ALL OF US. VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURAL POLICY

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VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURAL POLICY

All of Us

VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL POLICY

The Place To Be
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The photographs accompanying this policy are from the exhibition and book 'All of Us' by Michel Lawrence © 2008
Victoria is a multicultural success story – a grand success story that defines all of us!

With people from more than 200 nations, speaking more than 200 languages and dialects and following more than 120 faiths, we are one of the world’s great multicultural societies.

We acknowledge Indigenous Victorians as the first Australians and their unique and irreplaceable contribution to the identity and wellbeing of our state. We also acknowledge that successive waves of immigrants and refugees have enriched us socially, underpinned our economic development and established our reputation as one of the most welcoming places in the world.

This well-earned reputation is a credit to all Victorians, past and present, who have embraced and celebrated the benefits arising from our diversity from the arts to business, science to agriculture, and academia to public service.

As a government, we have worked to build on our proud history as a successful multicultural state.

- We have passed legislation and implemented policies that engender community respect and cohesion as well as offering protection from discrimination and vilification.

- We have made supporting our successful multiculturalism a priority, committing resources to ensure that each and every one of us has the opportunity to attain our full potential as well as constructively contributing to our community.

While respecting our differences is necessary in an open, inclusive and vibrant society, it is also vital to acknowledge that we have much in common. We have much to gain, individually and collectively, by working together to build a positive and progressive future that enhances our state as a great place in which to live, work, invest and raise a family.

As a state, we will all gain by ensuring that each individual is able to access opportunities and participate in social, cultural, economic and political life.

At the same time, every individual must recognise that we all have a responsibility to abide by Victoria’s laws and respect the democratic processes under which those laws are made.

The Victorian Government’s landmark Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 describes Victoria as a ‘united community with shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities’ in which people have the freedom to ‘preserve and express their cultural heritage’.

Our approach to multiculturalism is also underpinned by our commitment to the universal application of human rights, as demonstrated by the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

All of Us re-affirms the Victorian Government’s commitment to multiculturalism and sets out how we can make the most of the opportunities it brings to advance our society as a whole.

The policy was developed after extensive community consultation and is built on a strong foundation of partnerships, harmonious community relations, advocacy and supportive programs.

All of Us demonstrates the ways in which we can achieve a socially progressive society that reaps the real social, cultural and economic benefits that are inherent within our multicultural Victoria.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, we commend this policy to all Victorians and re-iterate our commitment to support cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in this great state of ours.

Hon John Brumby MP
Premier of Victoria, Minister for Multicultural Affairs

James Merlino MP
Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs
All of Us re-affirms the Victorian Government's commitment to multiculturalism and sets out how we can make the most of the opportunities it brings to advance our society as a whole.
One of Victoria’s greatest strengths and defining attributes is our rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

Introduction

One of Victoria’s greatest strengths and defining attributes is our rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. Victoria’s approach to multiculturalism has consistently promoted unity by supporting cultural difference within a shared framework of common values, human rights and the rule of law.

Victoria is now a society with people from more than 200 nations of origin, speaking more than 200 languages and dialects and following more than 120 faiths; where more than 43 per cent of the present population have been born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas.

How we respond to and manage such diversity and the changes to our society that it has generated, or can generate into the future, presents challenges but also provides a myriad of opportunities.

To build a progressive society, communities must have the capacity to positively embrace diversity and change, be it a new technology, a novel idea or a new group of migrants or refugees.

This is perhaps truer now than ever before, given the revolution in information and communication technologies, increasing global mobility and changing geo-political and economic relationships.

Victoria’s successful approach to our cultural, linguistic and religious diversity places us in an advantageous position, where we can capitalise on each of these to benefit all of us.

Multiculturalism as a policy concept was developed with the aim of providing a framework that reflects the real world and genuinely unites our culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse communities.

How do we define multiculturalism? While the underpinning principles and attributes of multiculturalism have been reasonably consistent and incorporated in various policies and legislation in Australia and overseas, there has been no universally agreed definition.

However, what is common to most definitions is that multiculturalism is an approach that respects and values the diversity of ethnicities, cultures and faiths within a society and encourages and enables their ongoing contribution within an inclusive context that empowers all members of the society (adapted from C. Rosado, Towards a Definition of Multiculturalism (1997)).

The then National Multicultural Advisory Council’s (NMAC) Australian Multiculturalism for a new century – towards inclusiveness (1999) stated that ‘Multiculturalism has served the Australian community well and best describes our positive acceptance of reality and significance of our cultural diversity and the proactive approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from it.’ The NMAC went on to recommend the following definition:

‘Australian multiculturalism is a term which recognises and celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity. It accepts and respects the right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage within an overriding commitment to Australia and the basic structures and values of Australian democracy. It also refers to the strategies, policies and programs that are designed to:

- make our administrative, social and economic infrastructure more responsive to the rights, obligations and needs of our culturally diverse population;
- promote social harmony among different cultural groups in our society; and
- optimise the benefits of our cultural diversity for all Australians.’
All of Us is the Victorian Government’s commitment to a multiculturalism that incorporates social, economic and cultural expressions of difference and diversity.

Victoria’s approach is based on rejuvenating the notion of community to incorporate more flexible ideas of identity and developing sustainable structures and systems that support these values.

Victoria must sustain multiculturalism if we are to continue to capitalise on the economic opportunities that it provides. In an era of major global challenges, including climate change, challenging economic circumstances and security concerns, cohesive societies with a shared sense of identity and purpose will succeed.

Multiculturalism assists in forming this shared identity and our approach to multiculturalism:

- creates and fosters stronger connections between culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Victoria and the world;
- supports intercultural and interfaith dialogue;
- harnesses business links and opportunities;
- develops positive international relations; and
- recognises the varying experiences of CALD Victorians from different generations.

In other words, multiculturalism for Victoria means connecting and binding Victorians’ sense of who they are, by understanding where they came from, what they can achieve and how they can pass on what they have learned to future generations.

All of Us supports a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to multiculturalism. It is underpinned by strong roles for government, community and business working towards the promotion of shared values that have drawn upon, but transcend, ethnicity, nationality, language and faith.

The policy embraces and builds on traditional approaches to multiculturalism that emphasise and celebrate difference and diversity in commonly recognisable forms such as language, religion, food, music, festivals and events. These traditional approaches continue to have resonance, and for many communities, provide the main form of cultural expression.

