

# Queensland Multicultural Policy

Second Progress Report 2019–2022



Queensland  
Government

Prepared by: Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of Environment and Science

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## Message from the Minister

Queensland is home to people from a diverse range of cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It's one of the many things that makes our state a great place to live.

The *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* promotes Queensland as a unified, harmonious and inclusive community and ensures services provided by government entities are responsive to all the people of Queensland. Importantly, the Act tells the story of who we are as Queenslanders, recognising first and foremost Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our forebears coming from many backgrounds and the rich diversity that characterises Queensland today. The Act establishes the Multicultural Queensland Charter, which sets out important principles of equity, fairness, welcome and belonging – a blueprint for an inclusive Queensland.

As Minister for Multicultural Affairs, it is a delight to work with many of our diverse communities. The past three years have been difficult, with the COVID-19 global pandemic natural disasters taking their toll. However, together we have risen to each of the challenges before us, demonstrating how communities can thrive when we all work together to ensure everyone is supported to connect, contribute and belong.

The Palaszczuk Government has continued to implement the vision outlined in the Queensland Multicultural Policy and delivered on the commitments in the second Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2019-2022.

This report, the second such report tabled under the Act, highlights some of our key achievements over the past three years in valuing and harnessing our cultural diversity. The report also presents our progress in achieving the Policy outcomes and identifies future opportunities to build on our strengths and ensure, as a government, we are responsive to the needs of all people in the community.

**Hon Leanne Linard MP**

**Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef**

**Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs**





## Acknowledgement

Both the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* and the Policy acknowledge the First Nations peoples of the land. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government are building a reframed relationship that acknowledges, embraces and celebrates Indigenous Australians, and builds on strengths to support thriving communities.

We are proud that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have continuing rights and responsibilities as the first peoples of Queensland, including traditional ownership and connection to land and waters. In the spirit of healing, we recognise the past acts of dispossession, settlement and discriminatory policies, and the cumulative acts of colonial and state governments since the commencement of colonisation which have left an enduring legacy of economic and social disadvantage that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced and continue to experience.

We will move forward together with mutual respect, recognition and a willingness to speak the truth about our shared history.

Through our continued shared commitment to reconciliation, all Queenslanders will be part of this journey.



## Impact of machinery-of-government changes

As part of the machinery-of-government changes, effective 18 May 2023, the Multicultural Affairs portfolio was transferred from the former Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA) to the Department of Environment and Science (DES).

For the purposes of this report, all actions that occurred during the period of 2019-20 to 2021-22 will refer to departmental arrangements as they were during this time. References to future actions have been updated to reflect the current departmental arrangements.

## Use of data sources

To inform our understanding of the impacts implementation of the Policy have had on the Queensland community, the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA) commissioned the following research:

- The Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion Queensland Report 2019, 2020 and 2021, which tracks Queensland public opinion on social cohesion, immigration and population issues.
- Community consultation undertaken by Market and Communications Research (MCR). MCR undertook market research examining the extent to which the three Policy priorities were achieved over the past three years. MCR undertook similar research in 2018 and comparisons have been made with these results.

In 2022, the research was conducted with a sample of Queensland's general population and a cross-section of the community in areas of high cultural and linguistic diversity. It included an online representative sample of 808 Queenslanders, including 21 per cent born overseas.

The research also included a targeted population sample collected via shopping centres (220 people, 61 per cent born outside Australia) and two humanitarian settlement providers (47 people, 100 per cent born outside Australia). This is comparable with the 2018 sample.

- Coinciding with the development of the Second Progress Report, DCYJMA contracted Synergistiq to evaluate the impact that the implementation of the Act has had on the community and government service delivery. Relevant findings from the evaluation have been included in this report.
- Information from a range of other sources was also used to inform the development of this report, including:
  - Queensland Government agencies' reports on the second Action Plan;
  - reporting under the Queensland Language Services Policy, providing information on the amount spent by the Queensland Government on interpreter services;
  - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 census data; and
  - feedback from the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council (the Council) on the outcomes and progress made in each of the Policy priorities.



## Impact of key global events

The period 2019 to 2022 has been a tumultuous time in Queensland and across the globe. A global pandemic, the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, civil unrest in a number of countries including for example in Iran and Sri Lanka, natural disasters across the world including floods in Pakistan and Brazil, earthquakes in Haiti and China, drought and associated famine in a number of African countries and war in Ukraine have all impacted communities here in Queensland.

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation characterised the spread of COVID-19 around the world as a pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). On 20 March 2020, the Australian Government closed Australia's borders to all travellers except Australian citizens, residents and their immediate family members and quarantine requirements were introduced for those returning to Australia (Australian Government, 2020).

Information about the Queensland Government response to the pandemic is included in the section on Priority One – Culturally responsive government.

The crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine have required responses outside the Australian Government's usual humanitarian intake process. Throughout these crises, DCYJMA has worked with the Australian Government, key non-government organisations and Queensland Government agencies to help ensure people have access to state-based services such as health, education and legal services.

In October 2021, the Queensland Attorney-General pledged \$400,000 in Queensland Government funding to assist Queensland's Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) to support its Afghanistan immigration legal clinic. This will help RAILS continue its vital work and support for our Afghanistan community.

In relation to Ukraine, the Queensland Government announced one-off funding of \$100,000 from 1 July 2022 to assist the Ukrainian Community of Queensland to support refugees and displaced persons coming to Queensland from Ukraine as well as impacted local community members. This will complement the work done by Multicultural Australia, the lead Humanitarian Settlement Program provider in Queensland, and help cover gaps in support that Multicultural Australia is not funded to provide.

In May, the Queensland Premier announced a Queensland Government donation of \$500,000 to the Ukrainian Crisis Appeal– the first such donation by an Australian jurisdiction.



## Who are Queenslanders?



**22.7 per cent (1,170,334)<sup>1</sup>** of Queenslanders were born overseas, a slight increase from **21.6 per cent** at the 2016 census.

**27.9 per cent** of Queenslanders had both parents born overseas.

While the 2021 Census shows us that the population in Queensland has increased over the last five years, including in its diversity, COVID-19 significantly impacted on overseas migration to Queensland. In 2020-21, Queensland's net overseas migration was negative 14,370 people, meaning that for the first time since 1972 Queensland lost more people through overseas migration than it gained. Temporary visa holders, including international students, represented the largest component of this loss, followed by New Zealand citizens. Due to the Australian Government's closure of the international border, Australian citizens returning to Australia were the largest positive contributor, followed by permanent visa holders (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2022).

There were 30,470 permanent residents who settled in Queensland in 2020-21. This included: 0.8 per cent or 240 humanitarian entrants, which is a significant decrease from previous years; 45.9 per cent (13,978) through family visa stream; and 53.3 per cent (16,252) skilled migrants. One in five (22.9 per cent) humanitarian arrivals were from Afghanistan. This data does not include Afghan citizens brought to Australia in the evacuation process following the conflict in August 2021, or subsequent arrivals following the Afghanistan conflict (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2022).

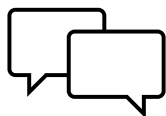
In 2021, the top overseas countries of birth for Queenslanders were:

New Zealand **4.0 per cent (208,572)**  
England **3.7 per cent (191,731)**  
India **1.4 per cent (71,819)**  
China **1.1 per cent (55,762)**  
Philippines **1.0 per cent (51,529)**



The most common reported ancestries in 2021 in Queensland were:

English (**38.0 per cent**)  
Australian (**33.4 per cent**)  
Irish (**11.0 per cent**)  
Scottish (**10.2 per cent**)  
German (**6.0 per cent**)



At the time of the 2021 Census **13.5 per cent (696,056)** of Queensland residents spoke a language other than English at home<sup>2</sup>.

Of these people, **90,855 (1.8 per cent)** do not speak English, or do not speak it well, an increase from 2016 (**1.6 per cent** or **75,532**).

<sup>1</sup> 306,000 people did not state a place of birth (5.9%).

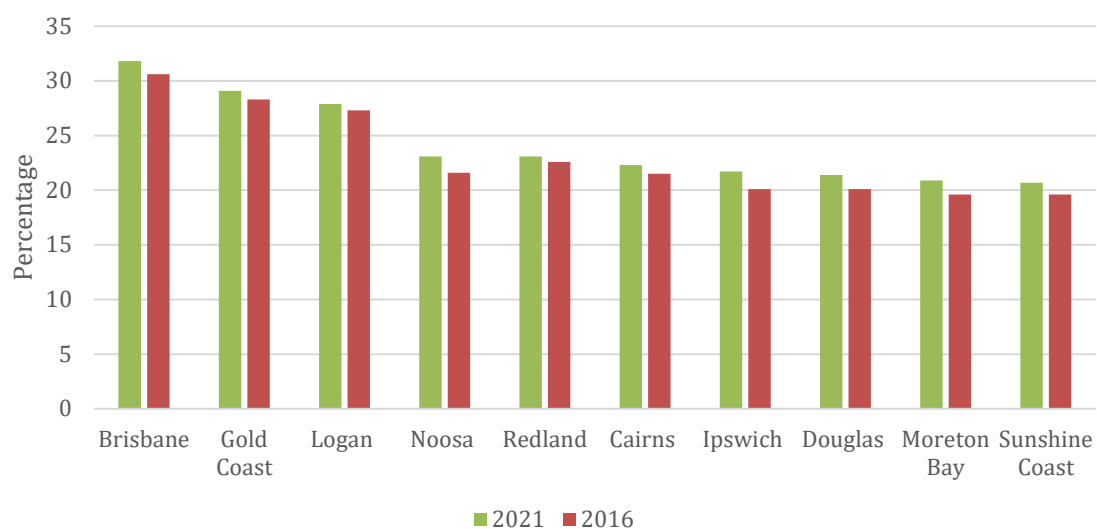
<sup>2</sup> Note: this includes Indigenous languages.



The most common languages other than English in 2021 were:

Mandarin (**1.6 per cent**)  
Vietnamese (**0.6 per cent**)  
Punjabi (**0.6 per cent**)  
Spanish (**0.6 per cent**)  
Cantonese (**0.5 per cent**)

Local government areas with the highest proportions of people born overseas



In the 2021 Census **50.7 per cent (2.6 M)** Queenslanders reported an affiliation with a religion. This is down from **60.3 per cent (2.8 M)** in the 2016 Census

## Multicultural Recognition Act 2016

The provisions of the Act support the Queensland Government's vision for an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland by establishing:

The Multicultural Queensland Charter (the Charter) and promotional responsibilities of chief executives	The Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council (the Council)	Queensland Multicultural Policy (the Policy) and Action Plan	Reporting obligations for government entities
The Charter is a set of eight principles that need to be considered by government entities when developing policies or providing services.	The Council provides advice to the Minister on issues faced by people from diverse backgrounds and the promotion of multiculturalism.	The Policy and Action Plan focus on the Queensland Government's role and actions to support an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland.	All government entities with listed actions are required under the Act to report publicly on the progress of their actions as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year.

Key milestones relating to the implementation of the Act are outlined below:



## Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council

The Council was established under the Act and advises the Minister for Multicultural Affairs on opportunities and barriers facing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and how to promote the Charter to support a unified, harmonious and inclusive community.

The Minister for Multicultural Affairs chairs the 11-member Council, which advises on:

- the needs, aspirations and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds;
- promoting the principles of the Charter within the Queensland community;
- developing and implementing government policies about multiculturalism; and
- how government-funded services and programs can be responsive to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds.

In August 2019, the second term of the Council was appointed for three years. Members' profiles for the second term Council are included in Appendix 2.

### Council achievements 2019 to 2022

**2019** Consulted with community members on the Gold Coast to explore and identify actions to promote and maintain positive mental health and suicide prevention amongst people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

**2020** Met with representatives from the Queensland Public Sector Commission (PSC), Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) and Queensland Health (QH) to discuss diversity and inclusion in the public sector and the progress of actions in the second Action Plan.

Released a statement, through the Chair of the Council, in support of communities directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19.

Consulted young people in Townsville to explore young people's attitudes towards multiculturalism, immigration and people from diverse backgrounds and identify ways to promote and maintain positive views on multiculturalism in Queensland.

**2021** Met with the Deputy Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner regarding the increase in racially motivated incidents during the pandemic.

Met with the Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) and a representative from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to discuss activities to address domestic and family violence.

	In collaboration with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), consulted with community members in Cairns on the development of a National Anti-Racism Framework.
	Provided a submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's Inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes.
2022	Provided a submission to the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC) as part of their review of the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991</i> .
	Met with the 2032 Taskforce for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to commence discussions on ensuring the event is genuinely inclusive of Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
	Supported Welcoming Australia to facilitate a workshop with Wide Bay region local councils focussed on fostering welcome and belonging for multicultural communities in regional areas.
	Participated in the annual Darkness to Daylight walk to drive community awareness and raise funds to help prevent domestic and family violence.

In 2022, a recruitment process was undertaken for the third term of the Council and the following members were appointed in October 2022:

- Mr Beny Bol OAM
- Dr Alvaro Ignacio Correa-Velez (reappointment)
- Mr Ameya Bhagwant Deshmukh
- Mrs Kenny Duke
- Dr Faiza El-Higzi OAM (reappointment)
- Ms Anna Jones
- Mr Timothy Lo Surdo
- Miss Madina Mohmood (resigned)
- Mr Giridharan Sivaraman (reappointment)
- Mr Andrew Taukolo
- Miss Fardowsa Mohamed Yussuf

Ms Roselle Tennefrancia was appointed to the Council in July 2023.



