



Factsheet: People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Background Information

Australia is a culturally and linguistically diverse nation. Some 46% of Australian's were born overseas or have a parent who was. Over 260 languages are spoken, in addition to Indigenous languages. Australian's identify with more than 300 ancestries.¹

As announced at Australia's first UPR, the Government appointed a full time Race Discrimination Commissioner to the Australian Human Rights Commission² and has funded the National Anti-Racism Strategy.³ The national multicultural policy has been revised,⁴ and two inquiries, the *Migration and Multiculturalism Inquiry*,⁵ and the *Access and Equity Inquiry*,⁶ have been conducted and finalised. Despite efforts to date, the expression of racial hatred and vilification continues to occur in Australia.

The Commission commends the Australian government for its ongoing commitment to combatting racism through the continuation of the National Anti-Racism Strategy Partnership. The national anti-racism campaign central to the Strategy, *Racism. It Stops with Me*, now has more than 320 organisational supporters.⁷

Key Issue – Implementation of inquiry recommendations

In 2012, an independent inquiry was conducted into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The *Access and Equity for a multicultural Australia Report* made 20 recommendations directed at building on Australia's strong multicultural foundation.⁸ In March 2013, the Australian Government expressed support for all of the inquiry's recommendations aimed at improving the response of government services to the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In March 2013, the Commission welcomed the release of the federal Joint Standing Committee on Migration report on the inquiry into multiculturalism in Australia.⁹ The report affirmed that multiculturalism is a success story, and stands as a good example to the world on how to build a cohesive society. The Commission encourages the Government to implement the Committee's 32 recommendations.

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that Government implement recommendations of the Migration and Multiculturalism and Access and Equity inquiries.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013*, Cat. No. 2071.0. At <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2071.0main+features902012-2013> (viewed 15 June 2015).

² Australian Human Rights Commission, 'Race Discrimination Commissioner Appointed' (Media Release, 3 August 2011). At <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/stories/2011-news-race-discrimination-commissioner-appointed> (viewed 15 June 2015).

³ Australian Human Rights Commission, *National Anti-Racism Strategy and Racism, It Stops with Me*. At <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/projects/national-anti-racism-strategy-and-racism-it-stops-me-campaign> (viewed 15 June 2015).

⁴ Department of Social Services, *The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy*. At <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/publications/the-people-of-australia-australias-multicultural-policy> (viewed 15 June 2015).

⁵ House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Parliament of Australia, *Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia* (2013). At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_committees?url=mig/multiculturalism/report.htm (viewed 15 June 2015).

⁶ Access and Equity Inquiry Panel, *Access and Equity for a multicultural Australia. Inquiry into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2012). At <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/multicultural-access-and-equity/access-and-equity-for-a-multicultural-australia> (viewed 15 June 2015).

⁷ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Racism, It Stops with Me* Campaign. At <https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/> (viewed 15 June 2015).

⁸ Access and Equity Inquiry Panel, *Access and Equity for a multicultural Australia. Inquiry into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2012), p 11-12. At <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/multicultural-access-and-equity/access-and-equity-for-a-multicultural-australia> (viewed 15 June 2015).

⁹ House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Parliament of Australia, *Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia* (2013). At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_committees?url=mig/multiculturalism/report.htm (viewed 15 June 2015).