



Queensland Cultural Diversity Policy

Queensland, rich in our diversity.



Vision for Queensland

Our vision is to provide equality of opportunity for all Queenslanders so that each and every person can participate in our strong economy and enjoy our vibrant society.



Cover images top left, clockwise:

Image 1 – Photographer: Leanne Butterley.

Image 2 – Photographer: Neda Lundie.

Image 3 – Photographer: Leanne Butterley.

Image 4 – Photographer: Neda Lundie.



Queensland Multicultural Week launch. Photo courtesy of BEMAC.



46,300 people

Overseas migration to Queensland is the largest contributor to the states population.



20.5 %

880,600 people of Queensland's total resident population stated they were born overseas, an increase from 17.9% at the 2006 Census.

A whole-of-government commitment

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all Queenslanders.

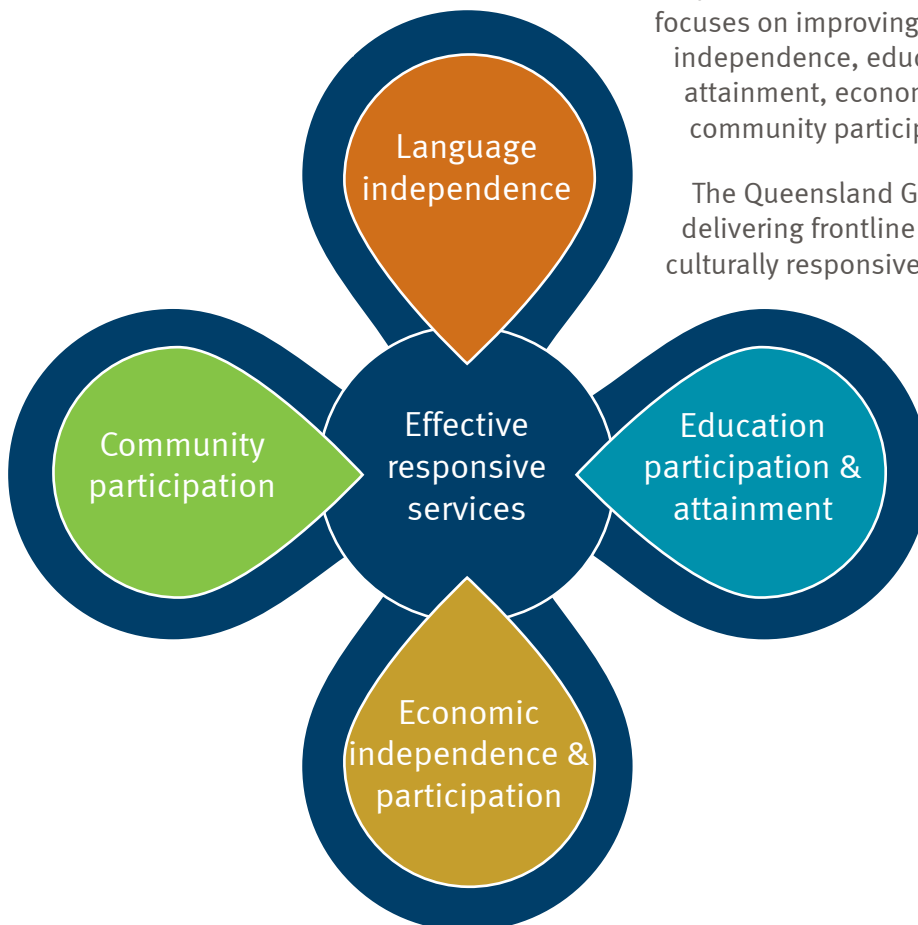
Queensland is filled with a richness and diversity of cultures which we acknowledge and celebrate; and we recognise this as a result of our long history of migration. A culturally diverse community is one that is innovative, economically strong and socially vibrant, because it is open to a rich diversity of ideas, skills, traditions and customs.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that all Queenslanders can fully participate in our economy and society, whether born in or having migrated to our state, whether residing in one of our cities, or calling one of our regional centres 'home'.

The *Queensland Cultural Diversity Policy* (the Policy) focuses on improving outcomes to language independence, education participation and attainment, economic independence and community participation.

The Queensland Government is committed to delivering frontline services that are the best culturally responsive services in Australia.

The government is committed to supporting the continued growth and development of strong culturally diverse communities across our state.



