AMP multicultural access and equity commitments.

2. Engagement

SEWPAC undertakes a range of communication and stakeholder engagement activities designed to raise awareness and understanding of its programs and policies. Effective and equitable engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse audiences will provide the means for clients to access SEWPAC services through mechanisms such as interpreter services, audio channels or translated material. This will support clients in the same situation gaining the same outcome.

Minimum obligations

- 2.1 Stakeholder engagement:** Department to have an engagement strategy to understand culturally and linguistically diverse communities' interactions with the department or agency.
- 2.2 Language and communication:** Department to have a language and communication plan for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including on the use of languages other than English and incorporating the use of interpreters and translators.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
2.1 Stakeholder engagement	2.1.1 Incorporate culturally and linguistically diverse people as a target audience in communication and stakeholder engagement activities, where appropriate.	Assistant Secretary, Public Affairs Branch	June 2014	All engagement and communication activities consider the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse clients and stakeholders.
	2.1.2 Incorporate culturally and linguistically diverse stakeholder engagement into divisional and agency business plans where appropriate.	All Division Heads and Heads of Agencies included in this AMP	June 2015	All divisions and agencies included in this AMP have considered the barriers to engagement of their culturally and linguistic diverse clients and stakeholders.
2.2 Language and communication	2.2.1 Identify barriers to communication to SEWPaC's culturally and linguistically diverse clients and stakeholder groups.	Assistant Secretary Public Affairs Branch	June 2014	Review conducted of SEWPaC activities to identify clients and stakeholders who require translation and interpreter services and targeted communication modes. (This audit will assist with achievement of 2.1.2).
	2.2.2 Improve communication with linguistically diverse clients and stakeholder groups by progressively implementing improvements in response to the review findings (2.2.1).	Assistant Secretary Public Affairs Branch	June 2015	Implementation of the improvements identified in the review planned and commenced (2.2.1)
	2.2.3 Develop the SEWPaC Language and Communication Plan in line with the <i>Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Government Agencies</i> .	Assistant Secretary Public Affairs Branch	June 2015	SEWPaC's Language and Communication Plan is approved by the Secretary and publicly available.

3. Performance

Seeking feedback and measuring performance will assist the Department and agencies to continuously improve multicultural access and equity performance. Annual reporting and public accountability will help to signal the importance of this policy to achieving our mission.

Minimum obligations:

3.1 Performance indicators and reporting: Department and agencies to develop a set of KPIs relating to engagement with, or outcomes of services to, culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

3.2 Feedback: Department and agencies to have arrangements in place to ensure affected culturally and linguistically diverse communities are able to provide feedback on department and agency multicultural access and equity performance.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
3.1 Performance indicators and reporting	3.1.1 Develop a set of KPIs that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant to SEWPaC's core business sensitive to cultural and linguistic barriers to effective engagement with SEWPaC clients and stakeholders. 	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	June 2014	KPIs developed in consultation with Division Heads and Heads of agencies included in this AMP.
	3.1.2 Report annually on these KPIs.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	June 2015	KPIs are approved by the Secretary. Progress against the KPIs is reported in the annual report.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
3.2 Feedback	3.2.1 Review current feedback mechanisms to ensure they capture feedback on the department and agencies multicultural and access performance.	Assistant Secretary Public Affairs Branch	June 2014	Any improvements identified in the review are incorporated in future feedback activities.
	3.2.2 Consider relevant feedback from the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council FECCA (provided through DIAC) on perceptions by their members of the department and agencies multicultural and access and equity performance.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	June 2014	Feedback received and provided to relevant areas of the department and agencies. Feedback responded to as appropriate.

4. Capability

The work of SEWPac touches on every part of the Australian community and impacts more specifically on some culturally and linguistically diverse groups in areas such as the illegal trade in wildlife, the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan particularly in the so called “islands of ethnicity” such as Griffith, Mildura and Shepparton and with the department and agencies work in Marine Parks as it affects commercial and recreational fishers. A more detailed understanding of these diverse groups and increased cultural competency will assist the department and agencies to pursue its mission.