## The Multicultural Queensland Charter

The Charter is a written statement, enshrined in the Act. It features eight principles concentrating on respect, equality, commitment and participation.

### **The Multicultural Queensland Charter**

1. A shared commitment to Queensland and Australia, and a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law, fosters a strong and unified community.
2. The people of Queensland come from many diverse backgrounds and have worked, and continue to work, together to build a prosperous, fair and harmonious Queensland.
3. The people of Queensland should be able to express and celebrate, in a lawful way, their cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.
4. Equal rights and responsibilities under the law and equitable access to the services provided or funded by the government for all people of Queensland helps build a fair community.
5. A shared commitment, among members of the Queensland community, to mutual respect, fair treatment and valuing the diversity of peoples in the community fosters a caring, safe and inclusive community.
6. The creation of opportunities that encourage the full participation of people from diverse backgrounds in the cultural, economic, political and social life of Queensland helps build a prosperous state.
7. Sustained, respectful and inclusive engagements between all individuals, groups and the government are a basis for mutual understanding.
8. A unified and harmonious community promotes a sense of belonging among its people and builds community confidence and resilience.

## Our story, our future - Queensland Multicultural Policy

The Policy vision is for an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland where people of all cultures, languages and faiths feel a strong sense of belonging and can achieve their goals.

The Policy promotes the principles of the Charter, outlining priorities and outcomes that will benefit people from culturally diverse backgrounds

Policy priority	Anticipated outcomes
Culturally responsive government	Improved knowledge about customers' diversity
	Culturally capable services and programs
	A productive, culturally capable and diverse workforce
Inclusive, harmonious and united communities	Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture
	Queenslanders celebrate our multicultural identity
	Connected and resilient communities
	A respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity
Economic opportunities	Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections
	Individuals supported to participate in the economy



## Second Queensland Multicultural Action Plan

In 2019, a second Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2019-20 to 2021-22 (the second Action Plan) was released. The second Action Plan featured 33 broad new or extended actions, including four whole-of-government actions, and 218 sub-actions that were delivered across 30 agencies. Queensland Government agencies reported annually on their progress in delivering the actions outlined in the second Action Plan. For links to agencies' most recent annual reports, visit: <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/policy-governance/policy-plan>

As of 15 October 2022, 30 of the 33 broad actions have been 'completed' for the duration of the second Action Plan.

Many of the actions under the second Action Plan, while reported as 'completed', continue to be the subject of agency work and focus, as the actions are intended to be embedded in agency business as usual.

Actions are reported as 'incomplete' where not all agencies signed up to the action have reported the action as complete, reporting either 'incomplete' or 'yet to commence'.

The Second Progress Report is structured around the three Policy priorities, with a focus on reporting the outcomes of the second Action Plan. The report does not capture the full range of activities undertaken by the Queensland Government but highlights a number of key activities that support the Policy priorities and outcomes.

Detailed information on the implementation status of actions, in particular details of incomplete actions, are set out under the relevant priority area where the second Action Plan is discussed in detail later in the Second Progress Report.





## Evaluation of the Implementation of the Act

In 2017, following the commencement of the Act, a monitoring and evaluation framework was developed to focus on the implementation and impact of the new Act, including whether the Queensland Government has been effective in addressing the purposes of the Act and what if any changes might be required for greater effectiveness. Part of the framework was to conduct an outcome evaluation after five years of implementing the Act.

In 2021, DCYJMA engaged Synergistiq to conduct the evaluation, which involved a community-wide survey, community-specific focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders, as well as interviews with local residents in four locations across Queensland.

Key findings from the evaluation report include:

- Implementation of the Act is improving government practice and services are more culturally appropriate, including embedding the Act and Charter as part of induction processes in Queensland Government agencies.
- Levels of awareness of, and familiarity with, the Act and Charter vary across government staff, with those working in central offices more likely to be aware than those working in front line or field-based roles.
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were largely positive about their experiences of living in Queensland and feel welcomed.
- There were perceptions that racism has been decreasing and acceptance of diversity has increased over the last five years, however most participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds reported having experienced racism since living in Queensland.
- While some stakeholders felt they had been afforded suitable employment and were able to attain leadership opportunities, many felt barriers still existed, including language proficiency, overseas qualifications not being recognised and lack of Australian experience or a professional network.
- Most stakeholders who had attended cultural events felt these had been a valuable experience for bringing people together.

Relevant findings of the evaluation have been incorporated into the Second Progress Report and will be considered in upcoming Action Plans under the Act, where relevant.



## Priority 1: Culturally Responsive Government

*Culturally responsive government is about:*

- *Improving knowledge about customers' diversity;*
- *Culturally capable services and programs; and*
- *A productive, culturally capable and diverse workforce.*

### **Second Action Plan**

The second Action Plan included 17 broad actions under Priority area 1.

All 17 broad actions (100 per cent) have been completed for the duration of the second Action Plan. Some work will continue outside the second Action Plan as these activities become business as usual for Queensland Government.

A thematic analysis of agencies' annual progress reports under the second Action Plan revealed some key themes for agencies' actions to address the outcomes under Culturally responsive government.

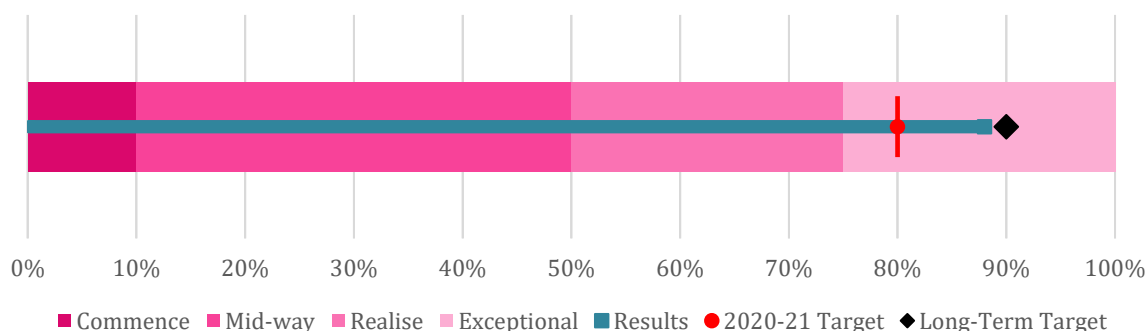
#### *Improved knowledge about customers' diversity*

Under the Policy, certain agencies are specified to collect minimum mandatory indicators – country of birth, preferred language and whether an interpreter is required. Following machinery-of-government changes in 2020, these agencies are:

- Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
- Department of Education
- Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Queensland Corrective Services
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
- Queensland Health (including Hospital and Health Services)
- Queensland Police Service

Despite being included in the Policy, the QPS was not included as a lead agency in relation to the corresponding actions in the second Action Plan. The below analysis does not, therefore, include the QPS.

Chart A - Proportion of identified agencies that have improved the collection and availability of data relating to culturally and linguistically diverse customers and using it to inform service delivery



The information in Chart A is taken from agencies' 2020-21 annual reports on progress on the action in the second Action Plan, that agencies '*deliver agency implementation plans to improve the collection, use and availability of information on customers from culturally diverse backgrounds*'. There were similar actions included in the first Action Plan (which covered 2016-17 to 2018-19), to:

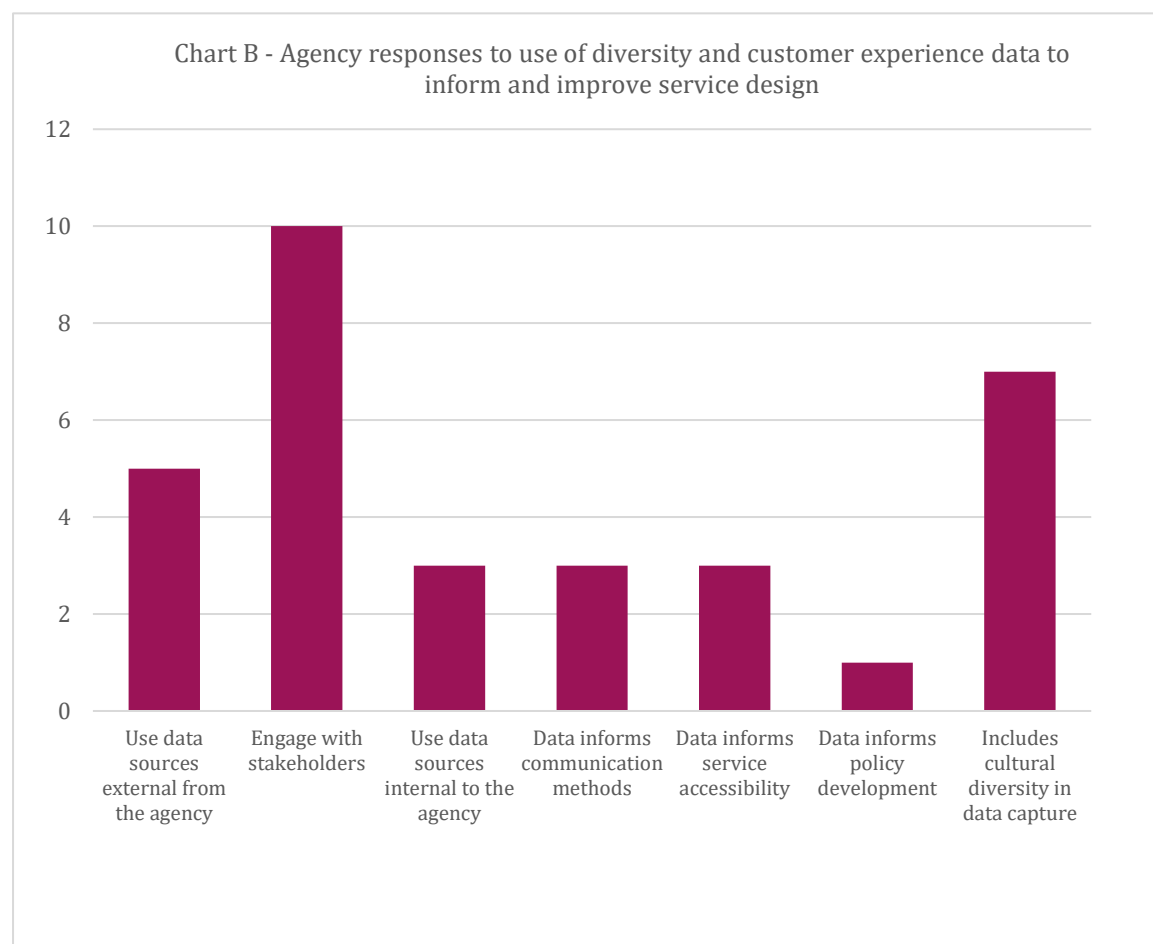
- Develop agency implementation plans outlining the steps needed for the government agency to collect and report on the minimum mandatory indicators for culturally diverse customers.
- Ensure relevant staff are aware of the minimum mandatory indicators for culturally diverse customers and of the importance of capturing this information.
- Develop a plan to ensure that the improved data regarding culturally diverse customers is aggregated and published on a regular basis, subject to all privacy requirements being met.

Although in 2020-21 and 2021-22 many departments reported the action relating to improving data collection as 'completed', the action was designed as a continuation of the actions in the first Action Plan and to lead to continuous improvement in the collection, use and availability of information on Queensland Government customers from culturally diverse backgrounds. There is still a lot that can be done to improve the collection and availability of information about government customers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. While the action has been reported as 'completed', agencies are continuing with implementation activities under this action, with work underway in relevant agencies to continue to work towards collecting information on customers from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Agency implementation plans were introduced in 2016 so that agencies could identify what needed to be done to improve data collection and the steps to achieve the collection and use of this data. The eight agencies identified in the Policy reported on this action. Five of the eight agencies signed up to this action reported that they had systems in place to enable the capture of the minimum mandatory indicators (DCYJMA, DJAG, Department of

Education (DoE), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), and QH). Three agencies identified they had a plan in place to improve the collection of data relating to culturally diverse customers (QH, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (DCHDE) and Queensland Corrective Services). Two agencies indicated they had other processes in place to understand customers' diverse needs (Department of Transport and Main Roads and DCYJMA).

The second action, for agencies to *'use diversity and customer experience data to inform and improve service design'*, was new for the second Action Plan and was designed to progress the use of captured data to better inform service design so that government services become more culturally responsive. Nine agencies signed up for this action, including six which were not identified in the Policy for the previous action. Most agencies reported engaging with stakeholders in some form to inform services. Other key responses were including cultural diversity in data capture and using external data sources to inform services. Fewer responses identified that data is used to inform communication methods, service accessibility and policy development.





### *Recognising Australian South Sea Islander peoples*

There has been longstanding anecdotal evidence of the under-counting of Australian South Sea Islander people. As a result, there are significant gaps in data for this community which has impacted government's ability to respond appropriately from a policy and planning perspective. Until the ABS started collecting Australian South Sea Islander data in the 2001 Census, the last major source of data was the Census of the Australian South Sea Islander population undertaken as part of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's research published in the 1992 *A Call for Recognition* report. According to the 2016 Census, 9,388 people identified as having Australian South Sea Islander ancestry in Australia, including 6,830 people from Queensland. The Census also indicated that Australian South Sea Islander people are less likely to complete Year 12 (49.5 per cent, compared with 58 per cent of the Queensland as a whole population); more than twice as likely to be unemployed than non-Indigenous people (16 per cent compared with 7.2 per cent); and almost half as likely to own a home outright or with a mortgage (37.9 per cent) and twice as likely to rent (67.8 per cent), than Queensland as a whole (62 per cent and 34 per cent respectively).

