

September 2001

TASMANIAN MULTICULTURAL POLICY

Multiculturalism

Among the most profound changes in Australia over the past 50 years has been the evolution in public policy from the White Australia Policy to a non-discriminatory immigration policy, with the parallel transition from assimilation to integration and then to multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism has evolved beyond its origins, where most of the focus was on post-arrival settlement programs, to an issue of importance to the whole community, vital to our sense of ourselves as Australians.

Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world and certainly one of the most successful in developing a cohesive, harmonious society from this multicultural diversity. Tasmania in its own right is a dynamic and diverse society with a great range of cultures, languages and religions.

This Multicultural Policy provides a framework for all Tasmanians encouraging them to express, value and share one another's cultural heritage. The Policy encourages full participation in the cultural, social and economic opportunities that Tasmania offers.

Tasmanian Government Commitment to Multiculturalism

The Government recognizes that Tasmania is and will remain a culturally diverse society and affirms multiculturalism as the best way to manage this diversity. The Tasmanian Government believes that multiculturalism brings economic and social benefits to the State that enhance and strengthen every aspect of our day-to-day lives.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to fostering an inclusive, cohesive and open society and to developing strategies that promote equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all Tasmanians, regardless of their cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender, national origin, how long they have been here or where they live in the State.

To formalize this the Government has committed to a set of Principles to maximize the potential of multiculturalism for the benefit of all Tasmanians, and to assist in

strengthening our cohesive and harmonious society. These Principles are:

- To recognise and value the diversity of cultural and linguistic resources and the skills of all Tasmanians as social and economic assets, and to develop and use these resources and skills for the overall benefit of Tasmania,
- To recognise and encourage the right of all Tasmanians to participate in, and to contribute to, the social, political, economic and cultural life of Tasmania,
- To accept and respect the culture, language, and religion of all Tasmanians within the framework of the laws of the Commonwealth and the State,
- To recognise the rights of all Tasmanians to fair access to the services of the Tasmanian Government, taking into account the needs arising from the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community.

Links to Tasmania *Together*

Tasmania *Together* is the Tasmanian Government's 20 year Social, Environmental and Economic Plan. It is the overarching policy initiative into which all other plans, strategies and policies will dovetail.

Tasmania *Together* includes a set of vision statements, broad goals, and benchmarks that will shape government policy, service delivery and budgets for the foreseeable future.

A Progress Board will oversee progress on achieving the goals of Tasmania *Together* against benchmarks. These benchmarks include specific targets that need to be completed within set deadlines.

The Multicultural Policy supports the achievement of the Tasmania *Together* goals and benchmarks. In particular:

- Goal 1: Ensure all Tasmanians have a reasonable standard of living with regard to food, shelter, transport, justice, education, communications, health and community services.
- Goal 3: Recognise, encourage and value the many contributions that volunteers and unpaid workers can – and do –make to their community.
- Goal 9: Foster an inclusive society that acknowledges and respects our multicultural heritage, values diversity, and treats everyone with compassion and respect.
- Goal 16: Increase job and meaningful work opportunities in Tasmania.

Strategies/Action Plan

The Multicultural Policy has four interlinked objectives:

- to increase the share of migrants coming to Tasmania

- to improve the retention rate of migrants once they have arrived in Tasmania
- to improve access to Government services
- to improve understanding of the value and benefits of multiculturalism throughout the community.

Attached to the Policy is an Action Plan setting out initiatives under each of these objectives.

A number of them will aim to attract a larger share of migrants to Tasmania as well as initiatives to improve the retention rate of migrants once in the State.

It should be noted that when the general term of “migrants” is used it includes business migrants, skilled migrants, migrants from the family stream, and humanitarian entrants (including refugees).

The Government recognises that it is not enough to promote Tasmania as a great place to live without the support mechanisms in place for migrants once they arrive. Accordingly, actions are included to provide this support and enhance a ‘sense of belonging’ for the newly-arrived. This includes actions that improve and expand access to Government services.

Tasmania has a long history of receiving migrants from all parts of the world, and this State can be very proud of its ability to provide assistance to people in need. The State Government will take the lead in continuing to improve our understanding of the value and benefits of cultural diversity.

Extensive research and numerous reports to all levels of Government have highlighted the fact that migration provides a boost for economic growth. The recent Access Economics report to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs – Impact of Migrants on the Commonwealth Budget January 2001 – shows that the impact on the Commonwealth budget is positive in all but the first year for average total migration.

It is worth noting that if the Commonwealth immigration figures for 2001-02 remain at the same level over the next four years the economy will be \$3.7 billion better off over those four years.

Access Economics is due to release a report on the impact of migrants on State budgets in the near future. It is expected that the results will show that all types of migrants will have a positive budgetary effect after two to three years.

