



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

Multicultural Access and Equity Action Plan

2016–2019



© Commonwealth of Australia, 2016.



Multicultural Access and Equity Action Plan 2016–2019 is licensed by the Commonwealth of Australia for use under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence with the exception of the Coat of Arms of the Commonwealth of Australia, the logo of the agency responsible for publishing the report, content supplied by third parties, and any images depicting people. For licence conditions see: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/au/>

This report should be attributed as '*Multicultural Access and Equity Action Plan 2016–2019*, Commonwealth of Australia 2016'.

The Commonwealth of Australia has made all reasonable efforts to identify content supplied by third parties using the following format '© Copyright, [name of third party]'.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Government or the Minister for the Environment and Energy.

Contents

Our Department and portfolio agencies	4
Our vision for Multicultural Access and Equity Policy	4
Our plan	5
Overview	5
Our action	6

Our Department and portfolio agencies

The role of the Department of the Environment and Energy is to advise on and implement environment and energy policy to support the Government in achieving a healthy environment, strong economy, thriving local communities and a cleaner, secure and affordable energy future.

Our initiatives promote the conservation and sustainable use of Australia's natural resources aim to meet community and industry energy needs through the efficient use and adequate, reliable and competitive supply of energy.

Our mission is “to protect and conserve the environment, water and heritage and promote energy efficiency performance and productivity to support Australia's global competitiveness”.

Our vision for Multicultural Access and Equity Policy

Our vision is to reflect the cultural diversity of the people we work with as we implement our policies and programs.

The Multicultural Access and Equity Action Plan 2016–2019 builds on the Department's Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP) 2013–2015 which focuses on understanding our multicultural constituency so that we can better meet their needs. This involves 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, particularly as we develop our digital service delivery and engagement.

Our plan

This Multicultural Access and Equity Action Plan covers the Department of the Environment and Energy and its portfolio agencies of:

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
- Climate Change Authority
- Director of National Parks
- Australian Renewable Energy Agency
- Sydney Harbour Federation Trust
- The Clean Energy Regulator.

Overview

The plan provides a framework for the Department and portfolio agencies to help embed multicultural access and equity in our work ensuring policies and programs reflect the diverse interests and needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse community sector.

The Policy Analysis and Implementation Division has developed the plan drawing on information and expertise across the Department and portfolio agencies. The First Assistant Secretary, Policy Analysis and Implementation Division is the Senior Executive Officer responsible for the plan internally.

This plan focuses on the areas of engagement and capability.

Our action

1. Leadership

Demonstrable and visible leadership will realise the multicultural access and equity commitments set out in the Department's Multicultural Access and Equity Action Plan 2016–19.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
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 plan are fully realised and delivered.	First Assistant Secretary Policy Analysis and Implementation Division	December 2016	Senior Executive Service officer appointed.
	1.1.2 Identify a senior internal governance group to support the oversight and implementation of the plan.	First Assistant Secretary Policy Analysis and Implementation Division	December 2016	Group established.
1.2 Department and agencies commitment	1.2.1 Develop a strategy to raise awareness among staff about the aims of the plan.	Director Stakeholder Engagement	December 2016	Departmental and portfolio agency staff, are aware of the Department's multicultural access and equity commitments.

2. Engagement

The Department undertakes a range of communication and 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 Department services through mechanisms such as interpreter services, audio channels or translated material. This will support clients in the same situation gaining the same outcome.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
2.1 Community engagement	2.1.1 Incorporate culturally and linguistically diverse people as a target audience in communication and engagement activities, where appropriate.	Assistant Secretary, Policy and Communications Branch	June 2017	All engagement and communication activities undertaken by all divisions and portfolio agencies, consider the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse clients and stakeholders.
	2.1.2 Incorporate culturally and linguistically diverse client and community engagement into divisional and agency business plans where appropriate.	All Division Heads and Heads of Agencies included in this plan	June 2017	All divisions and agencies included in this plan have considered the barriers to engagement of their culturally and linguistic diverse clients and communities.
2.2 Language and communication	2.2.1 Review of the barriers to communicate to Department's culturally and linguistically diverse clients and community groups.	Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications Branch	June 2017	Review of departmental activities to identify clients and communities 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 community groups by progressively implementing improvements in response to the review findings (2.2.1).	Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications Branch	June 2017	Implementation of the improvements identified in the review planned and commenced (2.2.1).
	2.2.3 Educate employees about Enterprise Agreement provisions that encourage the principles of workplace diversity such as the Community Language Allowance.	Assistant Secretary, People Strategies Branch	June 2017	Employees are well aware of the Community Language Allowance and staff with a level of competency in a language other than English are encouraged to assist other staff engaging with CALD communities or international audiences/stakeholders.