### *Culturally capable services and programs*

Over the three-year time frame of the second Action Plan, there were many examples of agencies developing initiatives and education or communication strategies that targeted culturally or linguistically diverse communities, in particular in the health sector.

The other major theme from agency reports was the development and distribution of multi-lingual resources, such as translated information and websites.


Other ways agencies reported they improved the cultural capability of services and programs include:

- working with interpreters and bi-lingual staff;
- partnering with culturally diverse community organisations or specialised services to deliver services, such as the TAFE Queensland run Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP);
- providing cultural capability training to staff; and
- raising awareness across government of resources that are available to support culturally appropriate services.

Only a few agencies indicated they used diversity data to improve access to services. Several other agencies indicated they engaged with culturally and linguistically diverse communities to inform the development of policies and services and promote awareness. Only one agency mentioned ensuring publications were inclusive by using diverse imagery.

### *A productive, culturally capable, and diverse workforce*

Most agencies provide staff with access to cultural capability training, such as the SBS Cultural Competence Program, or have incorporated cultural diversity elements into existing training programs, for example information on the impact of intersectionality in domestic and family violence situations. At a minimum, agencies have included information on the Charter in corporate induction sessions.



Some agencies have diversity and inclusion plans or other strategies that direct their cultural capability actions. Other ways agencies support the cultural capability of staff include:

- Providing learning opportunities, other than formal training programs, such as membership of Diversity Council Australia, sharing stories of the lived experience of refugees, or holding staff multicultural awards.
- Promoting multicultural and cultural events to staff.
- Providing resources to staff to build cultural capability, such as videos promoting cultural diversity, the Charter, and information on agency intranets about working with interpreters.
- Establishing staff diversity networks (both formal or informal) across the agency; and
- nominating an executive champion for diversity and inclusion.

### *Diversity on Boards*

The second Action Plan included an all-agency action commitment to increasing all forms of diversity on Queensland Government boards. The aim of this action was to ensure equitable representation on Queensland Government bodies of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, young people and people who identify as LGBTQIQ+.

Six agencies participated on a cross-agency working group focused on progressing the commitment to increase all forms of diversity on Queensland Government boards. In October 2022, a Diversity on Boards toolkit was released following work of the working group.

The review of agencies' reports on the second Action Plan indicated several agencies have demonstrated targeted and inclusive recruitment practices for government boards. Some examples include webinars to assist people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to apply for positions, co-designing inclusive recruitment processes and promoting opportunities through local networks. Some agencies indicated they had rolled out activities to educate board recruiters on improving diversity on boards. Only two agencies reported on improving data capture about boards and reporting on their diversity.

Some agencies reported little to no progress in relation to this action or focused on improving gender representation given the work undertaken across government on achieving a 50 per cent target for women on boards. This may indicate a need for further education with agencies as to the intent of the action and promoting the need for greater representation of other diversity cohorts.



## Market research

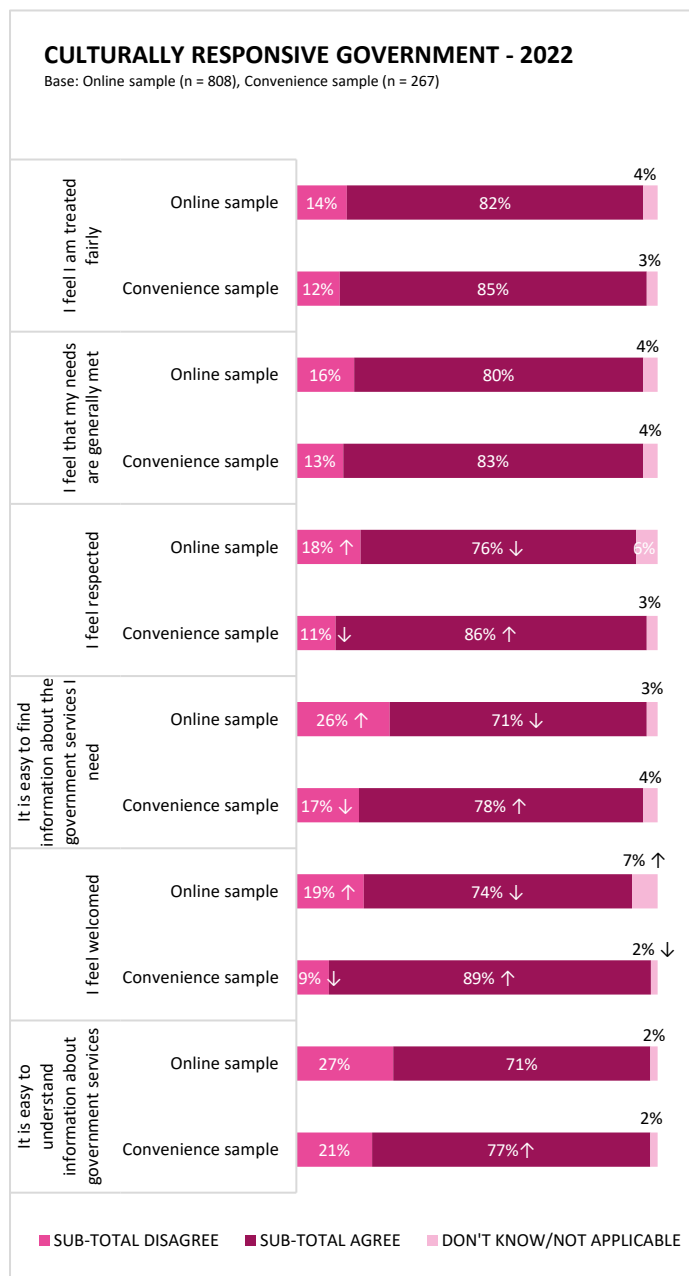
Overall, most respondents to the market research expressed positive views that the Queensland Government was culturally responsive to their needs. Results are also generally consistent between the 2018 and 2022 surveys with a couple of exceptions.

Most respondents in both samples agree that when they use services provided by the Queensland Government their needs are met, they feel respected, welcomed, and treated fairly. However, the response is less positive for respondents in the online sample who speak a language other than English at home, with 72 per cent of respondents agreeing they feel their needs are generally met as opposed to 81 per cent of those who speak English at home.

In the convenience sample, 89 per cent of those speaking a language other than English at home felt they were treated fairly and were respected compared with 76 per cent (treated fairly) and 80 per cent (felt respected) of those who speak English at home).


In addition, most feel that information about government services is easy to find and understand. In 2022, more people shared the view that information is easy to understand in the convenience sample (77 per cent), than in 2018 (69 per cent). Respondents in the convenience sample who speak English at home were also less likely to agree that information about government services is easy to find.

When asked whether they had been provided with an interpreter when requested, 88 per cent of respondents from the convenience sample (who speak English not well or not at all) indicated they had received an interpreter. This was a significant increase from 2018 (68 per cent).



Arrows ↓/↑ indicate a result that is significantly different to the other sample type at the 95% confidence level.





Participants were also asked an open-ended question of what more can the government do to make Queensland a more welcoming place to live. The most common responses from the online survey were:

- reducing the cost of living;
- reducing crime;
- improving justice and safety; and
- improving the availability of government services, policies and funding.


From the convenience survey, the most common responses were:

- creation of jobs;
- reducing crime and improving justice and safety; and
- having more inclusive and friendly communities where people treated each other as equals and with respect.

### **Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council**

When asked whether they felt Queensland Government services generally met the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, most members agreed that some government services do meet these needs, while others still struggle to address diversity. The Council is aware of concerns from young people, particularly from African and Muslim backgrounds, of less favourable treatment, in particular by the justice system. These experiences can impact on the willingness of people to access the system when they need to (e.g., reporting being a victim of a crime to Police). The Council acknowledged Police Liaison Officers and the positive actions by Youth Justice to engage with African communities and highlighted the more positive experience when individuals are supported to navigate the system, such as by facilitating access to interpreters.

The health system was raised by several members of the Council as being responsive to cultural diversity. Council members felt that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for greater engagement with culturally diverse communities and QH responded. The need to address COVID-19 has been a great impetus for change, however, the challenge in the future will be to see if changes from COVID-19 are embedded into ongoing business practices. An example of positive change during COVID-19 is Metro South Hospital and Health Service engaging with culturally diverse women on experiences accessing pre-and post-natal care. The Queensland Refugee Health and Wellbeing policy and action plan 2017-2020, alongside established Queensland refugee health networks and advisory bodies, has worked to improve the health and wellbeing of refugees and humanitarian entrants in Queensland. The strategy has provided a mechanism to improve partnership and coordination across diverse sectors to support the wellbeing of humanitarian entrants.



Council members also spoke about other areas across government which still needed improvement. These included the need for:

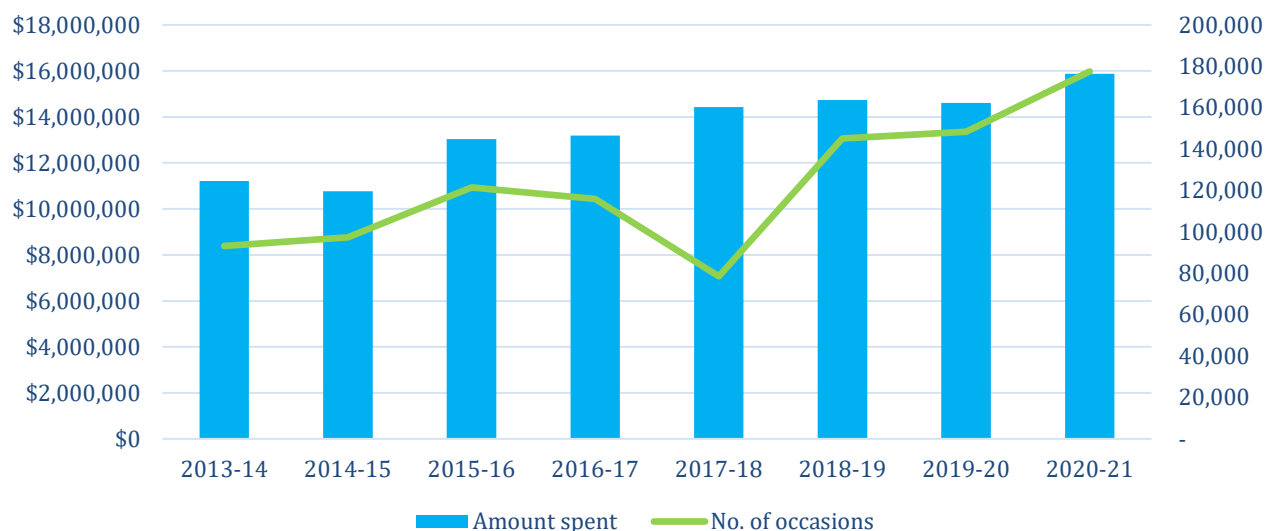
- More funding to address domestic and family violence in culturally appropriate ways. Council members advised there are not enough shelters to meet the needs of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their children. Council members also felt that the sector, including first responders, would benefit from training that included the different structures and characteristics of culturally diverse families. Access to interpreters was also raised, as well as culturally diverse women, especially those with low English language proficiency, not being heard and being mis-identified as perpetrators.
- Greater workforce diversity and representation at the higher levels of government, not just on the front-line.
- Greater awareness amongst front-line staff, especially in rural areas, about how to provide culturally appropriate support or engage interpreters to support people access services.

### **Other data**

As at April 2022, 30 Queensland Government agencies were using the Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA) for the provision of interpreting and translation services. A comparison of expenditure between that reported through the annual reporting process and through SOA supplier reports, indicates that, as well as the SOA, agencies are using a variety of language services providers including TIS National and other boutique providers for specialist requirements.

Through the annual reporting process, Queensland Government agencies must report on the number of times they have engaged interpreters and their expenditure on interpreter services. An analysis of agencies' reports for 2020-21 indicated a significant increase in expenditure and engagement of interpreters. The increase in expenditure on interpreters did not always correspond with a significantly higher rate of engagement of interpreters. This could indicate an increase in the cost of language services. Some agencies also reported on their expenditure and engagement of interpreters for the first time, possibly due to the machinery-of-government changes in late 2020. Other agencies showed a significant increase in both expenditure and engagement, which may indicate increased need for effective communication with people with difficulty communicating in English.

**Chart C: Queensland Government amount spent on interpreters and number of occasions interpreters were engaged**



### Priority 1: Key highlights

A selection of key achievements under Policy priority 1 for the period 2019-22 is outlined below. For further information about these achievements and other agency actions in agency annual reports, visit: <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/policy-governance/policy-plan>

#### Good Start Program

The award-winning, statewide Good Start Program works on improving the health and wellbeing of Māori and Pacific Islander children and their families. The program aims to lower the levels of chronic disease and obesity by working with families to build their knowledge, skills and confidence about healthy eating, physical activity and lifestyle practices. The Good Start team works with Māori and Pacific Islander families to talk about healthy pregnancies, healthy babies and healthy children. It also works with children in schools to teach them about eating healthy food and being active. In addition, the program provides healthcare professionals with tools to support Māori and Pacific Islander families.