All of Us is the Victorian Government’s commitment to a multiculturalism that incorporates social, economic and cultural expressions of difference and diversity. It espouses bringing together people across cultures and faiths to encourage shared community values of respect and fairness and promote equality and protection from discrimination. It identifies some of the challenges we face and opportunities we can take advantage of by harnessing the dynamism of multiculturalism.

The policy defines multiculturalism by means of four themes. Each theme outlines a set of priority strategies designed to meet the objectives of the theme and advance the whole of Victorian society.

INDIGENOUS VICTORIANS

This multicultural policy acknowledges Indigenous Victorians as the first Australians. The policy acknowledges that Indigenous Victorians, as the original custodians of the land, have a unique spiritual, social and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters within Victoria and that Victorian Indigenous culture, as one of the world’s oldest living cultures, has made a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the identity and well-being of Victoria. (This acknowledgment is drawn from the Constitution of Victoria.)
Victoria’s diversity is one of our greatest cultural, social and economic assets. As a result, Victoria is perceived internationally as a welcoming place to do business, study, work, live and raise a family.

A Snapshot of Victoria’s Cultural Diversity

Victoria is the most culturally diverse of all Australian states. At the 2006 Census, the total population of Victoria was 4,932,234, of which:

- 23.8 per cent (1,173,204) were born overseas in more than 230 countries;
- 43.6 per cent (2,152,279) were either born overseas or had at least one parent born overseas;
- 72.8 per cent (853,966) of those born overseas came from non-main English speaking countries (NMESC);
- 20.4 per cent (1,007,435) spoke more than 200 languages other than English (LOTE) at home; and
- 68.7 per cent (3,390,804) followed more than 120 religions, collectively.

In March 2008, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated Victoria’s resident population to be 5.27 million, with overseas migration contributing largely to the increase. Overseas migration will continue to be a large component of population growth as Victoria reaches its projected figure of 6 million people by 2025.

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It is this platform that we want to build on, utilising the opportunities that cultural, linguistic and religious diversity offers the state across the spectrum of ages and ethnic communities.

KEY POPULATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Victoria’s increasing diversity presents a number of issues for the Government and the community to consider. We need to:

- understand the changing geographic distribution of our diverse population, so we can plan for equitable and accessible services targeted at specific population groups in specific localities;
- consider the special needs of our new and emerging migrant groups, particularly refugee communities; and
- assist the ageing population across Victoria, particularly with culturally sensitive services for those born in NMESC.

Increasing diversity

The source regions of our overseas-born population are changing. Although the United Kingdom and New Zealand have continued to account for large numbers of migrants to Victoria in recent years, increasing numbers now originate from Southeast and Northeast Asia as skilled migrants, former overseas students and through family reunion. There is also a small but significant increase in migrants from the Middle East, Southern and Central Asia and the sub-Sahara region, who arrived mainly as humanitarian entrants.
Translation and interpreting services may need to manage new and emerging languages as well as maintain language service support for our more established and ageing migrant communities.

Victoria’s migration history, combined with increased global mobility, has resulted in a variety of population groups with very different backgrounds and needs. For example, established migrant communities, such as the Italian and Greek, have long-standing local connections and many have raised their children and grandchildren in Victoria. However, as members of these communities age, the type and nature of the support they need from government changes.

On the other hand, members of newly arrived communities, for example humanitarian and refugee entrants, may have experienced higher levels of disadvantage, and typically have more intense and complex needs, such as in health, education and settlement support.

Transient groups, such as international students and temporary skilled migrants, offer Victoria much in terms of economic benefit and cultural links, but have differing needs and expectations compared to those of permanent migrants.

More Victorian migrants are settling in outer Melbourne and regional areas

While the majority of migrants continue to settle in metropolitan areas, increasing numbers are settling in or re-locating to outer Melbourne and regional Victoria. This is consistent with policies to encourage regional development and to meet regional skills and population shortages.

Both skilled and humanitarian entrants often move to outer metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria for more affordable housing and job opportunities. Although migrants bring significant benefits to these areas, their successful settlement needs to be supported by appropriate services provided by governments, community organisations, service agencies and local councils.

Geographic Distribution – Metropolitan and Regional

- NMESC-born population in traditional and new areas

Persons born in NMESC: 2006 Census

Metropolitan Melbourne

- More than 90 per cent of Victoria’s NMESC people live in metropolitan Melbourne. The largest numbers are in the south-eastern local government areas of Casey, Greater Dandenong and Monash, and in the western and northern local government areas of Brimbank, Hume and Whittlesea.

- Inner-city local government areas also have significant numbers, but they are highly concentrated in small localities.

Regional Victoria

- There are concentrations of NMESC-born in the horticultural areas of Swan Hill, Mildura and Shepparton, and in the manufacturing areas in Greater Geelong and Latrobe Valley.
Victoria’s ageing migrant population

Victoria’s population is ageing and ongoing migration is one important factor that can assist Victoria to maintain a viable working age population into the future.

The number of older people in Victoria will increase as the baby-boomer generation ages. Victoria’s CALD population is also ageing at a greater rate than the general population, driven by our established migrant communities.

The proportion of Victoria’s ageing population is projected to increase significantly with the ageing of baby-boomers and the relatively low birth rates in recent decades. This ageing trend is more pronounced with our more established migrant communities.

At the 2006 census, of the 674,913 people aged 65 years or over in Victoria, 26 per cent were from a NMESC and 22 per cent spoke a LOTE at home. One-third of the latter group were not proficient in English.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates that by 2011, 31 per cent of Victoria’s population aged 65 or over and 38 per cent of Melbourne’s population aged 65 or over will be from a NMESC.

A notable consequence of this trend is increasing demand for language services and the need to develop culturally responsive aged care.

Diversity in language needs

While the diversity of languages spoken by Victorians provides opportunities to develop our economy, it may also present challenges for organisations delivering services to Victorians. For example, translation and interpreting services may need to manage new and emerging languages as well as maintain language service support for our more established and ageing migrant communities.

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For further demographic data, visit the Victorian Multicultural Commission’s (VMC) website at www.multicultural.vic.gov.au
Achievements in Multiculturalism

This Government has focused strongly on ensuring that all government and government-funded services respond to the diverse needs of the community, including people from CALD backgrounds. The Government has a strong record of improving mainstream services such as health and education with these enhancements to mainstream services being of benefit to all Victorians, including people from CALD backgrounds. In addition, the Government has invested more than $350 million in dedicated ethno-specific and multicultural programs that aim to work in partnership with mainstream services. Some of the most important initiatives include:

Legislation

- Introducing the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001, which protects all Victorians from vilifying behaviour or abuse on the basis of their racial or religious background.
- Introducing the Multicultural Victoria Act 2004, which formally recognises the benefits multiculturalism brings to Victoria and makes strengthening multiculturalism a core goal of every government department.
- Introducing the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, which commits public authorities to actively respect and protect human rights and foster an inclusive human rights culture for all Victorians.