However, Tasmania’s total migration numbers have gone down steadily over the last 10 years as a direct consequence of the reduced migration program of the Commonwealth Government.

A number of the goals in Tasmania *Together*, particularly Goal 1, relate to improving Government services to the community. The Government has also committed to the Principles For Tasmania’s Culturally Diverse Society. One of the Principles mentioned earlier is “to recognise the rights of all Tasmanians to fair access to the

services of the Tasmanian Government, taking into account the needs arising from the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community.”

This can be seen as the long term overarching driver of this Policy, since without progress and improvement on this issue there will be little progress on the other three objectives.

There are a number of other Tasmania *Together* benchmarks that relate directly to this objective. For example, number and type of discrimination complaints and their outcomes; percentage of teachers who have received professional development training in dealing with race related discrimination and harassment; levels of serious discrimination against ethnic minorities; number of cultural events in each region and attendances; number of cultural awareness courses; number of programs delivered by major cultural institutions.

The Government recognizes that a crucial aspect of providing access to services to people from linguistically diverse backgrounds is ready access to language interpreters and translators. To this end, one of the actions under this policy is to establish a Government Language Services Policy.

At the 1996 Census, overseas-born people represented 23.3% of Australia’s total population but only approximately 10.8% of the population of Tasmania. This smaller number in Tasmania has led to some migrants feeling that they are isolated and discriminated against.

The Government plans a number of long term initiatives that will get the message across to the general community of the overwhelming benefits of multiculturalism to Tasmania. Indeed, cultural diversity is now generally seen as an indicator of an economy’s success.

Implementation

All Tasmanian Government agencies will be involved in implementing the Action Plan which sits beneath the Multicultural Policy through their programs and services. Multicultural Tasmania’s role is to undertake the following functions:

- co-ordinate whole-of-government policy development and planning under the Multicultural Policy
- conduct consultations with organizations and stakeholders in the community and across government on multicultural affairs
- provide advice and assistance to government agencies on the implementation of the Action Plan underpinning the Multicultural Policy
- co-ordinate and support the Interdepartmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs
- develop co-operative relationships with other spheres of government towards a more effective management of diversity issues.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs will work to ensure consistency in implementation of the Action Plan across government. In addition, Working Groups may be established to develop and support strategies such as those

on multicultural opportunities in trade and business.

Review & Reporting Requirements

Like all areas of public policy, multicultural strategies need to be continually reviewed and updated in the context of the changes in our society.

Agencies will incorporate relevant initiatives from the Multicultural Policy into normal strategic and operational planning processes. They will also report on implementation of the Action Plan in their annual reports.

TACMA (the Tasmanian Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs) will review the Multicultural Policy on an annual basis and will report on its implementation and progress to the Premier.

TASMANIAN MULTICULTURAL POLICY – ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE: Increase Tasmania’s share of migrants		
Action	Current Status	Options
<p>Ensuring infrastructure, support mechanisms and practices are in place for all migrants to participate in Tasmania’s economic, social, political and cultural life.</p>	<p>State Government agencies currently work with Local and Commonwealth Government, businesses and the community towards improving opportunities for migrants in order to ensure they are able to contribute to the State’s economic, social, political and cultural life.</p>	<p>Increase opportunities for migrants to access English language classes, traineeships, and bridging courses to increase job opportunities</p> <p>Encourage and assist migrants to share and to enhance the skills they have through information sessions and training courses on skills recognition.</p> <p>Recommendation: TAFE Tasmania and Multicultural Tasmania (MT) to develop and co-ordinate strategies.</p>
<p>Production of plain English (and other languages) promotional publication about Tasmania for distribution overseas.</p> <p>Marketing of Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) and Regional Established Business in Australia Scheme (REBA).</p> <p>[*RSMS allows employers in regional</p>	<p>MT and the Department of State Development (DSD) are responsible for the co-ordination of RSMS and REBA. Both programs have been successful in bringing skilled and business migrants into Tasmania.</p> <p>DSD in conjunction with MT has produced a promotional publication,</p>	<p>Focus marketing on industries identified as priorities for business opportunities and where skills shortages exist.</p> <p>Formalise arrangements for public servants and business people to distribute this and other publications.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p>

<p><i>Australia to nominate overseas people for permanent entry to Australia in circumstances where the employer is unable to recruit suitable skilled personnel through the local labour market.</i></p> <p><i>REBA allows people into regional Australia on Business (Long Stay) visas to apply for permanent residency two years after they have successfully established a business venture in a designated area of Australia.]</i></p>	<p>which ethnic communities have undertaken to distribute.</p> <p>The publication is being distributed, with the assistance of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), to all Australian embassies.</p> <p>Informally, senior public servants and business people travelling overseas have also distributed this publication.</p>	<p>DSD and MT to continue co-ordinating these activities.</p>
<p>Further development of “Migrating to Tasmania” website.</p>	<p>The current website receives around 60 hits a day and generates an average of 8 inquiries a week.</p>	<p>Continue to develop website and encourage State Agencies to have input.</p> <p>This website could be used to run e-campaigns targeted at filling identified skills shortages like nurses, psychologists, social workers, IT professionals, pharmacists, business migrants. Funding could be attracted from key industry bodies to offset the costs of site development.</p> <p>Examine the potential for other innovative uses of technology e.g. digital ‘infomercial’ for distribution through all overseas embassies and as part of e-campaigns to encourage people to come to Tasmania to live.</p>