#### Innovative culturally appropriate engagement to raise awareness of disaster preparedness

During October and November 2020, the QFES engaged with new arrivals through the TAFE Queensland delivered AMEP to raise awareness of disaster preparedness and home fire safety. The presentations were provided to seven AMEP classes with approximately 160 students of various English language abilities and were supported by the Townsville Multicultural Support Group (TMSG) where an interpreter was required.

QFES also promoted disaster preparedness and home fire safety at the TMSG Fun and Learning Day for culturally diverse communities on 15 May 2021.



### **Multicultural Microgrants Program**

Run annually, the Multicultural Microgrants Program aims to assist Logan Hospital departments, wards and services with quick response funding so they can make a positive contribution to culturally diverse communities accessing health services in the area. The program aims to achieve the following:

- Provide a welcoming and culturally safe environment, to improve person-centred care.
- Improve access and equity in health service provision.
- Encourage engagement and participation from all cultural groups within the community.
- Encourage community development processes and activities including community participation and capacity-building.
- Encourage partnerships and joint ventures to maximise outcomes from limited resources.
- Improve clinical outcomes for our diverse population.

### **Language Badge Project**

Metro South Health staff and volunteers who fluently speak languages in addition to English can choose to wear a language badge at work. Badge-wearers provide cultural and basic language support to patients and their families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The program was developed at the QEII Hospital as a co-design project with staff, hospital volunteers and patients. Due to the success of the pilot in 2020, the program is now implemented across Metro South Health facilities.

Metro North Health has also introduced this initiative, with approximately 1 per cent of the workforce joining the program in the six months since late 2021.



### **Diversity on boards toolkit**

DCYJMA developed the toolkit in partnership with members of the Diversity on Boards working group, which included officers from DJAG, the PSC, the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP) and DPC.

The toolkit provides useful information, practical strategies and other tools to assist agencies to increase participation and representation of all forms of diversity. A diversity of representation on Queensland Government boards means that Queensland benefits from the wealth of experience, knowledge and innovative ideas of all Queenslanders.

Diverse representation includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disability, seniors, young people, women, and people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

<https://www.des.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/policy-governance/policy-plan>



## Queensland's response to COVID-19 – success stories

The move to online service delivery during the pandemic impacted migrants who had difficulty accessing services due to language and financial barriers (Tamer, 2021). To address this concern, which was also raised with multiple agencies by stakeholders, the Queensland Government focused efforts to ensure people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were able to access accurate and timely health messaging as well as services. The following outlines some of Queensland Government culturally appropriate responses during COVID-19.

### *Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs*

As part of the COVID-19 Community Connections Support Package, DCYJMA provided funding to engage a Community Connector Advisor within Australian Red Cross as a central mechanism to coordinate engagement between government and local communities to ensure response operations are accessible, culturally appropriate and build people's capacity to comply with COVID-19 health directives. The Advisor also works to equip service organisations with relevant knowledge about available support to share with culturally and linguistically diverse communities and provides intelligence to government on gaps and challenges experienced by vulnerable people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

DCYJMA also played a key role in supporting QH in distributing key information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including supporting and facilitating meetings between the Chief Health Officer and community leaders.


### *COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship in Queensland*

In early 2020, the Queensland Government was working on developing effective responses to the COVID-19 pandemic to keep all Queenslanders safe. As the need to enforce physical distancing became central to Queensland's public health response, adapting and limiting in-person gatherings at places of worship emerged as an area of obvious need.

While there are peak bodies for individual faith groups, such as Queensland Churches Together, which brings together different Christian denominations, and the Islamic Council of Queensland, there is no peak body representing all religions. To fill this gap, the former Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs (DLGRMA) took the lead and worked with Griffith University's former Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue to facilitate engagement with faith leaders from diverse religious communities across Queensland. This engagement helped build an understanding of the diverse religious rites and rituals across faiths and led to the co-design of a COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship in Queensland that was approved by the Chief Health Officer in June 2020 for implementation.

DLGRMA responded to enquiries from diverse faith communities during the pandemic and facilitated many virtual consultation Q&A sessions between the Chief Health Officer, Deputy Chief Health Officer and faith leaders to ensure they understood COVID-19 restrictions, were able to convey key messages, modify their worship practices based on levels of community transmission of COVID-19 and ultimately, ensure their congregation could keep practicing their faith in a COVID safe way.





The benefit of this government-faith partnership was that faith leaders willingly shared their insights on how worship practices could be modified, and negotiations ensured practices complied with public health requirements. Faith leaders also played a practical role at the grass-roots level in keeping their congregations and all communities safe.

#### *TAFE Queensland and Queensland Health*

In 2021, TAFE Queensland English Language and Literacy Services (TELLS) partnered with Mater Refugee Health Services and QH to deliver COVID-19 vaccination information sessions at TAFE Queensland AMEP delivery sites. The partnership recognises the language and cultural barriers facing migrants and refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic period and aims to strengthen support for culturally diverse communities. On-site interpreters and translated resources were available during the sessions. These information sessions were designed to deliver key messages related to immunisation to recently arrived migrants and refugees whose level of English, or cultural beliefs, may present barriers to their participation in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

The information sessions were followed up with vaccination clinics for culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families at TAFE Queensland's Logan, Inala, Toowoomba and Bracken Ridge campuses. Just over 1,600 vaccinations were delivered through the TAFE Queensland culturally and linguistically diverse vaccination clinics.


As many AMEP students are newly arrived to Australia, they also experienced limited understanding of the health system and how to navigate it. TAFE Queensland teachers provided support to students, the QH funded Culturally and Linguistically Diverse COVID Health Engagement Project provided education on COVID-19 and the Vaccine and Metro South Health facilitated the clinic. On site and remote (telephone) interpreters were used for the registration, consent, and pre-vaccination questionnaire processes.

#### *Queensland Health*

The Department of Health implemented a targeted COVID-19 pandemic engagement and response for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including refugees, people from refugee backgrounds and people seeking asylum. This included:

- Establishing a stakeholder COVID-19 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Working Group in 2020, which continues to meet regularly to advise on the needs of people from culturally diverse communities and provide policy direction during the pandemic.
- Development and progression of actions under the COVID-19 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Policy and Action Plan.
- Development and implementation of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse COVID-19 Testing Framework and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout Plan (see above TAFE Queensland example).
- Translating COVID-19-related key messaging into 38 priority languages and distributing these resources through communications channels appropriate for the audience.
- Funding the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse COVID-19 Health Engagement Project through the Mater Refugee Health's Refugee Health Network Queensland to engage with culturally diverse communities. Activities of the project include codesigning messages, hosting information sessions with clinicians and public conferences to





support direct engagement with community leaders in relation to the pandemic response, including with public forums with the Chief Health Officer.

- Providing free vaccines to all people in Queensland, regardless of Medicare or visa status.

Hospital and Health Services were also responsible for implementing a wide range of local strategies and activities to ensure culturally diverse communities in their area were engaged in the vaccine rollout and pandemic response.

#### *Queensland Police Service*

From June 2021 to March 2022, an Acting Deputy Commissioner of QPS, in the role of Queensland Vaccine Operations Coordinator (QVOC), coordinated the operational and logistical elements of the Queensland COVID-19 Vaccination Program, supporting the government's aim of keeping the Queensland community safe against the effects of COVID-19.

The QVOC worked in partnership with QH, Queensland Government agencies, external stakeholders and District Disaster Coordinators across Queensland, to ensure the most vulnerable groups and communities within Queensland received clear, understandable and accurate information, as well as improved access to vaccinations.

Success of the vaccine roll out was the result of early and continual feedback from, and engagement with cultural, community and faith leaders to listen to and understand issues affecting vaccination rates, overcome misinformation and to encourage community members to get vaccinated. Using this early feedback, the QVOC worked with partner agencies to develop and implement a strategy that incorporated engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse community leaders and groups by key vaccination program authorities including the Premier, the Chief Health Officer, the QVOC and the Hospital and Health Service vaccine leads.

#### *Department of Education*

DoE supported the continuity of learning and wellbeing for more than 500,000 Queensland students and their families during the pandemic period, delivering a state-wide learning at home model through expanded infrastructure, enhancements to existing systems and delivery of online learning tools.

DoE continues to build on lessons learned and outcomes achieved during the pandemic to strengthen engagement, learning and wellbeing for every student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

#### *Housing*

As part of the Queensland Government's COVID-19 State-wide Emergency Housing Assistance Response, DCHDE contracted registered community housing providers to headlease 236 private market properties to provide medium to long-term housing solutions for people impacted by COVID-19. This included people transitioning from immediate temporary emergency accommodation responses, people seeking asylum and refugees. Wherever possible, these arrangements include wrap around support services to help sustain tenancies and avoid homelessness.



## **Priority 1: future opportunities**

### **Data collection and analysis**

Collecting data relating to cultural and linguistic diversity can be challenging. The term culturally and linguistically diverse is an inclusive term but encapsulates very diverse cultural groups. The Policy outlines the minimum mandatory indicators for cultural and linguistic data collection (country of birth, preferred language and whether an interpreter is required). While this is the very minimum of information that should be collected by Queensland Government agencies, it can still be inadequate for identifying all cultural backgrounds, for example Australian South Sea Islander peoples who were born in Australia, and people born in refugee camps in a country different from their cultural background (e.g., a refugee with Sudanese cultural heritage born in a refugee camp in Kenya). In June 2022, the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs announced the Australian Government would begin collecting ethnicity data as part of measuring diversity in Australia. A culturally and linguistically diverse working group with representatives from peak multicultural bodies, along with data collection and demography experts will be established to develop national standards for diversity data collection (Yussuf & Walden, Multicultural groups welcome federal government's move to collect ethnicity data, 2022).

Grouping people together as 'culturally and linguistically diverse' in relation to data can mask potential differences between different cultural groups. A study on the health outcomes of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds found that the culturally and linguistically diverse group appeared to have better health outcomes than the non-culturally and linguistically diverse group, even when using multiple indicators such as country of birth and main language spoken at home. The larger groups within the culturally and linguistically diverse group averaged out any differences in health outcomes (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022).

The World Wellness Group advised the Mental Health Select Committee that the pandemic highlighted the difficulty in reaching multicultural communities with targeted public health strategies who were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. A lack of data made it difficult to develop evidence-based and data informed service improvements (Mental Health Select Committee, 2022). Better data collections can also support more effective and targeted service delivery and strengthen support in settling migrants over the long-term (Weng, Mansouri, & Vergani, 2021)



### **The opportunity – building an evidence-base**

A key action in the third Action Plan, released in August 2022, is that the Queensland Government will collect, analyse, and use cultural diversity data to improve service delivery and better meet customer needs. This includes:

- Analysing our current performance against the diversity data indicators outlined in the Policy (country of birth, preferred language, interpreter required, and ethnicity/cultural identity) to understand data gaps, opportunities for system performance improvement, target setting and trends relating to our clients.
- Extending the diversity data collection requirements to our funded non-government organisations delivering programs and services, and sharing this information with contracting agencies as appropriate; and
- Implementing strategies to improve the collection of data, such as training for frontline staff on why data is needed, how to collect it and explaining to customers to encourage them to provide diversity information.

Eighteen agencies signed up to this action and will undertake specific activities to support its implementation.

For more information about the third Action Plan, visit

<https://www.des.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/policy-governance/policy-plan>

### **Culturally capable services and programs**

#### *Education*

Public schools were one area respondents to the survey for the evaluation of the implementation of the Act identified as needing improvement. DCYJMA is aware, through community engagement activities, that young people from some cultural backgrounds are disengaging from school due to, among other things, experiences of racism and discrimination.

In March 2022, the Council met with representatives of the Future Leaders Advocacy Group run by Multicultural Australia and the Youth Voice Program run by the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT). These young people from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds raised several issues related to education including how torture and trauma impacts engagement, lack of mental health support, cultural capability of teachers, bullying and racism and the need for liaison officers and safe spaces in schools.

### **The opportunity – Equity and Excellence Strategy – Department of Education**

DoE has undertaken targeted consultation on its new strategy for education including at the 2022 Principals' Conference in October.

Equity and Excellence is a vision for a progressive, high performing education system with a clear focus on educational achievement, wellbeing and engagement and culture and inclusion. The strategy demonstrates DoE's commitment to lift learning outcomes for every student, no matter their background or where they live.

### *Language Services Policy*

The 2021 Census revealed an increase in the proportion of the Queensland population who spoke a language other than English as home (more than 13 per cent, up from 11.2 per cent in 2016) and those who did not speak English or did not speak it well (1.8 per cent, up from 1.6 per cent in 2016) (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2022).

Analysis of reporting on the Language Services Policy indicates an increase in engagement of interpreters since 2018-19. This was particularly evident in 2020-21, likely due to the increased emphasis on engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse communities during COVID-19.

### **The opportunity – training to become qualified interpreters**

DCYJMA awarded a 3-year contract to TAFE SA in partnership with Queensland-based 2M Language Services, to deliver the Interpreter Training Boost program, which was launched on 17 February 2022.

The program will provide opportunities for up to 120 Queenslanders to gain jobs in the interpreting industry. The first cohort of participants commenced in May 2022.