Partnerships

- Establishing the Victorian Multicultural Business Advisory Council (VMBAC), to provide policy advice to the Victorian Government and better support the approximately 50 percent of small businesses that are owned by overseas-born or second-generation Victorians.
- Facilitating the signing of a Community Accord by ethnic and religious community leaders, as well as leaders of business, union, sporting and other non-government organisations.
- Holding forums with faith and community leaders to build bridges between communities and develop multifaith dialogue and providing funding to support initiatives arising out of the forums.

Programs

- Establishing the Refugee Health Nurse Program to improve refugees' access to health services, with funding of more than $1 million per annum for refugee nurses in 16 local government areas.
- Establishing the Refugee Support Package to empower refugees to increase their participation in the community.
- Victoria Police establishing their Multicultural Policing Strategy, which includes a Multicultural Advisory Unit, a Multifaith Council and Multicultural Liaison Officers to liaise with community and religious leaders, as well as cultural awareness training for Victoria Police officers.
- Contributing $8 million over three years to the Cultural Precinct Enhancement Fund to boost the viability and vibrancy of Melbourne's long-standing Chinese, Greek and Italian cultural precincts.
- Allocating over $30 million to increase Victoria's share of Australia's skilled and business migration (from 17.6 per cent in 1998-99 to 26.8 per cent in 2006-07).
- Increasing expenditure to over $16 million a year in 2006-07 for free interpreting and translating services across the Victorian Government.
- Increasing funding by approximately six-fold to support ethnic and multicultural community organisations through the VMC's community grants program, from $750,000 in 1999 to $4.6 million in 2007-08.
- Providing ongoing support, including over $50 million in 2008, for LOTE programs in primary and secondary schools.
- Providing $22.8 million to supplement Federal funding for English as a second language (ESL) support programs in over 450 schools in 2008.
- Strengthening partnerships with ethno-specific and multicultural agencies to develop and provide Home and Community Care services for people from CALD communities.
Multiculturalism supports, fosters and celebrates cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

Policy Themes

It is generally accepted that multiculturalism supports, fosters and celebrates cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. 

The Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 enshrines the following principles that underpin multiculturalism:

- an entitlement to mutual respect and understanding regardless of background;
- a duty on all Victorians to promote and preserve diversity within the context of shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities;
- a demonstrated ability of all Victorians to work together to build a positive and progressive future; and
- a responsibility for all Victorians to abide by the state’s laws and respect democratic processes.

All of Us builds on these principles, and affirms that multiculturalism in Victoria:

- **Advances equality** by supporting the human rights of all Victorians, irrespective of their cultural, linguistic or religious background, and by ensuring equitable access to better and more responsive services throughout the state.

- **Supports our cultural, linguistic and religious diversity** by recognising the value of our cultural heritage and protecting and supporting the diversity of our people and their communities.

- **Fosters unity and promotes community harmony** by promoting the benefits of diversity to all Victorians, and sustaining Victoria as a united, cohesive community with shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities, within which people from a diversity of backgrounds have the freedom and opportunity to preserve, express, celebrate and practise their cultural heritage, as well as sharing their cultural heritage with the broader community.

- **Boosts our economic advantage** by providing the state with a competitive edge through our diverse, innovative, highly skilled and internationally connected workforce, in areas such as tourism, small business and industry, research and development, employment and education.
The Victorian Government recognises that as our population becomes more diverse, its services should be responsive to the cultural needs of Victorians.

Multiculturalism advances equality and human rights

INTRODUCTION

The protection of human rights has always been a fundamental objective of multicultural policy in Victoria. The enactment of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the Charter) has strengthened multiculturalism by providing a broader human rights agenda. The Charter protects important rights that go to the heart of multiculturalism, such as freedom of expression, the right to participate in public life, freedom of religion and cultural rights. Promotion and protection of multiculturalism also aligns with Australia’s international responsibilities and recognition of international human rights agreements.

The Charter focuses on ensuring that fundamental human rights are considered at the earliest stages of policy development. It now sits as a primary policy making tool within government, so that all legislation, regulation and policy is assessed through a human rights lens.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that all Victorians, regardless of their cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, have equitable access to government services.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Responsive service delivery

A major challenge facing government at all levels is ensuring that all Victorians have appropriate access to the services they need. The Victorian Government recognises that as our population becomes more diverse, its services should be responsive to the cultural needs of Victorians; and that our institutions need to become more culturally competent.

Cultural competency for government departments includes continuing to ensure departmental personnel and appointees to government boards and committees are reflective of the diversity of the Victorian community. The Government’s support for appropriate access also includes support for greater participation in decision-making at all levels. This enables a wider range of Victorians to participate in the development of local community facilities and services that reflect the reality of their cultural diversity.

Encouraging the cultural competency of Victorian institutions is a major focus of this policy. Through the development and implementation of Cultural Diversity Plans, Victorian Government departments and public sector agencies will endeavour to ensure that each organisation adheres to the core values of and principles of multiculturalism as enshrined in the Multicultural Victoria Act 2004.

The ability to speak English proficiently can affect people’s access to, and use of, government services and information. People with low proficiency in English form a significant proportion of Victorian Government clients experiencing access difficulties. In addition to improving the cultural responsiveness of agencies and staff, practical support is required to assist people with low English proficiency, as language barriers can be overcome through the use of professional language services.

These difficulties have been historically addressed through a combination of the following four strategies:

- improving the supply of interpreters for non-English speaking people;
- providing more flexible opportunities to acquire proficiency in English;
- the delivery of services through ethno-specific and multicultural organisations, where appropriate, and
- enhancing the cultural sensitivity and competency of universal service providers.
All of Us.

Victoria’s Multicultural Policy.

Joshua Lulerhe, Congo
The Victorian Government’s response to an ageing population recognises that the growing number of older Victorians from CALD backgrounds will need targeted support to access the services and information that will assist them to remain healthy, independent and engaged with their community.