		<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>MT and DSD to develop options to better use the website by November 2001.</p>
<p>Build on Tourism Tasmania marketing to position Tasmania as a good place to both visit and live.</p>	<p>Tasmania already benefits from the relationship between migration and tourism: migration leads to increased tourism (from family and friends) and increased tourism leads to further migration (from tourists who see the benefits of living in this State).</p>	<p>Investigate options for joint marketing campaigns targeting tourism, migration and international students.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>The Interdepartmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs to investigate options.</p>
<p>Develop a ‘meet and greet’ program for new business migrants and their families. [<i>*It should be noted that DSD is responsible for business migration to the State.*</i>]</p>	<p>There is no current formal ‘meet and greet’ program established in Tasmania. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that some migrants would appreciate this type of program.</p>	<p>Investigate utilising the skills of retiree business people for a ‘meet and greet’ program.</p> <p>This program could be contracted to service clubs or the Mentor Organisation who utilise the skills of experienced or retired business men and women. Participants would be required to meet service standards in terms of cross-cultural training participation.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>MT and DSD to develop a costed program proposal.</p>
<p>Use the State and Territory Nominated Independent (STNI) migration program to sponsor independent category applicants identified through skill</p>	<p>MT is liaising with the Tasmanian DIMA office to develop a model for Government to sponsor STNI migrants in areas of</p>	<p>Approach key industry councils to consider sponsoring skilled people in partnership with the State Government.</p>

<p>matching who are willing to settle and stay in Tasmania.</p> <p>Tasmania does not currently use the STNI program preferring to use RSMS which provides the migrant with a job in the State on contract for at least two years.</p> <p>Under STNI the sponsor of the migrant (State Government) is financially responsible for the migrant for the first two years even if they leave the State.</p>	<p>substantial skills shortages.</p>	<p>Consider developing a bond system for STNI applicants.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>MT to develop a costed proposal.</p>
<p>Work with DIMA to increase Tasmania's share of migration.</p>	<p>State Government Agencies, and in particular MT, already meet with DIMA on an ad hoc basis.</p>	<p>Formalize meetings with DIMA specifically to discuss issues affecting Tasmania's ability to attract and retain more migrants.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>MT to seek a regular meetings program with DIMA by October 2001.</p>

OBJECTIVE: Improve Retention Rate of New Migrants		
Action	Current Status	Options
Provide traineeships and bridging courses for migrants.	Courses currently provided are not specifically targeted at getting employment.	<p>The Office of Post Compulsory Education & Training (OPCET) to investigate ways, within current resources, to improve employment related courses for migrants, including the possibility of integrating TAFE Tasmania and Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) courses.</p> <p>Work with employers to encourage a partnership approach to support migrants entering the workplace.</p> <p>Recommendation: OPCET (with AMES and TAFE Tasmania) and MT to investigate options.</p>
Conduct additional English language classes for migrants.	<p>Up to 510 hours of English language tuition are provided free to all humanitarian entrants (except for Temporary Protection Visa holders) who are registered for employment.</p> <p>However, 510 hours is not enough for some migrant groups to acquire sufficient language skills for employment purposes.</p>	<p>Investigate means of providing additional English language classes, within existing resources, including consideration of means tested fees for service.</p> <p>Recommendation: TAFE, OPCET and MT to develop proposals.</p>
Provision of appropriate short-term	Housing Tasmania, MT and the	Consider using a private provider to manage

accommodation and bond assistance.	community sector are working together to develop a range of appropriate accommodation assistance options.	some housing for diverse communities. Recommendation: DHHS, MT with Migrant Resource Centres to investigate options.
Provision of adequate post-torture and trauma counselling services in the State.	Post-torture and trauma counselling is available Statewide but the North and North-West of the State receives the service on a needs basis as the counsellors are based in Hobart.	Make counselling services more readily available for those who require them, using the active support and referral networks of DHHS, community organizations and medical professionals such as general practitioners Recommendation: MT and DHHS to investigate options with Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) and the Phoenix Centre
Provision of support for new and emerging communities to improve settlement experiences.	An integrated service is provided through the Commonwealth's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme (IHSS).	Recommendation: Establish an Interdepartmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs. One of the tasks of the IDC is to develop proposals for improving support from State Agencies for new and emerging communities.
Develop a Multicultural Resource Directory of organisations which provide services to culturally diverse clientele.	No such Directory currently exists in Tasmania.	Recommendation: MT and IDC to develop costed proposals.
OBJECTIVE: Improving Access to Government Services		
Action	Current Status	Options