Minimum obligations:

- 4.1 Cultural competency:** Department or agency to have training development measures to equip staff with cultural competency skills
- 4.2 Research and data:** Department or agency to collect ethnicity data on the culturally and linguistically diverse groups with which the department or agency engages and to which it delivers services directly or indirectly.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
4.1 Cultural competency	4.1.1 Review and identify opportunities for staff to access cultural competency training across the APS.	Assistant Secretary People Strategies	June 2014	50% of existing staff completing training.
	4.1.2 Identify opportunities to include cultural competency in department and agency training.	Assistant Secretary People Strategies	June 2015	Cultural competency is included in corporate training such as induction/orientation.
4.2 Research and data	4.2.1 Improve SEWPaC data collection by identifying opportunities to include information about language and ethnicity in SEWPaC surveys and other research.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	June 2015	A process for inclusion of items about language and ethnicity in all appropriate data collections is established.

5. Responsiveness

To deliver SEWPaC's and portfolio agencies mission programs, policies and regulations need to be accessible and sensitive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse clients and stakeholders.

Minimum obligations

- 5.1 Standards:** Any Whole-of-Government standards and guidelines developed by the department and agencies or agency must address multicultural access and equity considerations.
- 5.2 Policy, program and service delivery:** Provision to ensure that policies, programs, community interactions and service delivery (whether in-house or outsourced) are effective for culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- 5.3 Outsourced services:** Where relevant, provision for incorporation of multicultural access and equity requirements into contracts, grant agreements and related guidance material of which the department or agency has carriage.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
5.1 Standards	5.1.1 Ensure that Whole-of-Government guidelines and standards managed by the Department and its agencies consider multicultural access and equity.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	June 2015	Updated guidelines and standards available.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
5.2 Policy, program and service delivery	5.2.1 Establish a process to determine whether existing policies, programs and community interactions are sufficiently accessible to cultural and linguistically diverse stakeholders and clients.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	June 2014	The process is established and communicated to all Division Heads and Heads of Agencies included in this AMP. (The process at 2.1.2 will contribute to the achievement of this target).
	5.2.2 Progressively implement any identified improvements to SEWPaC policies, programs and community interactions that are identified (5.2.1).	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications in consultation with all Division Heads and Heads of Agencies included in this AMP.	June 2015	Implementation has commenced and progress is monitored (see 1.1.2).
5.3 Outsourced services	5.3.1 Identify opportunities to incorporate multicultural access and equity requirements into relevant grant programs administered by the department and agencies.	All Division Heads and Heads of Agencies included in this AMP.	June 2014	All relevant grant programs are identified and plans in place to incorporate improved multicultural access and equity requirements into any new funding agreements. This reflects the SEWPaC AMP commitment to improve multicultural access and equity.

6. Openness

Openness about SEWPaC's commitment to multicultural access and equity principles through this AMP will promote improved practice and accountability not just in SEWPaC but across agencies, clients and stakeholders.

Minimum obligations

6.1 Publishing: Department or agency to publish AMPs on their websites and performance reports against KPIs for culturally and linguistically diverse clients in the Department or agency annual reports.

6.2 Data: Department or agency to make culturally and linguistically diverse data available to other agencies and the public.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
6.1 Publishing	6.1.1 Publish the AMP on the SEWPaC website.	Assistant Secretary Public Affairs Branch	October 2013	The AMP is published on the SEWPaC website.
	6.1.2 Identify positive examples of interaction between SEWPaC activities and culturally and linguistically diverse clients and stakeholders and promote these on the SEWPaC website.	Assistant Secretary Public Affairs Branch	June 2014	SEWPaC website features positive examples of interaction between SEWPaC activities and culturally and linguistically diverse clients and stakeholders.
6.2 Data	6.2.1 SEWPaC will make available cultural and linguistic data to other Government agencies and stakeholders.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications	June 2014	Appropriate data sets are shared with other government agencies and stakeholders.