Making it happen

The Policy shares the same vision as the preliminary targets identified in *The Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland – our working draft* (The Queensland Plan).

The alignment between the Policy and *The Queensland Plan* will contribute to shaping a future full of opportunities for all Queenslanders in the regions, its education, its economy, governance, its people and the community preliminary targets' outline in the Queensland Plan.

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting Queensland's regions. *The Queensland Plan* highlights the priority for regionalisation. For places like Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, and our mining and agricultural hubs, a whole-of-government response is required to make this vision a reality and support the culturally diverse communities who will call these areas home.

Cultural Diversity Queensland (CDQ), as part of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs (DATSIMA), has the whole-of-government lead for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy.

The first Queensland Government Cultural Diversity Action Plan will be finalised in 2014 to support whole-of-government policy outcomes and contribute to the delivery of the vision.

We will partner with business, industry, community and non-government sectors to combine skills, experience and capacity to achieve the outcomes.

CDQ, with its partners, will monitor progress against the policy outcomes and action plan. Progress will be published annually by agencies on their websites so culturally diverse communities and the broader Queensland community can monitor achievements.

Preliminary targets of the Queensland Plan

People

Double the proportion of Queenslanders over 55 years who participate in the community and workforce.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have the same workforce participation as non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

Queensland is the best place to live in Australia.

Education

100 per cent of Queensland children have basic literacy and numeracy in primary school.

Education is highly valued by all Queenslanders.

Governance

Queenslanders are highly satisfied with the way governments deliver for their communities.

Regions

Half of Queensland's population lives outside South East Queensland.

Environment

Queensland has the best balance of environmental protection and economic development in Australia.

Health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have the same life-expectancy as non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

Queenslanders have the lowest incidence of preventable diseases in Australia.

Economy

Queensland has the highest income, trade and employment levels in Australia.

Our bright ideas have real economic and social benefits.

Community

Increase the wealth of all Queenslanders while achieving Australia's narrowest gap between the wealthy and the poor.

Queensland has the highest rates of volunteering and community participation in Australia.

Anyone who makes Queensland their home has employment opportunities and is welcomed into the community.

Infrastructure

The right infrastructure is delivered in the right place at the right time.

Source: The Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland 'preliminary targets'.

Outcome 1:

Language independence

Queenslanders speak more than 220 languages and come from more than 220 countries. One in five Queenslanders was born overseas. More than one third of Queenslanders were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas. Approximately one in 10 Queenslanders speaks a language other than English at home.

A key element to ensuring equality of opportunity is for every Queenslander to have the ability to independently communicate in English.

Economic and social participation for some people from culturally diverse backgrounds can be limited due to a lack of proficiency in English.

This can impact on a person's ability to find employment, perform at school, access health and other services, understand legal requirements, and generally participate in the Queensland community.

Priorities

DATSIMA is reviewing the existing *Language Services Policy* to ensure best practice is being delivered to Queenslanders. All Queensland Government agencies are responsible for implementing initiatives that contribute to addressing this outcome including the following:

- ensuring Queensland is considered the best practice state for the provision of language services and support for English language learning
- partnering with the non-government sector to build English language programs that are delivered where ever people live in Queensland
- promoting alternative pathways for improving English skills within the community
- identifying innovative approaches to service delivery that improve access to government services
- providing adequate translation and interpreter access so individuals learning English can fully understand services available
- providing information in languages other than English.



100%

The Queensland Plan outlines a preliminary target of 100 per cent of Queensland children having basic literacy and numeracy in primary school.

Issues

Access to interpreters and translated resources will continue to be necessary for individuals who need assistance to communicate effectively with government services, and to participate in other aspects of the community.

The availability of information in languages other than English will also assist with comprehension, and assist with particular cultural and language needs of culturally diverse communities for such purposes as policy and program development.

An inability to communicate can be one of the greatest forms of isolation for people from diverse backgrounds.

Current actions

- The Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts is **investigating and undertaking customer research to ensure culturally diverse communities can access a full range of government services online**, including considering opportunities to foster language independence.
- The State Library of Queensland is increasing Queensland content on, and usage of the **MyLanguage website which supports libraries to provide online information to culturally diverse communities**, and complements public libraries' Language Other than English (LOTE) collections.
- **The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) is fostering an understanding of, and providing access to, Queensland tenancy information** for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This will build on existing information channels for improving outreach activities with community support groups.



62,400

People in Queensland do not speak English well or at all.