Equality in justice

The Victorian Government recognises the importance of equality before the law for Victorians from CALD backgrounds and is aware of the social and economic cost of over-representation in the justice system. The Government will continue to work towards a justice system that is fair and protects disadvantaged Victorians.

Equality in health

While there is strong evidence migrants have generally better physical health than people of the same age born in Australia, discrimination can impact negatively on Victorians’ mental and physical health in a number of ways, including:

- increasing the risk of being exposed to health-damaging environments and engaging in health-compromising behaviours; and
- provoking stress and other negative emotional and psychological conditions (Harrell, Hall et al 2003).

It is recognised that people from a CALD background with a disability or with a mental illness as well as their families or carers may experience additional challenges in relation to communication, inclusion and access, and that needs to be incorporated as part of service and community planning.

To assist in improving the health of Victorians from CALD backgrounds, the Government will continue to work to reduce discrimination in all its forms.

Equality in education

The cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of Victoria’s student population presents an opportunity to develop an education system that both meets the particular needs of its students and prepares all Victorians for their future economic and social prosperity in a globalised world. In particular, the Victorian Government aims to provide opportunities for all students to develop their cultural literacy and to learn a second language through mainstream and community languages programs.

However, the Victorian education system does face ongoing challenges in meeting the needs of its culturally and linguistically diverse students. In 2007, 110,383 (20.5 per cent) of students in government schools were from language backgrounds other than English. Of this broad group, 5,549 (14 per cent) were newly arrived in Australia, and approximately 188 languages were spoken in their homes. We need to continue to develop the cultural competency skills of the education workforce so as to provide culturally appropriate education to all Victorian students.

Equality in the workplace

The 2008 report, Harnessing Diversity: addressing racial and religious discrimination in employment, noted that workplaces that embrace diversity and educate their workforce regarding discrimination, benefit by greater utilisation of migrant skills and by increased productivity and innovation.

However, people from CALD backgrounds continue to be at risk of discrimination in the workplace.

The Victorian Government will continue to work to reduce discrimination in recruitment and employment practices to ensure that the rights of all Victorians are respected at work and that the Victorian economy benefits from its diverse workforce.

Partnerships with ethno-specific and multicultural organisations

Ethno-specific and multicultural organisations can play important and varied roles in supporting culturally appropriate service delivery for Victorians from CALD backgrounds. Ethno-specific and multicultural organisations differ in their size and capacity, and undertake tasks such as providing targeted services, supporting universal service providers to be more culturally sensitive and advocating for the needs of the communities they support.

Racial and religious discrimination

While Victoria is proud of its record in combating discrimination, we need to be vigilant and continue to work against all forms of discrimination, racism and vilification.

Racial and religious discrimination or vilification towards people from CALD backgrounds can limit their access to education, employment and housing and affect their health. There is a significant correlation between discrimination and disadvantage.

There are clear benefits to reducing discrimination and considerable costs if this is not achieved. Discrimination in employment and in other areas of public life limits people’s human rights, works against social and economic participation, contributes to disadvantage and is contrary to Victoria’s values of fairness and opportunity.

The Victorian Government has a clear commitment to a fairer society that is inclusive, embraces diversity and promotes civic and economic participation. It recognises that tackling discrimination and racism is an essential pre-cursor to community cohesion.
POLICY OBJECTIVES

The primary function of state governments is to provide essential services to all its citizens. Governments need to ensure that citizens have equitable access to services, whatever their background. The Government will work to enable all Victorians to have equitable access to its services.

Victoria’s increasingly diverse population means that departments and agencies need to deliver their services culturally, religiously and linguistically appropriately. The Government will work to ensure that its staff and agencies become culturally competent.

Racial and religious discrimination is a fundamental violation of human rights, and undermines the equality of Victorian society. Discrimination limits peoples’ social and economic opportunities and reduces social cohesion. The Government will continue to work to reduce racial and religious discrimination in Victoria.

PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Enabling all Victorians to have equitable access to government services.

- Update the Government’s guidelines for using interpreters and translators.
- Develop a workforce strategy to improve the supply of interpreters for people with low English language proficiency who use government services, including the better use of technology.
- Continue to develop and test policies and procedures that will result in the most effective use of the Victorian workforce’s multilingual capabilities.
- Continue to build the capacity and expertise of schools in supporting ESL students, particularly refugee students, in transitioning to mainstream schools.
- Improve ESL student outcomes through improved data collection, analysis and evaluation.

Ensuring that government staff and agencies become culturally competent.

- Build the cultural competence of Victorian justice agencies to deliver services to Victorians from CALD backgrounds, by embedding core organisational practices.
- Supporting Victorian health services to provide culturally responsive services by:
  - producing culturally, linguistically and religiously appropriate health promotion information and prevention strategies; and
  - improving the participation rates of CALD Victorians in relevant cancer screening programs.

Reducing racial and religious discrimination.

- Provide ongoing human rights and Charter education to people from CALD backgrounds and to the community organisations that provide services to them.
- Encourage workplaces to respect cultural and religious practices and eliminate discrimination in hiring practices.
- Continue to support the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) in its work to improve productive diversity in the workplace.
- Encourage both the public and private sector to embrace Victoria’s multicultural advantage in their recruitment and selection of staff.
- Build the capacity of CALD communities to receive fair treatment in their daily lives when accessing the criminal and civil justice systems, or in relation to dispute resolution, problem gambling and emergency services.
- Promote positive contact between emerging refugee communities and the justice system through the Justice for Refugees Program.
- Continue to support Victoria’s educators in the areas of ESL, human rights, multicultural education, values, beliefs, civics and citizenship.
- Improve the collection of data on CALD children and young people in the education system so as to better monitor progress.
Multiculturalism needs to do more than acknowledge people’s particular heritage: it must also recognise that individuals can draw from different cultures in shaping their own identity.

Multiculturalism supports our cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is part of the daily experience of Victorians, living as they do in a state where multiculturalism is embraced in business, arts, education, culture and sport and recreation.

The Victorian Government is committed to:

■ maintaining and supporting our highly diverse cultural, linguistic and religious heritage;

■ encouraging Victoria’s CALD communities to retain and express their social and cultural identity and heritage; and

■ emphasising to all Victorians the importance of shared rights and responsibilities.

The Government believes this approach is conducive to social cohesion because it builds attitudes of respect, belonging and commitment.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Maintaining Victoria’s cultural diversity

Migrants and refugees have made significant and ongoing contributions to Victoria, in a variety of fields, adding to the richness and vibrancy of our state.

