



The Research Director  
Communities Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane, Qld, 4000  
Email: cdsdfvpc@parliament.qld.gov.au

**Submission: Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Firstly Access Community Services (Access) would like to compliment the Government on its introduction of the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015, it is timely and prudent to have such legislation in Queensland.

This submission is made on behalf of Access Community Services an organisation with a proud 31 year history of working with multicultural leaders, communities and clients. Access is one of Australia's leading settlement service providers and has a proven track record in the delivery of settlement and multicultural services. Access provides a range of state-wide services, our initial service delivery location was Logan where our corporate headquarters are currently located. Logan is one of Queensland and Australia's most culturally diverse cities, over 215 different ethnic groups reside in Logan, over 1 in 4 residents in the city of Logan were born overseas and 37% speak at least one language other than English

Access would like to submit the following:

S 3 (c) (iv) That the word "particular" be removed and "all" be inserted, this section would now read "establishing reporting obligations for all government entities". Reporting obligations should be mandatory for all entities, large and small, committed and uncommitted. By ensuring that all entities report a significantly more profound positive impact will be made and no entity would be able to avoid reporting obligations and a commitment this legislation.

S 16 (2) "the council must meet at least twice a year", whilst Access acknowledges that this is the minimum number of meetings we would submit that there be a minimum of three meetings each year.

S 18 (1) Access strongly supports a summary of the meeting being published and considers that this will enhance transparency and accountability.

S 19 (1) It is recommended that the multicultural policy be reviewed and refreshed at least every three years from the policies previous release date.

S19 (2) (b) The multicultural policy must "state outcomes for services provided by government ..."  
Access would submit that an amendment be made to include mandatory ie: this section is amended to read (2) The multicultural policy must - "state mandatory outcomes for services by government entities to people from diverse backgrounds in the Queensland community; and". We would also submit that reporting on these mandatory outcomes be undertaken in a consistent manner by each entity.

S 19 (2) (c) ensuring a consistent approach for collecting statistical information about diversity of people who use services provided by government entities is strongly supported. It is recommended that this statistical information is compiled into a single document containing individual entity information and also summary information and that this document is released annually by the responsible lead department for multicultural affairs.



S 20 (2) (b) should apply to all government entities not “stated government entities”, every agency must consider the multicultural policy outcomes and their actions to implement the policy.

S 20 (2) (c) The inclusion of this section to “ensure services provided by entities are accessible to people who have difficulty understanding English or communicating in English” is applauded.

S 20 (3) (b) Access submits that a plan should be prepared every two years not three as listed.

S 21 (1) The Minister’s reporting should not be “as soon as practicable” it should be within 4 months or in the least in a time specified period from when the plan stops having effect.

S 22 It is recommended that a new section S22 (c) be inserted “ The Chief executive must report annually on the government entity’s website how this is done”.

S 24 (1) This reporting section should apply for every government entity not just those with 1 or more stated actions, the ones with stated actions will be those entities more committed and aligned with the multicultural action plan, a reporting obligation should not be avoided because of a lack of stated actions, every entity should be obliged to report. Every entity should also be bound by a number of actions under the action plan.

S 24 (2) Should have “as soon as practicable” removed and a timeframe inserted such as within 4 months after the end of the financial year.

S 24 should have another clause inserted eg S24 (4) obliging the lead department with responsibility for multicultural affairs to summarise and report on Government entities exemplary and/or concerning actions or lack of actions. This would assist in providing exemplars of positive actions and outcomes and also the awareness of entities not progressing the required outcomes.

#### Schedule 1 The Multicultural Queensland Charter

It is appropriate and strongly supported to acknowledge and honour Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples ....., the content of the Charter is supported.

Access would support the names of those on the Advisory Council being made public and that email addresses of Advisory Council members be available to the public so Council members may be contacted and advised of suggestions or issues of concern.

The improved collection of data across government is supported and needs to be compulsory, this will inform service delivery planning, gaps and issues. Given that there are no sanctions for non compliance a summary list should be made and published each year of each entity that complies with this requirement and a similar list of any entity that does not comply. We would propose that this collection of data is critical in informing culturally responsive service delivery.

Access proposes that a requirement be inserted that the Council hold at least one meeting a year in a regional location to allow the opportunity for regional community members to meet with and provide advice to the Council.

As an organisation that recognises the benefits of multiculturalism Access would like to see bi-partisan support for the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015 as we would also like to see for all major multicultural policies and funding initiatives.

Access again congratulates the Government on the introduction of the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015 and looks forward to the introduction of this legislation in due course.



We hope that the suggestions contained in this submission will assist the Committee with its important deliberations and look forward to seeing the Committee's final report in February.

Should you require further information or clarification in relation to the content of this submission please contact our Chief Operating Officer, Garry Page on email [REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely,

Gail Ker OAM  
CEO  
Access Community Services