Outcome 2:

Education participation and attainment

Participating in and attaining an education is essential for culturally diverse Queenslanders to maximise employment opportunities and become economically independent.

Priorities

The Queensland Government values education as a means to securing opportunities for culturally diverse Queenslanders and improving the competitiveness of our economy. This outcome can be achieved with programs and services including:

- ensuring schools with high numbers of culturally diverse students are provided adequate support
- ensuring Queensland is considered the best practice state for providing 'English-as-a-second-language' programs in schools
- ensuring strategies are implemented that support access to and participation of families and children from culturally diverse backgrounds in a quality early childhood education program.

Issues

Young people from culturally diverse backgrounds can experience poor educational outcomes for a number of reasons including:

- past education being interrupted or delivered to a different standard to that in Australia
- overcrowding at home making it difficult for students to study
- limited English language proficiency
- responsibility for caring for other children in the household due to cultural norms, impacting on school attendance.



30 year vision

The Queensland Plan 30 year vision outlines education being highly valued by all Queenslanders with a curriculum that is flexible and future focused.



Photo courtesy of Tourism Australia.

Current actions

- The Queensland Government is **supporting students from non-English speaking backgrounds** in schools and TAFE Institutes.
- The Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) is providing **'English as a Second Language' programs** in schools and TAFE Institutes. DETE is developing **school-based initiatives for refugee students** which support their learning, social and psychological needs.
- DETE is also **supporting families from culturally diverse backgrounds** to access and participate in quality early childhood education programs through a range of initiatives that include: **community based family engagement and support programs**, kindergarten transition support programs, **free translation and interpretation services**, and professional development activities and **resources for educators**.

Outcome 3:

Economic independence and participation

The Queensland Government is committed to achieving a four per cent unemployment target by 2018.

We are committed to growing a four pillar economy by making use of our productive diversity—by utilising our cultural knowledge to understand overseas markets, encouraging and supporting small business development and assisting the economic independence and participation of culturally diverse Queensland communities.

Priorities

All Queensland Government agencies are responsible for implementing innovative initiatives to capitalise on the economic opportunities our diversity presents. Forging *new* partnerships and developing *new* pathways will create *new* opportunities for economic independence and participation including:

- ▶ promoting pathways to employment, business start-ups and ownership, and financial independence
- ▶ collaborating with the private sector to generate employment opportunities for Queensland's culturally diverse communities
- ▶ ensuring Queensland is the best-practice state in the recognition of overseas skills and qualifications to enable integration of new migrants into the Queensland labour market
- ▶ supporting the growth of culturally diverse businesses and promoting pathways for culturally diverse Queenslanders to establish businesses
- ▶ supporting the families of skilled migrants and international students to participate in the broader Queensland community
- ▶ promoting pathways into the workforce of the future for international students studying in Queensland.

We use our flexible, knowledgeable and resilient workforce to drive productivity.

We have a diverse workforce, with increased participation of groups previously underrepresented.

Issues

Some members of culturally diverse communities can often experience issues finding appropriate employment due to their qualifications, skills and achievements not being recognised. Lack of Australian work experience, a limited understanding of Australian workplace culture, networks and contacts, lack of Australian-based referees, and lack of English proficiency are also limiting factors.

People from culturally diverse communities can have limited awareness of relevant laws, regulations and government processes which may impede otherwise strong entrepreneurial spirit and determination to commence operating a small business.

Current actions

- Working in partnership with Trade and Investment Queensland and DETE to **ensure necessary 'social infrastructure'** is in place for students who are studying in Queensland to have a trouble free experience and to continue to **encourage more international students to study in Queensland.**
- DETE is **providing additional support and assistance** under the new Community Learning initiative **to disadvantaged learners who are not accessing income support or Australian Government employment assistance**, to participate in and complete vocational training up to a Certificate III qualification.
- The Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games is **enhancing the participation of culturally diverse Queenslanders in the Mentoring for Growth (M4G) program**—encouraging participation of culturally diverse businesses in mentoring sessions.



17,500

Queensland received 17,500 migrants through the skilled migration stream, an increase of 8.5 per cent from the previous year.



10.6 %

The unemployment average for migrants who arrived in Australia since 2011 was 10.6 per cent, compared to 5.9 per cent for people born in Australia.