The Victorian Government recognises that diversity enriches and unites us and celebrates the many cultures, languages and faiths represented in Victoria. The Government is committed to supporting the cultural heritage of all Victorians.

While diversity continues to provide considerable benefits to Victoria, its complexity also brings some challenges. A world in which Victorians have increased access to events and news from across the globe, requires a new level of awareness and proactive management to ensure these world events do not negatively impact on our community harmony. Fostering respect, tolerance and communication between different faiths and cultures can sometimes be difficult and requires supportive action by government.

The identity of CALD Victorians

Based on current projections, continued migration from a wide range of countries will make Victoria a more diverse place. CALD Victorians’ sense of identity may become more complex. For instance, some members of CALD communities—particularly young people—may not identify with one culture only, but have multiple identities. Multiculturalism needs to do more than acknowledge people’s particular heritage, it must also recognise that individuals can draw from different cultures in shaping their own identity.

Different notions of identity and the maintenance of cultural heritage are sometimes experienced by members of particular migrant communities, as younger members become accustomed more readily to their new life than older members. Such transitional, developmental phases are natural but require some sensitivity to ensure that these aspirations are addressed and accommodated, where possible.

The role of local government

Municipalities have to adapt to diverse and often disparate population needs, particularly as they respond to the complex needs of newly arrived communities, transient populations, youth and student communities and single parent households. Demographic shifts also impact on social policy, housing and infrastructure planning considerations.

By initiating local activities and engagement for multicultural groups and ethnic communities, local government can play a critical role in supporting cultural diversity.

For example, as part of the Transit Cities program in areas such as Dandenong and Footscray, councils have worked with a number of cultural groups to develop and publicise local cultural precincts and tours. This demonstrates how diversity can be incorporated into urban planning processes, as well as increasing social and civic participation for all Victorians.
23 All of Us.

Victoria's Multicultural Policy.

Irfan Hassan, Cyprus
POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Victorian Government believes that the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of its population is one of its greatest strengths. The Government will assist the maintenance and celebration of Victoria’s diverse cultures.

By engaging with the broader community at the local level, CALD communities can benefit economically, promote their culture more broadly and can contribute to increased social cohesion. The Government will facilitate mutually beneficial relationships between CALD communities, service providers and the broader community.

Cultural, linguistic and religious differences can sometimes act as barriers and result in isolation or persecution, which can be exacerbated for vulnerable groups. The Government needs to support such groups to reduce their isolation and increase social cohesion. The Government will provide support to vulnerable members of CALD communities.

PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Assisting the maintenance and celebration of Victoria’s diverse cultures.

- Continue to support CALD communities via the VMC’s Community Grants program, which provides support to Victoria’s multicultural and multifaith groups under the categories of: Organisational Support; Strengthening Multicultural Communities; Buildings and Facilities Improvements; Educational Programs; and Festivals and Events.

- Preserve the variety of community languages spoken by Victorians by continuing the After Hours Community Languages Program.

Facilitating mutually beneficial relationships between CALD communities, service providers and the broader community.

- Continue developing cultural opportunities for established, local ethnic communities.

- Support funding initiatives for local councils to implement strategic projects to advance multiculturalism locally.

- Establish and maintain a register of multicultural heritage sites.
Providing support to vulnerable members of CALD communities.

- Focus on strategies to support at-risk young refugees.
- Explore inclusive ways of keeping vulnerable CALD young people in school education and post-compulsory training.
- Develop resources that assist services to better understand and address the needs of older women from CALD backgrounds, with a focus on health, aged care, independent living and social connectedness.
- Establish opportunities that strengthen CALD women’s leadership through mentoring programs in partnership with ethno-specific organisations.
- Actively contribute to the development of the State Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and create targeted strategies to address issues of racial, sexual, and family violence against CALD women.

The Victorian Government believes that the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of its population is one of its greatest strengths. The Government will assist the maintenance and celebration of Victoria’s diverse cultures.
Multiculturalism fosters unity and promotes harmony

INTRODUCTION

Victoria’s cultural, linguistic and religious diversity is something that we all share. The Victorian Government supports this diversity and promotes unity by supporting cultural difference within a shared framework of human rights and the rule of law.

A society that supports the expression of all cultural backgrounds and that allows everyone to feel that their culture, language and religion is equally valued and respected is more likely to deliver unity and harmony.

By proactively working together and encouraging communication, cross-cultural and interfaith understanding grows and fears caused by ignorance are diminished; this is what the framework of multiculturalism encourages.

In this context, multiculturalism respects difference while promoting unity. In other words, cultural differences are something we all have in common, yet we are all Victorians. By respecting our shared diversity and the rule of law, we can realise our shared aspiration to build a cohesive and welcoming society.

We aim to promote harmony by:

- promoting the benefits of multiculturalism to the whole Victorian community;
- facilitating understanding between different cultural and faith communities; and
- emphasising the fundamental rights that we all possess but which also impose responsibilities to abide by the state’s laws and respect its democratic processes.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Promoting multiculturalism

Most Victorians have a very positive view of multiculturalism and support our cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. For example, the proportion of people who agreed that multiculturalism had made life better in their community increased from 86 percent in 2001 to 88 percent in 2006. (Victorian Population Health Survey and Household Income Labour Dynamics in Australia).

Unfortunately, there are some voices that claim that difference is the enemy of unity and that a multicultural society cannot be a harmonious one. Our ongoing challenge is to disprove these voices, which typically grow louder in times of crisis or when there is some uncertainty or anxiety about the future.

The Victorian Government re-affirms its belief in the multicultural society in which we all live and supports programs and initiatives that showcase the state’s diversity and community harmony for all Victorians.

The arts, sport and cultural diversity

The Government recognises and supports the important role that sport and the arts play in promoting the benefits of multiculturalism and in helping to improve cultural understanding between all Victorians. Sport and the arts allow us to positively engage with people from different backgrounds, often resulting in an appreciation of cultural similarities and a greater understanding of diverse cultures.

Sharing the artistic expression of cultural difference allows us to appreciate, enjoy and respect the diverse cultures of this state, as well as helping to preserve the cultural heritage of all Victorians.
All of Us.

Victoria's Multicultural Policy.

Dave and Gail Tarquini, Trinidad
Inter-group communication

To promote greater communication and, therefore, greater understanding between Victoria’s cultural and religious groups, the Government supports a number of cross-cultural and cross-religious networks.