For more information visit: <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/policy-governance/language-services-policy/interpreter-training-boost-program>



## Priority 2: Inclusive, harmonious and united communities

*Inclusive, harmonious and united communities mean:*

- *recognising and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture;*
- *celebrating our multicultural identity;*
- *communities who are connected and resilient; and*
- *embracing a respectful and inclusive conversation about diversity.*

### **Second Action Plan**

The second Action Plan included eight actions under this priority area. Status updates provided by agencies in 2021-22 annual reporting on Priority 2 indicate that six of the eight actions (75 per cent) have been completed for the duration of the second Action Plan.

The actions which are incomplete are:

- promote the Multicultural Queensland Charter to government agency staff. This was an all-agency action; and
- sign up and participate in the AHRC's *Racism. It stops with me*, campaign. This was an all-agency action.

Further information on Queensland Government activities to combat racism is in the future opportunities section of Priority 2.

Some work will continue outside the broad action as the activities become embedded into business as usual in agencies work.

### *Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture*


Two actions in the second Action Plan related to this Policy outcome, one led by DCYJMA and the other by DSDSATSIP. These agencies reported achievement of this outcome by:

- Engaging with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples at multicultural events, including through Welcome to Country.
- Building relationships with local Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the Regional Partnerships Projects.
- Multicultural organisations engaging with projects and events such as NAIDOC Week.

### *Queenslanders celebrate our multicultural identity*

Ten agencies signed up to the action to “*Celebrate and promote Queensland’s multicultural identity, such as through government publications and communications*”. All ten agencies reported this action as ‘completed’ at the end of the second Action Plan.

Five out of the ten agencies reported celebrating our multicultural identity by using inclusive language and imagery in publications and communication strategies. Remaining agencies’ responses varied from reporting on unrelated activities, promoting multicultural events to staff, or creating their own events.



The Multicultural Queensland Month and Awards ceremony were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. In 2021, Multicultural Queensland Month was delivered in August primarily as a virtual event, with the awards ceremony delayed and held at the Queensland Museum in November. Positive messaging and stories about diversity and inclusion were shared as posts across DCYJMA's various social media channels through 2020, 2021 and 2022, however the pandemic significantly impacted on DCYJMA's ability to promote united, harmonious and inclusive communities. In 2022, Multicultural Queensland Month was celebrated in August through a series of in person and virtual events, culminating in a Multicultural Awards ceremony.

Also contributing towards this outcome was the Multicultural Queensland Ambassador program, which encouraged corporations and other organisations to apply the Charter to their business practices and support Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds in practical ways. Prior to COVID-19, events and workshops were delivered by the former DLGRMA that encouraged organisations to form partnerships and take action in the areas of employment pathways, university scholarships for refugees and migrants, practical support for people seeking asylum and organisational cultural capability development. Disruptions experienced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic limited the ability to engage members of the program during 2020-21.

### *Connected and resilient communities*

Three actions addressed the outcome – *Connected and resilient communities*. These were:


- DCYJMA will work with organisations through the Multicultural Queensland Ambassador program to apply the Charter to their business practices and support Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds in practical ways.
- Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS) will assist in reducing financial barriers to physical activity for eligible children and young people, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds, through a subsidy program.
- DJAG will promote the rights, interests and wellbeing of women and girls from culturally diverse backgrounds.

In addressing this outcome, the three agencies reported they:

- Partnered with community organisations to increase opportunities for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Increased the capability of multicultural sector organisations, such as through workshops and funding.
- Engaged with the multicultural sector to inform initiatives to raise awareness and better support women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in relation to domestic and family violence.
- Increased cultural capability of multicultural Queensland ambassador organisations and the domestic and family violence sector.

Through the FairPlay program, in the 2021-22 financial year, DTIS reported that approximately 11,000 vouchers were redeemed by activity providers for eligible children and young people who have migrated or whose parents have migrated to Australia.





In 2020-21, DJAG implemented the Safe and Diverse Communities grants program to support small, targeted, community-led projects to increase the capability of multicultural communities to recognise, respond and prevent sexual, domestic and family violence across Queensland. This initiative is part of a larger investment in responding to domestic and family violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities over the next four years.

*A respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity*

There were two 'all agencies' actions in the second Action Plan that related to this outcome:

- promote the Charter to government agency staff and consider its principles when developing policies or providing services; and
- sign up and participate in the AHRC's *Racism. It stops with me* campaign.

All agencies except for DCYJMA reported the broad action '*promote the Charter to government agency staff and consider its principles when developing policies or providing services*' as 'completed'. DCYJMA reported the action as 'yet to commence' noting '*a review on how we can embed the Multicultural Charter principles into Human Resource policies and procedures will commence from October 2022.*'

The agencies that reported inclusive workforce and recruitment strategies, reported considering the Charter's principles when developing policies focused on internal human resources policies, indicating some confusion regarding the intent of the action under this priority, which was intended to relate to customer focused policies, procedures and services. Few agencies indicate the inclusion of the Charter in external policies and services. For example, DTIS Active Industry Fund agreements include a requirement for funded State Level Sporting Organisations to have a policy in place in relation to inclusive sport.

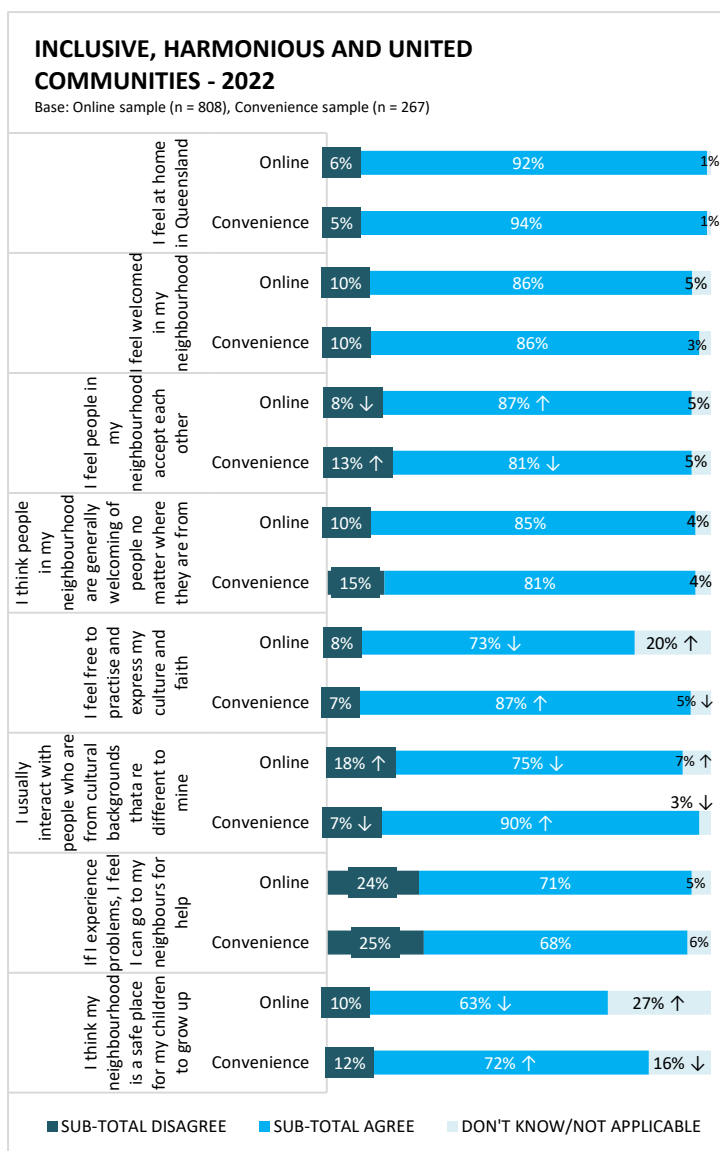
The QHRC reported an increase in reports of racism during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Policy includes a commitment that racism has no place in Queensland (Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, 2018). All but three of the agencies reported they have signed up the *Racism. It stops with me* campaign. The three remaining agencies who are yet to commence this action, TAFE Queensland, Electoral Commission Queensland (ECQ) and the Department of Resources (DoR) are undertaking activities which are either associated with signing the campaign or are providing workplace respect training. The specific reports in the second Action Plan provided by the three agencies are:

- ECQ has provided diversity and inclusion training to all staff and will explore signing up to the campaign in 2022-23;
- TAFE Queensland is taking steps to sign up in late 2022; and
- DoR is currently undertaking a communications campaign on workplace respect and maintains mandatory code of conduct training for all staff.



## Market research



Arrows ↓/↑ indicate a result that is significantly different to the other sample type at the 95% confidence level.

Perceptions of communities being inclusive, harmonious and united are positive among respondents in both the online sample and the convenience sample. Results to questions in this Policy area remained largely consistent between 2018 and 2022, however there was a subtle improvement in people in neighbourhoods accepting each other.

Most respondents (both in the online and convenience samples) reported they feel at home and welcomed in their neighbourhood. Most also find people in their neighbourhood welcoming, regardless of their cultural background. In both the online and convenience samples, most respondents agreed they feel free to practice and express their culture and faith.


Respondents in both samples often interact with people who are from cultural backgrounds different to their own and consider their neighbourhood to be a safe place for children to grow up in. While the

majority agrees they can go to their neighbours for help if they experience difficulties, among respondents in the convenience sample survey, there has been a slight rise in disagreement with this statement between 2018 (18 per cent) and 2022 (25 per cent).

People who speak a language other than English at home (87 per cent for the online sample) are less likely to agree they feel at home in Queensland (93 per cent for those who speak English at home).

## Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council

Council members were asked whether they felt people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds felt welcomed and accepted in their neighbourhoods. The prevailing opinion was that feeling welcomed and accepted depended on the individual, as well as the neighbourhood in which they live, work, or visit. In more culturally diverse neighbourhoods, diversity is normalised. However, in other neighbourhoods, young people from culturally



diverse backgrounds may stand out and are often profiled (e.g., harassed in shopping centres). This can impact their sense of belonging.

Council members also discussed how people's experiences differ and some people are more engaged with their cultural communities rather than connected to a community in a local neighbourhood. This form of cultural connection and the capacity to engage in it is more important than being tightly connected to the local neighbourhood.

The Policy shows a clear commitment from government that Queensland is a welcoming and inclusive community, and this over time will impact on a sense of welcome at the neighbourhood level. However, Council members also noted other influences on people's sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood. These include:

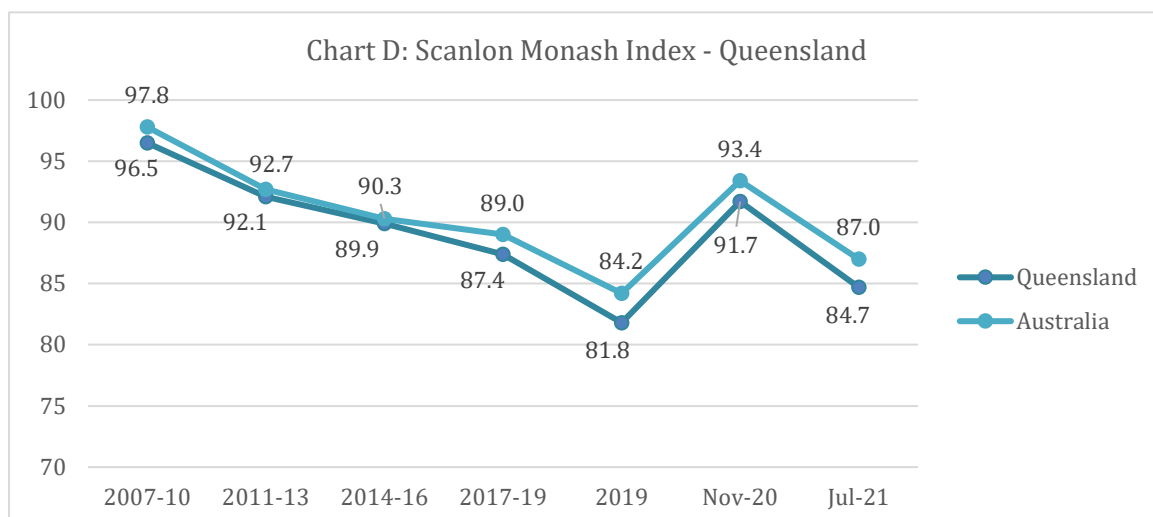
- Whether local governments have programs designed to encourage suburbs to be welcoming of diversity, especially with new arrivals.
- Role of the media in shaping people's perceptions can impact whether people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds feel welcomed. A predominantly negative narrative can influence views of migrants and refugees, especially for those with less exposure to diversity. A more balanced narrative would present stories of the successful contribution of culturally diverse communities including at the local neighbourhood level.

Assumptions about people, based on skin colour, dress or language, can fuel anxiety and at the extreme, lead to people feeling fearful. This is especially true for people who have had little interaction with or knowledge of cultural diversity.

### **Other data**

Social cohesion can be impacted upon by many external factors, such as events overseas or interstate. The Queensland Government's response to social cohesion crosses the work of different departments. The inclusive, harmonious, and united communities priority in the Policy aims to contribute towards positive social cohesion in Queensland.

The Scanlon Monash Index (SMI) of Social Cohesion provides an indication of the level of social cohesion in Queensland and allows a comparison between social cohesion in Queensland with Australia as a whole, and over time (Chart D). The higher the score the better the level of social cohesion in the state. The SMI aggregates results to questions across five domains of relevance to social cohesion – sense of belonging, sense of worth, perception of social justice and equity, political participation, and acceptance/rejection of cultural diversity.