Outcome 4:

Community participation

The Queensland Government values the contribution of each and every person who has chosen to call Queensland home. Building independence amongst culturally diverse communities encourages participation and contribution to the broader Queensland community. Ensuring the participation and contribution of every Queenslanders means ensuring that each of us feels welcome and a part of the community.

Priorities

All Queensland Government agencies are responsible for implementing initiatives that contribute to addressing this outcome, including:

- ▶ developing capability and leadership within culturally diverse communities
- ▶ enabling community organisations to support individual members
- ▶ encouraging civic and cultural participation
- ▶ improving acceptance and understanding of cultural diversity
- ▶ promoting awareness of services to new migrants
- ▶ improving support for migrants to connect with their local community.

Issues

Perceptions whether accurate or not, can impact how some individuals interact with culturally diverse individuals, and can influence how culturally diverse communities are accepted into the community.

Factors which contribute to inaccurate perceptions of culturally diverse communities include social isolation, poor English proficiency and weak social engagement with the general population.

Those who become socially isolated through poor English proficiency or negative perceptions can face difficulties integrating and actively participating in the community.

Every Queensland individual, community group, business and organisation has a responsibility to accurately reflect the positive contributions of culturally diverse individuals and communities, work together to break down negative stereotypes, and put in place positive reinforcements to actively change negative perceptions.



Community

A preliminary target that Queensland will have the highest rates of volunteering and community participation in Australia.



Queensland Multicultural Awards 2013
Photographer: Leanne Butterley.

Current actions

The **'It's our Parliament'** program **links Queensland Members of Parliament with culturally diverse communities** with a high representation in their electorate. Visits to Parliament House are arranged for specific community groups, particularly new and emerging communities, to assist them develop a better understanding of Australia's democratic system and processes.

The inaugural annual **Queensland Multicultural Week** was held from 31 August to 8 September 2013, including events across Queensland which celebrated the benefits of cultural diversity. The **Valuing Diversity grants** program plays an important role in developing the state's cultural maturity and reinforcing the importance and benefits of a culturally diverse community.

Queensland State Archives is investigating **an online Queensland map which shows significant settlements and communities** with links to information and records.

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs has established the **Cultural Diversity Roundtable** to provide an effective mechanism to 'hear' the needs of Queensland's culturally diverse communities as issues arise. The Roundtable includes representation from diverse communities, non-government service providers, business leaders and regional Queensland.

DATSIMA has recruited two Cultural Diversity Officers to be based in Logan as a part of the development and roll-out of a new **Regional Service Delivery model** to ensure effective engagement with culturally diverse communities, so people can access services they need and those services are coordinated at a regional level.

The Department of Health is **encouraging and supporting collaboration and partnerships** that make the healthcare system less complicated and more accessible for Queensland's culturally diverse communities.

The Department of Housing and Public Works provides a range of products and services to **assist low-income households** into the private market, such as the **RentConnect** program and low interest loans. The department is also developing new approaches for providing private market assistance.

In summary...

As our state's diversity continues to grow it is critical we continue to recognise the custodianship of the land and enduring traditions and cultures of the 'First Australians', the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. A separate Economic Participation Framework focuses on providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

This policy focuses on opportunities for our newest Australians.

Queensland reaps significant economic and social benefits both from its cultural diversity and through continuing migration. Through their skills, knowledge, ingenuity and sheer effort, generations of migrants have been instrumental in developing our economy and enriching our social and cultural profile.

We value cultural diversity and are committed to ensuring that every single Queenslanders has the opportunity to participate in our great state both economically and in our community.

Cultural diversity must be about maximising its benefits for our state, and making sure all Queenslanders can access the same opportunities and support. No matter how people come to Queensland, we have a responsibility to do what we can to make sure they can participate in our economy and community as quickly and as fully as possible.

Valuing cultural diversity is about being able to express and share cultural traditions, practices and beliefs while unifying the whole community within the framework of Australia's democracy and rule of law. We need to recognise our cultural diversity as a positive and valuable resource for our great state.

We welcome cultural diversity as a strength.

Embracing cultural diversity ensures a fair go for everyone, helps eliminate discrimination, and strengthens cohesion in our society.

The Honourable Glen Elmes, MP
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander and Multicultural Affairs and
Minister Assisting the Premier

Robert Cavallucci, MP
Assistant Minister for
Multicultural Affairs

A culturally diverse community
is a vibrant community.

A culturally diverse community
is one open to new ideas,
tastes and customs.



Photo courtesy of BEMAC.

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