The growing interaction between different cultural groups is often referred to as interculturalism, where intercultural and interfaith exchanges take place within an accepted framework of rights and responsibilities.

While connections between diverse communities in Victorian society occur naturally, government can also support them. This is most effectively done at the local level. This can happen by connecting local communities through public policy, campaign and advocacy work, community education, community events and media activity that promotes awareness and tolerance within the local community.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

While most Victorians are supportive of multiculturalism and the diversity of our population, minority voices sometimes claim that multiculturalism undermines the unity of our society. The Government believes it is important to disprove these claims. The Government will continue to promote the benefits of multiculturalism to all Victorians.

Government works most effectively when it is engaged with the broader society. Apart from ensuring that the voices of all Victorians are heard by government, such engagement assists in increasing social cohesion. The Government will continue to engage in dialogue with Victoria’s cultural and religious communities.

Members of CALD communities, especially newly arrived communities, can be at risk of not engaging with the broader community. This can potentially result in social exclusion and reduced social cohesion. The Government will encourage community engagement of people from CALD communities.
PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Promoting the benefits of multiculturalism to all Victorians.

- Continue supporting and promoting Cultural Diversity Week.
- Continue supporting Refugee Week, to acknowledge the contribution that refugees make to Victoria.
- Develop a new Multicultural Education Strategy that builds on what has already been achieved in multicultural education and supports Victorian schools to equip all their students for active global and multicultural citizenship.
- Develop sister school arrangements with Victorian and international schools.
- Continue fostering cultural diversity and respect through the promotion, enhancement and celebration of multicultural arts to better reflect the cultural diversity and shared heritage of Victorians.
- Promote the principles of multiculturalism as outlined in the Multicultural Victoria Act and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities to ensure that all Victorians are familiar with both their individual rights and their individual and collective responsibilities, so as to deliver a more cohesive and united community.

Engaging in dialogue with Victoria’s cultural and religious communities.

- Further engage all ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious communities, including engagement via the Multicultural Affairs Round Tables at the Community Cabinet meetings held throughout the state.
- Continue bringing faith and community groups together to promote community harmony through initiatives including the Multifaith Advisory Group and the Multifaith Multicultural Youth Network.
- Continue to enhance the strong relationship between Victoria Police and community leaders through the Police and Community Multicultural Committee, Victoria Police Multicultural Advisory Committee and the New and Emerging Community Liaison Officers positions.

Encouraging community engagement of people from CALD communities.

- Provide a foundation of principles encouraging inclusion and fairness towards people of diverse cultures, on and off the sports field.
- Better utilise the medium of sport to facilitate community engagement of young people and their families from CALD communities as part of their settlement into Australian community life.
- Encourage the community engagement of people from CALD communities through volunteering activities, as part of a whole-of-government volunteering and participation strategy.
The Government believes that multiculturalism provides one of the foundations for a more prosperous Victoria.

Multiculturalism boosts our economic advantage

INTRODUCTION

Migration to Victoria has presented the state with a range of ongoing advantages. It has also provided opportunities for migrants and refugees to build better lives for themselves and their families. The Government aims to ensure that migration continues to be mutually beneficial for the broader community and for new arrivals to Victoria.

One of the critical factors in determining successful settlement and participation outcomes for migrants and refugees is to assist in delivering economic security, namely positive employment that is reflective of the person’s skills, experience and qualifications. Jobs, particularly during economic downturns, are crucial to successful settlement outcomes.

The Government believes that multiculturalism provides one of the foundations for a more prosperous Victoria. Nations, states, cities and communities that are at ease with, and that welcome other cultures, continue to attract new people, investment and skills.

Victoria benefits from its record as an inclusive and culturally diverse society as the state competes for globally mobile labour and business investment. The Economist Intelligence Unit, for example, has repeatedly named Melbourne as one of the most liveable cities in the world, with culture and diversity being key factors considered in the rankings.

A key Victorian Government objective is to continue to work with business, industry, unions and community to strengthen Victoria’s economic advantage to maintain the state’s long term prosperity. One of the many ways in which this will be achieved is by harnessing our multicultural advantage. This requires government and business to:

- effectively utilise CALD Victorians’ linguistic diversity;
- capitalise on migrants’ entrepreneurship and global social networks;
- develop the opportunities that Victoria’s cultural diversity offers our tourist market;
- recognise migrants’ skills and qualifications;
- train migrants for job readiness;
- maximise pathways to sustainable employment;
- increase cultural competency within organisations; and
- value international students’ contribution to the Victorian economy.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Migration, a key driver of the Victorian economy

Migration has played a major role in the economic development of the state, from the goldfields in the nineteenth century, and the mass migration of the post-Second World War period, to today’s skilled migrants. The resulting cultural diversity has brought social richness, cultural benefits and economic growth that have helped to make today’s Victoria a prosperous and vibrant state in which to live.

Migrants contribute to Victoria’s economy in a number of ways, including:

- productivity improvements through the influx of skilled and business migrants;
- increasing aggregate demand through consumption; and
- supplying necessary labour in regional areas and industries experiencing skills shortages.

New migrants continue to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to the Australian Government budget and the broader economy every year. Access Economics, in its Migrant Fiscal Impact Model: 2008 Update, assessed the costs that migrants impose on health, education, welfare, employment and settlement services compared to the fiscal benefits from taxation and visa charges.
All of Us.

Victoria's Multicultural Policy.

Amer Malik, Pakistan
For the 2006-07 migration program, Access Economics estimated a total benefit of $536 million in the first year, then another $856 million in year two, growing steadily over time to reach $1.34 billion after 20 years.

With one in four migrants to Australia settling in our state, migration continues to play a critical role in driving development in Victoria, as highlighted by the fact that approximately one in two small businesses are either owned by overseas-born or second-generation Victorians.

**Skilled migration**

We need to better utilise the skills which migrants bring to Victoria and create opportunities for developing and integrating skilled migrants into mainstream employment. Skills within migrant and refugee communities are sometimes not found in other communities and can be harnessed to Victoria’s economic advantage.

The economic benefits that skilled and business migration bring include:

- meeting the skill needs of the Victorian economy that cannot be met locally, helping to address economic constraints on business;
- boosting the skill composition of Victoria’s human capital and assisting Victoria’s internationally competitive industries, through a more productive and competitive workforce and a broader pool of labour;
- increasing population, boosting the demand for housing and locally produced consumer goods; and
- increasing Victoria’s international linkages, which results in increased tourism, international education and exports.