Source: Mapping Social Cohesion—the Scanlon Foundation Surveys 2021 –Queensland Report (not published)


The aggregate results for previous years indicate that by a small margin the SMI for Queensland is consistently below and parallels the movement of the index at the national level. Since the survey began in 2007 there has been a steady decrease in social cohesion in Queensland and Australia as a whole. The 2019 results are consistent with this trend, however in 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national SMI moved in a positive direction to reach 93.4 in November 2020. Queensland followed this positive shift to reach 91.7. In November 2020, Queensland was higher than the national score in the domains of social justice and equity, sense of belonging, and political participation.

In 2021, the SMI for Queensland was lower at 84.7, but still 2.9 index points higher than the pre-pandemic level. This drop is consistent with the national index which was 87 in 2021. In 2021, Queensland was higher than the national index in the domains of social inclusion and equity (100.4 Queensland, 96.7 national), and political participation (93.7, 93.4). It was lowest in the domain of acceptance/ rejection, where it was at 69.1, 9.2 index points below the national index. The domain of acceptance/rejection asks participants questions about immigration, experiences of discrimination, whether government support should be provided to ethnic minorities for the maintenance of customs and traditions, and whether life will be worse in three or four years (Markus AO, 2021).

Despite the lower scores in this domain, a substantial majority of Queenslanders continue to endorse immigration and multiculturalism. Positive attitudes towards migration and multiculturalism were highest amongst those:

- with friends from different backgrounds;
- aged 18-34; and
- with a postgraduate university qualification (Markus AO, 2021).

Maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important to most Queenslanders and 89 per cent responded they had a 'great' or 'moderate extent' sense of belonging in Australia. There was also a high level of agreement that multiculturalism has been good for Australia at 78 per cent, although this was lower than the national finding at 88 per cent (Markus AO, 2021).



The 2021 Scanlon Foundation survey did find ongoing concerns over integration. A substantial majority of Queenslanders (68 per cent) disagree with government assistance being provided to ethnic minorities for maintenance of customs and traditions. There also continues to be evidence of a relatively high level of negative opinion towards Australians of Asian, African and Middle Eastern backgrounds, which co-exists with substantial concern expressed about racism in Australia society. Concerns about racism have risen since 2020 at a rate that has not been seen in previous Scanlon Foundation surveys and cuts across most population sub-groups (e.g., women, people aged 18-34, financial status and people born in non-English speaking countries) (Markus AO, 2021).



## Priority 2: Key highlights and success stories

A selection of key achievements and success stories under Policy priority 2 for the period 2019-22 is outlined below. For further information about these achievements and other agency actions in agency annual reports, visit: <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/policy-governance/policy-plan>


### Building resilient young people

The **Celebrating Multicultural Queensland (CMQ) program** aligns with the Charter and provides funding towards multicultural events and projects that engage people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This includes people who arrived in Australia as migrants or refugees, people seeking asylum, members of diverse cultural groups and the wider community. The program aims to contribute to building an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland.

Since 1 July 2020, the CMQ program has included funding for Youth and Community Connection projects that assist with breaking down the barriers facing young people that can result in feelings of disengagement or disconnection with community. The projects enable young people to feel heard, valued, supported and empowered, resulting in their increased access to, and inclusion in the community.

Some examples of projects funded include:

- The Queensland African Communities Council (QACC) delivered the 'Youth Mentoring and Family's Support' project in 2021-22, which was youth-led and youth-delivered through the African Youth Support Council (youth mentors) targeting young people aged between 14 and 25 from African backgrounds in the criminal justice system, in the community or in schools. The project encompassed two key strategies: early intervention and rehabilitation with mentors delivering individualised and group activities; and linking participants to other local key specialist services for additional support, with a youth hub hosting life-skills and recreational activities. Over 1,500 young people participated in the programs in 2021, from a range of age groups and cultural backgrounds, including some from non-African backgrounds. QACC is also delivering the 'Our Future Beings Now' project from 1 July 2022 (for two years) to continue providing and building a consistent, engaging and positive line of communication between family, community, service providers and young people.
- Youth Off the Streets Limited is delivering the 'Logan Multicultural Youth Support Network' project from July 2021 for two years, which will involve young people aged between 12 to 25 in the Logan area at risk of social isolation, disengaged or at risk of disengaging from their families, schools or communities. The project will create opportunities for intercultural learning and connection through participation in cultural activities and events with the establishment of a steering committee of youth leaders to inform the direction and progress of the project.



The **Department of Health** has developed a 'Building Cultural Awareness' video series on the **Multicultural Queensland Charter**, Refugees and people seeking asylum, and Interpreters and Healthcare. The videos are designed to increase staff awareness and understanding of how to apply the principles of the Charter in everyday practice.

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural>

Administered by **DJAG**, the Safe and Diverse Communities grants program supports small, targeted, community-led projects to increase the capability of multicultural communities to recognise, respond and prevent sexual, domestic and family violence across Queensland.

<https://www.justice.qld.gov.au/initiatives/safe-diverse-communities-grants>

The **Queensland Performing Arts Centre's (QPAC)** Warm Welcome was a series of events looking at what happens when communities open their hearts, homes and institutions to people from other places.

<https://www.qpac.com.au/the-creatory/news/warm-welcome/>

The **Department of Education** held a virtual screening of *The Final Quarter*, as a pilot session to staff and included facilitated discussion on racism.

The screening was part of the department's commitment to the *Racism. It stops with me* campaign.

## Creating a respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity in regional Queensland

Through the **DCYJMA** funded Regional Partnerships Projects, the **Paroo Shire Council** recognised that diverse workforces contribute to the financial success of businesses and increase capacity for problem solving, innovation and creativity in the local area. Diversity helps create thriving communities. Through kick-starting conversations with business owners, the community sector, and residents of the Shire, ideas have been explored on how to bring people on the journey of welcome and inclusion.

Initial conversations involved the following key steps:

1. Identifying and sharing stories of migrants already living in the Shire to challenge stereotypes and community concepts of a 'migrant' - facilitated through Council and community social media platforms, newsletters, and newspapers.
2. Using and explaining terminology around migration. Explaining the different migration streams and possibilities and what is required to be eligible for the skilled migration program.
3. Developing and implementing a communications strategy around the benefits of migration and what this means culturally and economically.
4. Sharing a clear and concise message across the Shire about the aims and benefits of a Welcoming Plan and equipping local Councillors and community leaders to communicate it effectively and confidently.
5. Utilising existing community activities to promote the Welcoming Plan (see Paroo Library example).

Paroo Shire Council's communication strategies have worked to build an understanding of the purpose of the Welcoming Plan and ensure that the expectations of the community begin to align with a vision for a welcoming and inclusive community.

### Paroo Library

During COVID-19 lockdown measures, the Paroo Shire librarian shifted the regular in-library story-time to an online format. To maintain interest and continue to connect with families, children and other members of the community, the librarian approached key people to read books specific to their profession. The librarian also invited migrants living in the Shire to read a book about their culture, a story from their childhood or something connected to their heritage. This activity further helped to identify and promote migrants living in the region, personalising their stories, highlighting their contributions, and increasing connections across the community.



As part of Multicultural Queensland Month 2021, **QFES** collaborated with Rockhampton Regional Council to hold educational sessions with the Rockhampton Chinese community. QFES delivered fire and severe weather education sessions and presented on home fire safety and smoke alarm laws. The day provided opportunities for the community to ask questions on volunteering with QFES and becoming a capable and connected community and for the attending QFES members to complete a walking tour of the Rockhampton Chinese Temple, which has been part of the community for 120 years.

### Connecting people through volunteering



Thargomindah is a tiny remote community in far southwestern Queensland, with a population of under 250.

Led by the then Principal, **Thargomindah State School** developed an informal program to assist community members with limited English to expand their communication skills. Originally, this was only offered to members of the school community but was expanded to be offered more broadly to the whole community.

Expansion occurred when the Bulloo Shire Council appointed an Engineer from a Chinese background. His wife, who had a fine arts degree and professional experience as a nail technician, knew that moving to Australia where her communication was limited would be difficult.

Through facilitation and leadership by the then Principal, an immersive opportunity was offered to help improve spoken English and connections with the community as a valuable member of the schools' volunteer cohort. This unique opportunity also helped provide opportunities for the children to understand other cultures, languages, and backgrounds.

Bulloo, Paroo and Balonne Shire Councils participated in three-year demonstration projects funded by DCYJMA which concluded October 2022.



## Connecting young people from culturally diverse backgrounds through sport



In August 2021, **Pushing Barriers** was awarded the Multicultural Queensland Award for Diversity and Inclusion, a well-deserved recognition for their tireless efforts to help refugee youth engage with community sport.

Pushing Barriers is a not-for-profit charity with the primary objective to advance the lives and welfare of refugee youth, by providing them opportunities and funding to be included and welcomed into Australian culture and society through sport.

Pushing Barriers does this by partnering with sporting clubs to cover the cost of club fees, uniforms, and equipment, and providing transport to and from sporting events and training as required. Pushing Barriers offers young people with a refugee background the opportunity to play club sport. The organisation is currently supporting 80 young people to play soccer, netball, basketball, and volleyball.

Through programs such as Active Clubs and Active Clubs Kickstart funding, DTIS has provided the organisation and its members with much-needed funding.

DCYJMA also provided funding support to Pushing Barriers through the 2021-22 CMQ program to deliver a project aimed at improving the lives and wellbeing of refugee youth through inclusion and welcome into communities through sport. The project will also deliver a series of cultural workshops and training to volunteer club liaison officers.

## Priority 2: Future opportunities

### *Racism, vilification and hate*

Racism and discrimination were key issues raised in consultation with the Council, as well as through DCYJMA's community engagement work.

Racism occurs across many different settings, including social media. The Australian Muslim Advocacy Network has accused Twitter under Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act of inciting hatred as a publisher of third-party accounts, as well as discrimination for refusing to take action against hateful content (Gillespie, 2022). Islamophobia in the Digital Age: a study of anti-Muslim tweets, found there were over 3.7 million Islamophobic posts on Twitter between August 2019 and August 2021, with the majority of these remaining online even after a year (Butler, 2022). While the majority of these posts originated in India, the United States and the United Kingdom, given the global reach of social media, the impact is felt amongst the Muslim community in Australia (Butler, 2022).

The Islamophobia Register Australia recorded an increase in anti-Muslim hate following the 15 March 2019 Christchurch massacre (Convery, 2022). It is often Muslim women who are targeted, comprising 82 per cent of the in-person victims in the report.

The Australian Race Discrimination Commission has identified 14 areas of concern in relation to institutional and systematic racism, including (Fang & Mann, 2022):

- Justice – while Asian Australian's make up 9.6 per cent of the Australian population, only 3.1 per cent of Asian Australians are partners in law firms, 1.6 per cent barristers and only 0.8 per cent of the judiciary (Fang & Mann, 2022).
- Employment – a 2015 study by the Australian National University found applicants with Chinese, Middle Eastern and Indigenous sounding names were far less likely to get called for job interviews than applicants with Anglo-Saxon names. (Booth, Lee, & Varganova, 2012).
- Education and health.

### **The opportunity – taking a stance against racism**

Key Action 6 of the third Action Plan requires all Queensland Government agencies to ensure equitable and respectful opportunities and experiences for staff and customers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, through targeted initiatives to address unconscious bias and racism and promote inclusion.

This includes providing anti-racism training to all staff, increasing the cultural capability of staff to better understand and address barriers to inclusion, and provide clear messages affirming a zero-tolerance to racism and discrimination.

### **The opportunity – banning symbols of hate**

On 31 January 2022, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee tabled its report on the Inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes.

In May, the Premier announced the Queensland Government would accept all 17 recommendations from the Inquiry including to make it a criminal offence to display hate symbols to invoke fear in others.

The new laws will allow these symbols to be used in respectful circumstances, such as in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism etc., but prevent them from being used as a symbol of hate.

For more information on the government's response to the Inquiry, visit <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-Committees/Committees/Committee-Details?cid=170&id=3099>


### **The opportunity – Holocaust Museum and Education Centre**

In late 2020, the Queensland Government committed \$3.5 million towards the establishment of a Holocaust Museum and Education Centre (HMEC) within Brisbane. DCYJMA has been working closely with the HMEC project managing entity, Queensland Holocaust Museum and Education Centre Ltd (QHMEC).

The HMEC was officially launched by the Premier, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Lord Mayor of Brisbane on 30 June 2023 in Brisbane's Cathedral Precinct – at the Old Archives Building and Penola Place in Charlotte and Edward Streets. This is an interim location, in partnership with the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane whilst a more permanent location is found. While funding for the HMEC has been committed by all three levels of government, the project is being delivered by the Jewish community via a separate entity, QHMEC, established to oversee the creation of the HMEC.

The HMEC includes an online museum and education centre, education and teacher training resources, and physical and interactive exhibitions. Mobile museum facilities will reach the entire state as part of a unique Queensland approach to educating students and residents about the consequences of bigotry and human rights abuses.

As well as focusing on the persecution and murder of Jewish people, the HMEC acknowledges other groups persecuted by the Nazi regime, and genocides which have occurred since then. First Nations peoples will also be represented. Importantly, the HMEC will capture the lived experiences of Holocaust survivors. Stories told by those directly affected by unchecked bigotry are powerful tools to help educate Queenslanders and other visitors about the importance of standing up against racism and prejudice of all forms.