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.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
3.1 Performance indicators and reporting	3.1.1 Develop a set of KPIs that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant to the Department's core business • sensitive to cultural and linguistic barriers to effective engagement with clients and community. 	First Assistant Secretary Policy Analysis and Implementation Division	June 2017	KPIs developed in consultation with Division Heads and Heads of agencies included in this plan.
	3.1.2 Report annually on these KPIs.	First Assistant Secretary Policy Analysis and Implementation Division	June 2017	KPIs are approved by the Secretary on an annual basis. An annual snapshot of the plan's implementation will be reported to the Department of Social Services as part of whole-of-government's presentation to the Australian Multicultural Council (AMC).
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 Policy and Communications Branch	December 2017	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 Analysis and Implementation Division	December 2017	Feedback received and provided to relevant areas of the Department and agencies. Feedback responded to as appropriate.

4. Capability

The work of the Department 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 and 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.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
4.1 Cultural competency	4.1.1 Incorporate reference to the importance of building employee capability to understand and value the perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse groups in the Department's learning and development strategy.	Assistant Secretary People Strategies Branch	June 2017	The Department's Learning and Development Strategy 2016–2019 includes reference to the development of cultural capability of employees.
	4.1.2. Include cultural awareness training in the Department's learning and development program.	Assistant Secretary People Strategies Branch	December 2017	Cultural awareness training is made available and promoted to employees.
	4.1.3 Encourage employees to disclose their proficiency in a language other than English.	Assistant Secretary, People Strategies Branch	December 2017	Regular reminders advertised through the intranet for employees to update their proficiency in a language other than English in ESS.
4.2 Research and data	4.2.1 Improve data collection by identifying opportunities to include information about language and ethnicity in surveys and other research.	First Assistant Secretary Policy Analysis and Implementation Division	December 2017	A process for inclusion of items about language and ethnicity in all appropriate data collections is established.

5. Responsiveness

To deliver the Department'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 communities.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
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 Analysis and Implementation Branch	June 2018	Guidelines and standards updated as required.
	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 Analysis and Implementation Division	June 2018	The process is established and communicated to all Division Heads and Heads of Agencies included in this plan. (The process at 2.1.2 will contribute to the achievement of this target).
5.2 Policy, program and service delivery	5.2.2 Progressively implement any identified improvements to the Department policies, programs and community interactions that are identified.	First Assistant Secretary Policy Analysis and Implementation Division in consultation with all Division Heads and Heads of Agencies included in this plan	December 2018	Implementation has commenced and progress is monitored (see 1.1.2).
	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 plan	December 2018	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 Department's commitment to improve multicultural access and equity.
5.3 Outsourced services				

6. Openness

Openness about our commitment to multicultural access and equity principles through this plan will promote improved practice and accountability not just in the Department but across agencies, clients and stakeholders.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
6.1 Publishing	6.1.1 Publish the plan on the Department's website.	Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications Branch	October 2016	The plan is published on the Department website.
	6.1.2 Identify examples of interaction between our activities and culturally and linguistically diverse clients and communities and promote these on our website.	Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications Branch	June 2019	Environment.gov.au features positive examples of interaction between our activities and culturally and linguistically diverse clients and communities.
6.2 Data	6.2.1 The Department will make available cultural and linguistic data to other government agencies and stakeholders.	First Assistant Secretary Policy and Communications Branch	June 2019	Appropriate data sets are shared with other government agencies in coordination with the Department of Social Services.