In 2004, the Victorian Government launched its first Skilled Migration Strategy, a $6 million package of incentives that encouraged skilled migrants to move to Victoria, particularly into regional areas. Since then:

- Victoria’s share of Australia’s skilled migrants has increased from 17.6 per cent in 1998-99 to 26.8 per cent in 2006-07; and
- more than 1,500 skilled migrants and members of their families have now settled in regional Victoria.

A second skilled migration strategy - Global Skills for Victoria - was released in October 2007, providing a further $15 million to support skilled migration. This included the Global Skills for Provincial Victoria initiative, which, consistent with economic and population strategies, has been attracting skilled migrants to rural and regional Victoria and assisting them into skilled employment. This has provided new challenges for local government in terms of service delivery, but has also enriched and strengthened many communities. Migrants to regional areas have often provided specialist skills, for example, medical expertise, which has previously been lacking in the communities in which they have settled.

**CALD workforce participation**

However, some migrants are experiencing difficulties entering the employment market. Programs to develop better connections between migrants and employers are needed to ensure migrants’ skills are utilised more effectively.

In line with trends in other Australian jurisdictions, the economic participation rates of Victorians from CALD backgrounds are relatively low, particularly in the period immediately after their arrival. Factors influencing this include language, skill levels, and immigration status. In times of economic downturn, the challenges migrants face become more acute and the Government will work to ensure that barriers to migrants entering the workforce are reduced.

Recent initiatives that will assist in boosting the economic participation rates of CALD Victorians include the Government’s:

- Workforce Participation Strategy, which aims to improve access to employment for people who face significant barriers, and
- Securing Jobs for Your Future—Skills for Victoria, which commits $316 million over four years to deliver broader and more responsive training options for all Victorians.
Diversity in the workplace

As we welcome more migrants from more countries, the skills and experience they bring will continue to drive innovation in the way Victorians do business. This innovation and creativity also manifests in other areas, including Victoria’s vibrant artistic industry.

Successfully managing workplace diversity is linked to increased profitability for business (the Committee for Economic Development of Australia and VEOHRC). This can be achieved through the use of cultural and linguistic skills and knowledge in a workforce to improve:

- export development and importing;
- domestic and international marketing and supply chain;
- customer service;
- the value and use of bilingualism;
- diversity workforce planning (eg: productivity, employer of choice);
- innovation (eg: information and communication technology, product development); and
- export knowledge and expertise internationally.

A significant challenge for multiculturalism is utilising the connection between economic, social and cultural factors to boost Victoria’s economic advantage. The Victorian Government believes that a more strategic educational approach, which engages business and community leaders, can be harnessed to emphasise the economic benefits of multiculturalism to the whole Victorian community.

We also need to continue to support the important role of education in equipping young Victorians with the cultural literacy skills necessary for economically productive and fulfilling lives.

Settlement planning and services

The Australian Government has primary responsibility for Australia’s migration program and the initial phase of settlement. However, the Victorian Government has a long history of supporting the successful settlement of migrants to the state and ensuring they can access the services they require.

The Victorian Government aims to work closely with the Australian Government to achieve a strategic approach to settlement planning and services, so as to have a genuinely streamlined and coordinated service delivery system. Effective support for the settlement process is integral to sustainable and healthy communities.

Humanitarian entrants, in particular, often have complex and ongoing needs on entry to Victoria and require specific and well designed services in order to allow them to settle into their new country. Facilitating their access to appropriate services will contribute to their successful settlement, mitigate their initial vulnerability and foster longer-term social cohesion in the Victorian community.

International students

International students are becoming more economically important to Victoria. The value of international education (including consultancy and offshore export activity) to the Victorian economy in 2007-08 was $4.45 billion, making it Victoria’s biggest export (ABS). The Government recognises the need to protect and nurture this important industry and to ensure that Victoria remains an attractive destination for international students.

Tourism

Multiculturalism also provides benefits to Victoria’s tourism industry. The Australian tourist market is increasingly focusing on lifestyle, with Melbourne’s cultural diversity making it a desirable destination. Food and wine festivals in regional areas, which often have a multicultural element, are also very important for regional tourism.
**POLICY OBJECTIVES**

Victoria gains economic advantages from people who have come to our state, whether permanent or temporary. Short-term residents, such as international students and tourists, directly support Victorian businesses and create jobs. The Government will work to make Victoria a welcoming place for temporary residents and visitors and support our education and tourism export industries.

New migrants provide needed skills, valuable experience and contacts that can grow our economy. The Government will continue to support immigration and assist new migrants to make the best contribution to Victoria.

Victoria’s established multicultural society is an economic asset. The Government will support communities and individuals to grow their businesses.

**PRIORITY STRATEGIES**

Making Victoria welcoming to visitors and supporting Victoria’s export industries.

- Consider the recommendations of the Overseas Student Education Experience Taskforce, which will inform the development of an updated International Education Strategy.
- Promote the state’s diverse cultural history and food and wine experiences.
- Continue to develop translated information on visitvictoria. Translations are currently available in Korean, Japanese, Chinese (simplified and traditional), German, Italian, French and Spanish.
- Continue developing cultural and economic opportunities for established, local ethnic communities.
Supporting immigration and assisting new migrants to make the best contribution.

- Continue implementation of Global Skills for Victoria.
- Continue implementation of Working Victoria, a plan to boost Victoria’s workforce participation rates and skills base. Among other things, the plan focuses on reducing the barriers to work experienced by some groups in Victoria.
- Continue implementation of Global Skills for Provincial Victoria, working with local councils in regional Victoria to attract migrants with skills and assist these migrants into skilled employment to address labour market shortages.
- Continue delivering seminars to newly arrived skilled and business migrants to facilitate entry into professional employment and business establishment.
- Continue to show leadership on the development of streamlined and coordinated settlement planning and service delivery.
- Encourage the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship to settle new arrivals in regional Victoria, subject to the availability and provision of appropriate resources and settlement services.

- Continue support for recent arrivals seeking employment opportunities in regional Victoria.
- Provide better education for new migrants on consumer affairs, rights and responsibilities.
- Continue working in partnership with key agencies to provide for the additional needs of refugee students in Victorian schools.

Supporting communities and individuals to grow their businesses.