### *Increasing representation of culturally and linguistically diverse groups in leadership positions*

Evidence shows clearly that decision-making, service delivery and organisational legitimacy are all improved when governing bodies reflect the diversity of the community and stakeholders they serve. Diversity of skills and expertise, and the perspectives and lived experiences of all Queenslanders contribute to good governance, improving the performance and leadership of an organisation, and help ensure that boards and committees are making decisions in the interests of the Queensland community.

Diverse boards bring more inclusive and egalitarian culture — one that elevates different voices, integrates diverse perspectives and insights, and welcomes conversations about diversity, including workforce diversity. Diverse boards also support workforce diversity by providing leadership, championing diversity, and setting a good example for the public sector workforce.

#### **The opportunity – a target for cultural diversity on boards**

Key Action 2 from the third Action Plan builds on the existing whole-of-government commitment to increase all forms of diversity on Queensland Government boards by committing to engage with stakeholders to develop a whole-of-government target for culturally and linguistically diverse people on boards, committees, and other bodies over the five-year period 2022-23 to 2026-27.

DES will work with other Queensland Government agencies and stakeholders, including the Council, to develop this target.

#### **The opportunity – Australian South Sea Islander community plan**

The 2022–23 State Budget included a \$1.07 million investment over four years to raise awareness of Australian South Sea Islander people's unique culture and history of contributing to Queensland's cultural and economic development, as well as delivering more targeted and culturally appropriate support; help address disadvantage and meaningfully acknowledge past harm and trauma.

As part of this package, a dedicated engagement officer within DES will develop and oversee the delivery of initiatives in collaboration with the Queensland United Australian South Sea Islander Council. The position will be a conduit between government and Australian South Sea Islander community organisations throughout Queensland. It will ensure community needs are understood across government and will build on existing work and identify future opportunities – particularly around culturally appropriate service delivery.

For more information about Australian South Sea Islander communities, visit <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/multicultural-communities/australian-south-sea-islanders>



### **The opportunity – Global Competence Framework – Department of Education**

On 6 July 2022, the Director-General released the consultation draft of the DoE's Global Competence Framework, co-designed with 22 Queensland state schools.

The framework aligns with the two goals of The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration and its commitment to all young Australians engaging in high-quality learning opportunities that are inclusive and free from discrimination, and to help them thrive in a complex world.

The framework is expected to be finalised ahead of Term 1, 2023.

### *Including culturally and linguistically diverse seniors in Queensland's new Seniors Strategy*

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates by 2050, more than one in five Queenslanders will be 65 years or older (DSDSATSIP, 2022). According to the ABS 2021 Census, 34 per cent of the population aged 65 years and over were born overseas.

### **The opportunity – an age-friendly Queensland**

Future Directions for an Age-Friendly Queensland, released on 18 October 2022, outlines the Queensland Government's commitment to continuing to create age-friendly communities in which seniors, including seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds feel connected, cared for and can contribute in ways of their choosing.

Future Directions for an Age-Friendly Queensland also signals the Queensland Government's commitment to deliver a contemporary and meaningful seniors strategy, expected to be released in 2023. The next seniors strategy will be informed by the voices of Queensland seniors sharing their views on what an age-friendly Queensland looks like, both now and into the future, through an online survey available at <https://qchub.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/seniors-strategy>.

### *Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have disability*

People from culturally and linguistically diverse background who have disability face additional barriers, including accessing information and services necessary to be fully included in the community. Engaging with Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have disability and providing additional support ensures greater inclusion.



### **The opportunity – AMPARO Advocacy**

DCSSDS currently provides funding to AMPARO Advocacy, a non-profit community organisation which provides independent individual and systemic advocacy for people with disability from culturally and linguistically backgrounds.

AMPARO Advocacy believes that people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background with disability have the same right to live valued lives that are comparable to those of other members of society where they:

- are respected and valued;
- can experience valued relationships with friends, family and community;
- have access to interpreters and information in their preferred language;
- have supports and services provided in culturally sensitive and responsive ways;
- have natural authority to influence the direction of their own lives, or where they; have limited capacity, that their family if possible, retains this authority;
- are welcomed and have opportunities to live an ordinary life; and
- are participating and contributing members in the social, economic and political life of broader Australian society.





## Priority 3: Economic opportunities

*Economic opportunities means:*

- *Queensland gets the most benefits from our diversity and global connections; and*
- *individuals are supported to participate in the economy*

### Second Action Plan

The second Action Plan included eight actions under Priority Area 3. Status updates provided by agencies in 2021-22 annual reporting on Priority Area 3 indicate that seven of the eight (87.5 per cent) broad actions have been completed for the duration of the second Action Plan.

The action which is incomplete is:

- Provide pathways to employment in the Queensland public sector for migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum, such as through work experience, internships or targeted recruitment.

Further detail on this action is discussed below.

*Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections*

The key action in the second Action Plan addressing this outcome was for DCYJMA, DESBT, Jobs Queensland, and Trade and Investment Queensland to work together to address the findings of the Deloitte Access Economics report *Seizing the opportunity: making the most of the skills and experience of migrants and refugees*.


The most common themes arising from agencies' responses to this action were:

- Collaborating with other Queensland Government agencies to increase participation in existing programs, such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work.
- Providing targeted programs or information sessions to assist people from diverse backgrounds find work, such as the Diverse Queensland Workforce program and the Overseas Qualification Unit, which offers free academic assessments of qualifications gained overseas and gives an indication of the general educational comparability in Australian terms.

Other themes from the second Action Plan agency reports included:

- Working with non-government organisations to promote or develop employment opportunities for migrants and refugees, such as DCYJMA's partnership with Welcoming Cities promoting skills utilisation in regional Queensland.
- Meeting with industry, professional organisations, and local government to promote the benefits of a diverse workforce.
- Addressing the barriers to employment for migrants and refugees.
- Providing advice on employment opportunities.





### *Individuals supported to participate in the economy*

Under this outcome multiple agencies signed up to the action to provide pathways to employment in the Queensland Public Sector for migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum, such as through work experience, internships, and targeted recruitment.

Common themes in agencies responses to this action include:

- Targeted recruitment strategies for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the organisation as an employer of choice for culturally and linguistically diverse workers.
- Partnering with multicultural service or recruitment organisations.
- Providing support to culturally and linguistically diverse staff.

All agencies signed up to this broad action have reported it as 'completed' except DCYJMA, DoR and the QHRC all of which have a status of 'yet to commence'. The many agencies who had completed the action have improved their recruitment processes and role descriptions to be more inclusive of diversity. The three agencies who have not yet commenced provided the following updates in their agency reports:

- DoR states it continues to monitor representation in this area and notes that more than 10 per cent of its staff identify as having cultural or language diversity. Recruitment rates remain high, particularly in technical roles.
- QHRC has been heavily impacted by COVID. A huge increase in enquiries and complaints, in particular, led to significant resources being directed to their management. In the circumstances, there has been limited capacity for staff to facilitate the development of this action in any depth.
- DCYJMA states it will review options to provide employment pathways for migrants, refugees, and people seeking asylum in the future.

There were several other agency specific actions that addressed this outcome in the second Action Plan. The key themes arising from these agencies' reports were:

- Providing employment and training programs that are inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work and the Back to Work programs.
- Ensuring small business programs are inclusive of culturally diverse small business owners.
- Promoting Queensland Government programs and funding opportunities to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Using government's funding programs to support training and employment

## Market research

The 2022 survey results for economic opportunities were generally consistent with the 2018 results with only a couple of exceptions.

Overall, most respondents (both in the online and convenience samples) agree they usually work in jobs that suit their skills and experience. This agreement is stronger among respondents in the online sample (88 per cent versus 82 per cent among the convenience sample) except for those who speak a language other than English at home (79 per cent).

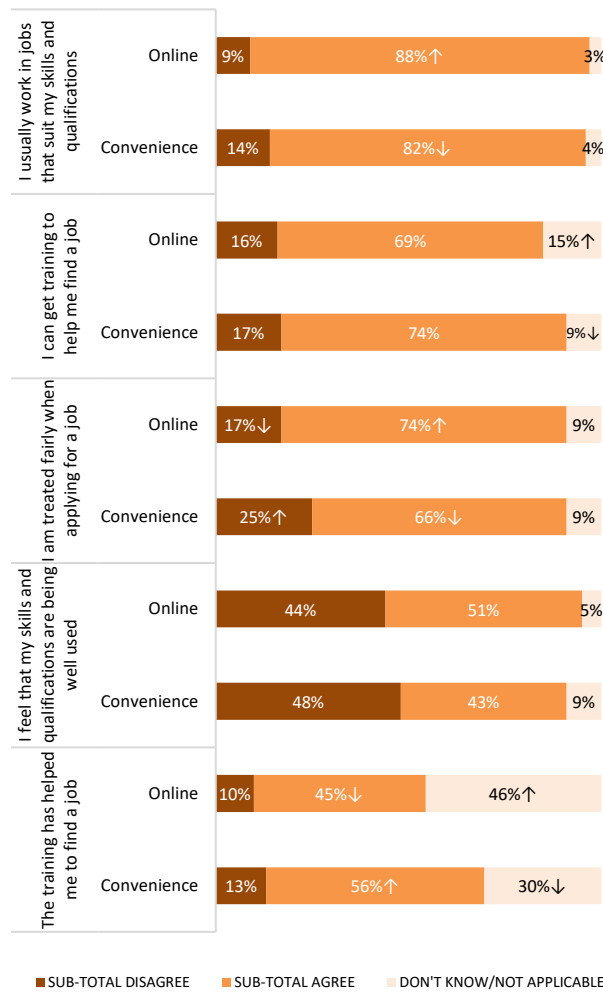
Approximately seven in ten respondents agree they can get training to help them find a job (found in both samples). Convenience sample respondents (56 per cent) are more likely than those in the online sample (45 per cent) to agree that training has helped them to find a job. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of online respondents agreeing with this statement (with only 38 per cent in 2018). Agreement is also higher amongst those in the online sample who speak a language other than English at home (62 per cent versus 42 per cent for those who speak English at home).

Respondents in the online sample (74 per cent) are more likely than those in the convenience sample (66 per cent) to feel they are treated fairly when applying for a job. Since 2018 there has been an increase in agreement with this statement among the online sample (66 per cent in 2018).

Approximately half of respondents in the online sample and four in ten in the convenience sample agree their skills and qualifications are being used well. The proportion of online respondents agreeing with this statement has increased significantly between 2018 (44 per cent) and 2022 (51 per cent).

### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY - 2022

Base: People who are working or looking for work - online sample (n = 506), convenience sample (n = 164)



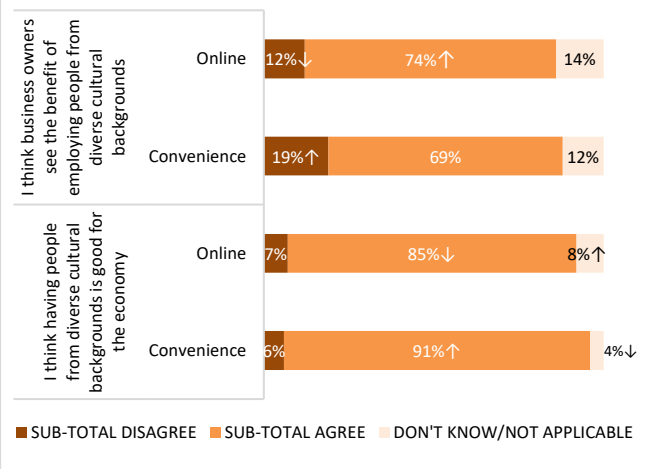
Arrows ↓/↑ indicate a result that is significantly different to the other sample type at the 95% confidence level.

Most respondents agreed that business owners typically see the benefits of employing people from diverse cultural backgrounds and the economic benefits of diversity in the workforce. The view that the economy benefits from diversity is especially prevalent among those in the convenience sample (91 per cent, compared with 85 per cent in the online sample) and among people who do not identify as Australian in the online sample (89 per cent).

Among those who participated in the online survey who own or operate a small business, two thirds agreed they know they can get help from the Queensland Government to set-up or run a business. Among their counterparts in the convenience sample, just under half know of the help available from the Queensland Government to set-up or run a business. These results are consistent with those from 2018.

#### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY - 2022

Base: Online sample (n=808), Convenience sample (n=264)



Arrows ↓/↑ indicate a result that is significantly different to the other sample type at the 95% confidence level.

### Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council

When asked whether people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds work in jobs that use their skills and qualifications, Council members noted that small steps have been gained in this area but there is scope for further progress. Many migrants are overqualified for the work they do and are rarely represented in decision making roles, including in the political sphere. Migrants attach identity and value to work, and it can have a significant impact on settlement.