<p>Development of Language Services Policy for Government.</p>	<p>There is no current policy in the State, however, Anti-Discrimination legislation and the <i>Principles for Tasmania's Culturally Diverse Society</i> already underpin a 'service guarantee' for people of a language background other than English.</p>	<p>Recommendation: MT to develop draft policy as a proposal by December 2001.</p>
<p>Enhance translation and interpreting capacity in Tasmania.</p>	<p>Interpreting and Translation services for some languages are difficult to access within this State.</p>	<p>Use the existing resources within the State Government to develop a translation and interpreting capacity.</p> <p>Contract Tasmanian interpreters to provide these services and eventually seek to export this capacity in competition with other providers.</p> <p>A single Agency could act as a contact point for all translating and interpreting requests from State Government agencies.</p> <p>Tender the provision of translating and interpreting services to a provider or mix of providers on a strict performance based contract.</p> <p>Seek assistance with translation and advocacy services from trained volunteers from the same cultural community.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p>

		MT and the IDC to investigate the options and report to the Premier by February 2002.
Continue to fund qualified interpreters for those clients who require State Government services. This Service Guarantee is currently in practice.	Need to ensure that interpreters have access to specific medical and mental health and legal training in addition to the generalist qualifications.	Recommendation: As part of the Language Services Policy, MT to develop guidelines on use of interpreters by December 2001.
Audit language and cultural skills in Government.	There has been no audit completed in this area.	Recommendation: MT to undertake a comprehensive survey of language and cultural skills within government agencies.
Make appropriate use of the language skills of State Public Servants. Effective use of this resource could increase the number of available interpreters, thus enabling a more effective service to clients than is currently available, especially in emergencies. It is not envisaged that the use of State Service identified interpreters would be frequent.	This initiative follows on from the Government's language and cultural skills audit.	Subsidise attendance at courses on interpreting and the cost of accreditation. Consider appropriate recompense to employees providing interpretation or translation service. Recommendation: MT to investigate costs and options.
Provide multi-lingual information where relevant.	Some State Agencies already do this but it is not consistent across Government.	Encourage State Agencies to give more consideration to this practice. Recommendation: MT to prepare guidelines by November

		2001 for consideration by the IDC.
Survey of clients of Government services.	A comprehensive across-agency survey of clients from culturally diverse backgrounds has not been done.	The Multicultural Council of Tasmania (MCoT) could be funded to conduct a survey of culturally diverse clients of Government services. Recommendation: MT with MCoT to develop costed proposals.
Develop standardised data collection across Government to allow improved analysis of the appropriateness and accessibility of Government services to people of diverse backgrounds.	Results from Agency reports on the <i>Principles</i> indicate that the collection of data varies considerably across Agencies.	Seek the advice of the Tasmanian Statistical Advisory Committee, Treasury, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics on appropriate data collection systems and the application of standards across government for developing an understanding of their client profile. Departments could seek an exemption from data collection requirements if they substantially service internal clients or the costs of developing appropriate systems would outweigh the benefits to the Government. Recommendation: MT to develop a proposal for appropriate standardised data collection processes by April 2002.
Review existing services to ensure they	There has been no across-agency review	All Government services, including those

<p>provide culturally appropriate services to consumers from culturally diverse communities.</p>	<p>of services to ensure they provide a culturally appropriate service to clients from culturally diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>provided under contract, be reviewed (Departments with primarily internal clientele could apply for an exemption from this process).</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>MT and MCoT to start the review of services by March 2002. To be completed by September 2002.</p>
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OBJECTIVE: Improve Understanding of Value and Benefits of Multiculturalism		
Action	Current Status	Options
Cross-Cultural Awareness Training.	Cross-cultural training is provided to some extent by all State Agencies. However, the training is not a requirement for employees with client contact, other than police officers.	Provide cross-cultural training to all employees who have client contact. Other employees could be offered the course as part of their staff development. Include cross-cultural training as part of agency orientation packages. Recommendation: MT to facilitate through the IDC with a program in place by June 2002.
Maintain commitment to the <i>Principles</i> to guide the development of policies and services of all Government agencies.	Public sector agencies already report annually to MT on the application of the <i>Principles</i> .	The <i>Principles</i> could underpin a policy document (in conjunction with the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act</i>) on access to Government services and programs. Recommendation: IDC to develop draft.
Hold workshops on the value of multiculturalism with non-government organizations, local communities and the private sector.	MT currently provides workshops on request.	Recommendation: MT to continue to provide as resources permit.