- Continue the work of the VMBAC, which recommends strategies to increase exports, promote Victoria as a culturally diverse business centre and aid the development of business opportunities that take advantage of Victoria’s linguistic and cultural resources.
- Continue encouraging reciprocal arrangements for cultural exchanges between Victorian local government authorities and international cities in Asia, Europe, Canada and the United States. For instance, many local councils across Victoria have ‘sister city’ arrangements with other cities around the globe.
- Develop relationships with key buyers and government departments in Asia to increase export opportunities for Victoria.
RELEVANT VICTORIAN LEGISLATION

*Multicultural Victoria Act 2004*

The Act enshrines the principles of multiculturalism and makes strengthening of multiculturalism a core goal of every Victorian Government department.

**Preamble**

'The Parliament of Victoria recognises and values the cultural, religious, racial and linguistic diversity of the people of Victoria.

The Parliament of Victoria wishes to promote this state as a united community with shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities within which people from a diversity of backgrounds have:

(a) the freedom and opportunity to preserve and express their cultural heritage;
(b) the freedom and opportunity to participate and contribute to the broader life of society; and
(c) equal rights and responsibilities under the laws of Victoria.‘

**Principles of multiculturalism**

'Parliament recognises that the people of Victoria are united in their shared commitment to:

(a) a democratic framework governed by the rule of law; and
(b) Victoria and Australia and the people, interests and future of Victoria and Australia.

Parliament further recognises that all Victorians come from diverse cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds and values the richness that such diversity brings to the Victorian community.

Parliament supports the obligations of citizenship to which subsection (1) refers and promotes the diversity to which subsection (2) refers by recognising the following principles of multiculturalism:

(a) all individuals in Victoria are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds;
(b) all individuals and institutions in Victoria should promote and preserve diversity and cultural heritage within the context of shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities;
(c) all individuals in Victoria (regardless of background) have shown that they can work together to build a positive and progressive future and this cooperation is to be encouraged so as to enhance Victoria as a great place in which to live, work, invest and raise a family;
(d) all individuals in Victoria are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of this state;
(e) all individuals in Victoria have a responsibility to abide by the state’s laws and respect the democratic processes under which those laws are made.’

*The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*

The Act provides an avenue of redress for anyone who believes they have been the victim of vilifying behaviour or abuse on the basis of their racial or religious background.

*The Equal Opportunity Act 1995*

The right to equality and freedom from discrimination are basic human rights. The Act aims to promote equality in Victoria by prohibiting discrimination in certain areas of life. The objectives of the Act include:

- promoting everyone’s right to equal opportunities;
- eliminating, as far as possible, discrimination and sexual harassment; and
- providing redress for people whose rights have been breached.

The Act allows people to bring complaints about racial and religious discrimination and vilification. Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is responsible for the administration of these laws. Following on from the recommendations of the 2008 review of the Act, An Equality Act for a Fairer Victoria, the Government introduced the Equal Opportunity Amendment (Governance) Bill 2008 into Parliament in early December 2008. The Bill will create a new governance structure for VEOHRC that provides clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

*The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

The Charter commits public authorities to actively respect and protect human rights and foster an inclusive human rights culture for all Victorians. The Charter aims to ensure human rights are valued and protected within government and the community.

The Charter protects important rights that go to the heart of multiculturalism. These include freedom from discrimination, freedom of expression, the right to participate in public life and freedom of religion and cultural rights. It allows measures to support disadvantaged community members so that everyone can reach their full potential.

RELEVANT VICTORIAN POLICIES

There a number of Victorian Government policies that influence the nature of multiculturalism in the state and which the new policy will build on. These are:

- Multicultural Education Strategy (2009)
Nooran Al-Qarakchy, Iraq
The Growing Victoria Together framework provides a long-term strategic vision for Victoria by balancing a suite of progress measures and actions for:

- a thriving economy;
- quality health and education;
- a healthy environment;
- caring communities; and
- a vibrant democracy.

A Fairer Victoria 2008: Strong People, Strong Communities

A Fairer Victoria 2008 continues the commitment to strong people and strong communities, investing over $1 billion across a range of initiatives.

It is a whole-of-government social policy action plan to address disadvantage and promote inclusion and participation.

Cultural Diversity Plans

A Fairer Victoria and the Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 require all departments to develop Cultural Diversity Plans to provide for culturally sensitive service delivery to all Victorians. Departments report on the progress of the development and implementation of their plans through their annual reporting on the Victorian Government’s achievements in multicultural affairs.

Departments are required to:

- incorporate culturally appropriate training for their staff into the delivery of services to our CALD communities;
- ensure that information on services is readily available to CALD communities; and
- assess the effectiveness of service delivery to CALD communities as an integral part of program evaluation.

Multicultural Education Strategy

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is developing a new Multicultural Education Strategy to revitalise the existing policy framework. The new strategy is developed around the notion of global and multicultural citizenship and aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for living and working in a culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse society and within a global, networked community.

Justice Statement 2 (2008)

The Justice Statement 2 outlines a series of reforms to take Victoria’s justice system forward, making it fairer, more accessible and more responsive to the Victorian community. The Statement aims to further protect the rights of all Victorians and address issues of disadvantage and offending in the criminal justice system.

Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008)

The Victorian Government’s Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development is a comprehensive five-year plan that brings together a new vision and mission, along with goals and priority areas that deliver on these reforms.

Future Directions: An Action Agenda for Young Victorians (2006)

Future Directions is the Victorian Government’s plan for all young Victorians. It specifies five outcomes: contributing and making a difference; achieving potential through informed life choices; having resources and making connections; managing healthy active and diverse lives; and being safe and promoting safe behaviours.

Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan: 2008-2010

The plan builds on the framework of the first Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, launched in 2005, and extends across the health and human services system. It highlights the key needs of refugees and details how the Department of Human Services and its funded organisations respond to these needs. These responses include statewide programs, regionally-based activity and local innovations.


This statement outlines how the Victorian Government intends to meet the challenges and opportunities of Victoria’s innovative, productive and internationally competitive economy with a better vocational education and training system.


The strategy focuses on meeting the current and future labour needs of Victoria’s industry by increasing the opportunity and capacity of all Victorians to participate in the workforce.

Regional Tourism Action Plan (2009)

The Government set out its vision for tourism with the release of the ten-year Tourism and Events Industry Strategy. To further consolidate and refine the Government’s commitment to tourism in regional Victoria, the Regional Tourism Action Plan (RTAP) 2009-2012 has been developed.

The RTAP has four key cross-regional issues:

- Industry structures;
- Investment attraction;
- Destination marketing; and
- Skills and service standards.
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