Members were also asked to identify the barriers to employment for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These included:

- Bias and discrimination in recruitment processes is an important factor, especially towards those who are visibly different.
- Lack of networks that can help facilitate opportunities for employment.
- Lack of access to mentors or people who can advocate for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to progress in the workplace and with their careers.
- English language proficiency can be an issue, especially for women from refugee backgrounds who had to learn the language when they arrived.
- Perception that education systems in countries where English is not the first language is of poor quality, and that only western English-speaking countries offer good quality education. This is a generalisation and ignores the fact that many countries around the world have quality educational systems, and that in all countries education quality varies (including in Australia).
- Perception that people must have a high level of English language proficiency to gain employment. This fails to recognise that workplaces are environments that can play a key role in supporting the development of language skills (e.g., work-specific language,

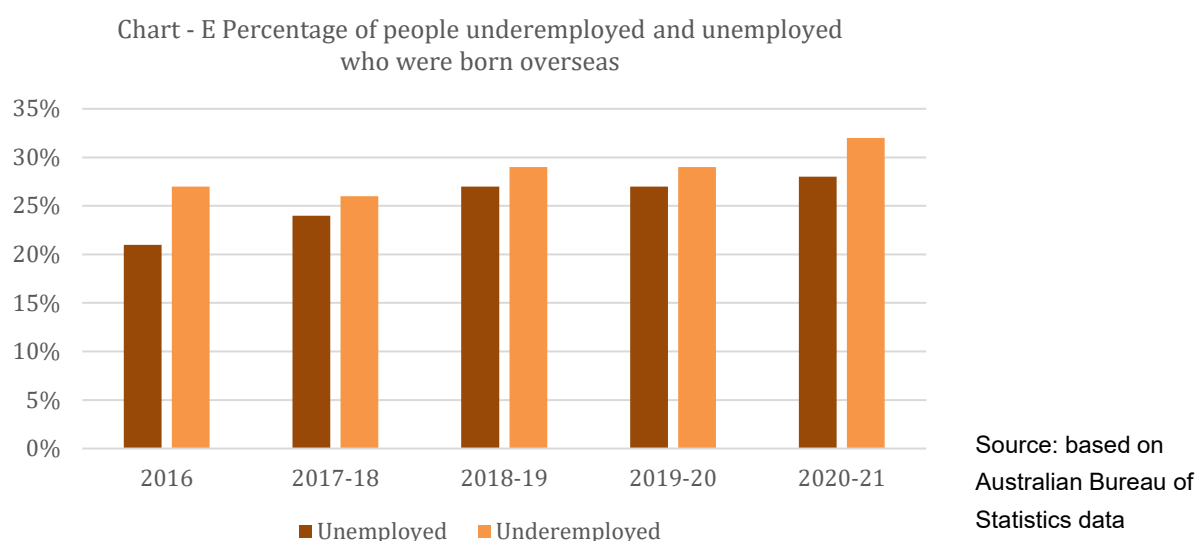
and people feel more motivated to learn the language when they are working in their own fields).

- Lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and work experience.
- Difficulties obtaining experience in the Australian job market and navigating the market.
- Lack of workplace socialisation – workplace training and professional/career development opportunities. Existing support options available for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are fragmented across different levels of government and industry, which can make it difficult to navigate.

Members also spoke of the need for engagement with employers to better understand the barriers to employing qualified migrants. Negative narratives can impact on whether international students chose to come to Australia to study and negatively impact Australia's reputation.


### Other data

To get the most from our diversity, we need to build an economy where all individuals can participate and achieve their economic goals.



The graph above illustrates the percentage of people underemployed and unemployed who were born overseas. Underemployed includes people who are employed and would prefer, and are available, to work more hours than they are currently employed (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Both the percentage of underemployed and unemployed people born overseas have steadily increased since 2016. The levels remained static in 2019-20 but have increased again in 2020-21. Culturally and linguistically diverse communities have been particularly affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Various lockdowns and infection control practices have impacted front-line workers and certain industries more than others, such as meat processing plants, aged care, and hospitality (Weng, Mansouri, & Vergani, 2021). These jobs tend to be made up of workers from migrant and refugee backgrounds and temporary



visa holders such as international students, seasonal workers and people seeking asylum (Weng, Mansouri, & Vergani, 2021). The impact of COVID-19 on the workforce has compounded existing inequalities within the labour market.

### **Priority 3: Key highlights/success stories**

#### **Community efforts in welcome and inclusion**

As one of the participants in **DCYJMA's** Regional Partnerships Projects, Balonne Shire Council developed a Welcoming Plan to welcome new members to their community.

The Balonne Shire is home to a thriving community of people from Fiji as well as people from 18 other diverse cultures. The Shire is planning to build on its successes in welcoming people to the community, to help fill local skills gaps and to keep thriving.

The agriculture sector is a significant employer in the region and relies heavily on seasonal workers – either backpackers or people on a working holiday visa who are only able to work under specific conditions, including time restrictions. Attracting families to relocate and settle in St George offers greater economic, cultural and community benefits than continuing to support a temporary and transient workforce.

Regional migration has benefits for both migrants and the receiving community. It is vital to recognise that migrants may experience cultural and geographic isolation, and ensure strategies are in place to help migrants settle into the community successfully.

**Queensland Ambulance Service's** Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Paramedic Program provides a structured and supportive educational pathway with the added benefits of full-time employment within the pre-hospital emergency response sector.

For more information or to submit an expression of interest, visit <https://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au/diverse-recruitment.html>

### Small grants making a big difference locally

Queensland Association of School Tuckshops Inc received funding of \$35,826 in 2020-21 from **DCYJMA's CMQ program** to deliver the **Connections Through Cooking** project. The project assisted migrants, especially socially isolated women from culturally diverse backgrounds, to be active participants in school communities through volunteering in school canteens in several schools.

The project provided a soft entry point to assist women develop confidence to participate in training and employment in catering, hospitality, and other fields. Canteen staff and volunteers were provided with resources and training to create supportive environments and are available for other schools across Queensland to access to build their capacity to engage and be inclusive.

The project began in July 2021 and received media coverage from ABC News both in print and television, which increased its visibility within the community and resulted in new referrals from relevant organisations and additional school tuckshops expressing an interest in the program.

On completion of the project, 33 participants were engaged with 23 placed in different schools as volunteers. Through participation in the project, volunteers gained confidence, independence and learnt new skills, as well as meeting new people in their community and having the opportunity to practice their English-speaking skills. This project has also assisted participating schools to build their capacity to include a more culturally diverse volunteer workforce.

The Multicultural Community Centre Ltd received funding of \$30,000 in 2020-21 to deliver the **DGSB - Developing and Growing Small Business Program - Digital solutions** project. The project has delivered several activities to assist in developing and growing a small business by providing participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds the opportunity to create an online digital presence for their business.

The project began in July 2021 and, to date, three small businesses were launching their businesses in the areas of biodegradable cutlery, women's clothing and swimwear and multilevel marketing.

The George Street Neighbourhood Centre Association Inc trading as the Neighbourhood Hub received funding of \$38,771 in 2020-21 to deliver the **Mackay Multicultural Connect Program**. The project engaged women from culturally diverse backgrounds to identify and document their strengths in Mackay, identify social, cultural, and economic challenges they face, and to identify how organisations can work together to address these challenges and barriers, including English language ability, access to services, and transportation.

The project began in July 2021 with important ongoing partnerships formed with the Mackay Regional Council and Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal who are large employers within the Mackay community, committed to providing project participants with employment opportunities.

On the completion of the project, more than 30 women participated in the program with employment/volunteer/work experience opportunities offered at Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal, Mackay Regional Council, Ocean International and Ideal Placements.





### Training and skills a pathway to employment

**Upcyclinc** is an innovative employment and training program delivered by Centacare Far North Queensland Multicultural Services. The team comprises skilled, and industry connected employment case workers and youth engagement workers representing culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Far North Queensland.

Upcyclinc is a circular economy project that creates sustainable outcomes for employment, business and waste reduction and has been funded through a combination of Try, Test, Learn funding (Commonwealth Government) and **Skilling Queenslanders for Work funding (DESBT)**.

The program was initially set up to be a social enterprise with the intention to become self-sustaining. However, over time the program has evolved to become agile and adaptable for participants with real value being found in the process of people participating in a simulated workplace, providing opportunities to develop real life skills and confidence to carry through into employment. This process has enabled participants to overcome barriers experienced by people who are least likely to receive sustainable employment outcomes through traditional employment services in the region, particularly migrant and refugee communities. Participants are upskilled and matched with work opportunities and intensively supported to develop the skills and resilience to maintain long-term employment, decreasing potential social welfare dependence.

Under Skilling Queenslanders for Work funding, 53 migrants from this project have gained employment.





### **Priority 3: Future opportunities**

#### *Employment*

The Department of Environment and Science (DES) has identified unemployment as a significant issue for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, in particular people from refugee backgrounds and those living in regional areas. Those who do have jobs are often working in vulnerable positions with little employment security.

For refugees who have experienced limited or interrupted schooling or have low skills, on top of limited English language proficiency, finding employment can be very difficult. Prejudice can also prevent refugees, and people from other backgrounds, securing meaningful work (Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services).

As well as the negative impacts on emotional wellbeing, mental health and living conditions for refugees, failing to secure employment can also threaten their ability to resettle successfully and feel as though they belong in Australia (Arian, Gavranovic, & Venner, 2021). Traditional job seeking activities are generally not as effective for refugees, these include formal processes through resumes and applications letters, informal networks, vocational education, volunteering opportunities and starting their own business (Arian, Gavranovic, & Venner, 2021).

### **The opportunity – facilitate economic participation**

Key Action 1 of the third Action Plan facilitates economic participation opportunities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Over the next two years, the Queensland Government will take practical steps to contribute to improved economic outcomes for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This includes promoting access to social procurement opportunities, improving accessibility of existing government funded employment and training programs to culturally diverse communities and organisations and building the capacity of smaller and new and emerging communities to be competitive in government funding processes that support employment pathways.

### **The opportunity – growing the arts, cultural and creative sector**

Grow 2022-2026, the second action plan for the Queensland Government's Creative Together 2020-2030: A 10-Year Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland (Creative Together) is committed to investing in the sharing of Queensland's diverse stories. This will require the strengthening of a creative workforce that reflects the diversity of Queensland multicultural and First Nations communities.

Grow 2022-2026 focuses on building the state's pipeline of talent to secure critical skills and grow capacity. Four-year investment of \$50 million will support key initiatives to address skills gaps and support industry placements that grow clear career pathways and creative employment. Specific focus will grow First Nations arts across the state including employment and career development initiatives for First Nations peoples.

For more information about Grow 2022-2026 and Creative Together, visit <https://www.arts.qld.gov.au/creative-together>

### **The opportunity – breaking down barriers to joining the public sector**

Key Action 2 of the third Action Plan aims to remove barriers to participation for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to join the public sector and Queensland Government boards, through culturally inclusive recruitment practices and workplace cultures.

As the largest employer in Queensland, the Queensland Government will take practical steps to significantly improve economic opportunities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including migrants, refugees, people seeking asylum, and Australian South Sea Islander peoples, by providing meaningful employment and career progression opportunities, including mentoring, work placement or pathways to better using their skills and experience. This will help support achieving a culturally responsive government through a more diverse workforce.

Agencies will also develop strategies to address any identified under-representation of employees from culturally diverse backgrounds amongst agency staff.



### *Workers' Rights*

Lack of access to welfare or equitable employment opportunities, low levels of English language proficiency and unfamiliarity with Australian workplace or legal systems and culture, all place migrant and refugee workers (particularly temporary visa holders with no pathway to permanent residency) at risk of being victimised by exploitation or unfair work practices.

#### **The opportunity – empowering workers from migrant and refugee backgrounds**

The Queensland Government has provided \$1 million over four years for the Workers' Rights Education and Support Services program to help empower workers from migrant or refugee backgrounds, including temporary visa holders. The program will help migrants and refugees understand their rights at work and develop confidence rectifying issues in the workplace. The program will be delivered through a partnership including Multicultural Australia, QPASTT and Queensland Community Alliance.

### *Small business ownership and entrepreneurship*

There is limited data currently available relating to the characteristics, strengths and challenges of small businesses owned by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Queensland.

We do know that many migrants start a small business because they have a negative experience in the labour market, or because it is what their family has always done. Migrants are also more likely to be willing to take the risks associated with starting a new business, as they have already made the bold decision to move to a new country (Chen, Sinnewe, & Kortt, 2018).

Migrants can face greater barriers in establishing a small business, such as understanding the Australian culture, institutional environment and language (Chen, Sinnewe, & Kortt, 2018). Migrant business owners may also not be aware of the training programs available to assist them and their business or consider such programs too expensive and time-consuming (Chen, Sinnewe, & Kortt, 2018).

#### **The opportunity – Multicultural Entrepreneurs**

DCYJMA is working in collaboration with the Office of the Queensland Chief Entrepreneur and DTIS to organise a multicultural entrepreneurs event. This event will provide opportunities for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to find out about the journey of successful start-ups, the importance of diversity, information on businesses and employment opportunities.



### **The opportunity – Queensland Small Business research project**

DCYJMA and DESBT are collaborating on a research project which will provide opportunity to better inform government agencies in building inclusion of migrant-owned businesses in relevant programs, support and opportunities and assist to build a connection pathway to migrant small businesses to increase awareness and access to support programs.

### **The opportunity – harnessing small business diversity**

The \$140 million Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-23, places a focus on responding to the diverse needs of small business owners, including from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Strategy includes \$100 million Business Investment Fund to invest in small to medium sized businesses with significant growth potential and to create Queensland based jobs, \$30 million to increase skills and capability through grants and other support for small businesses, and \$10 million to make the Queensland Small Business Commissioner permanent and a targeted engagement framework that includes, reinvigorating the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council. The Strategy also makes a commitment to engage with Queensland small businesses to ensure:

- they are connected to support and services;
- feedback is captured and there is collaboration on solutions; and
- small businesses are promoted to customers.

For more information on the Big Plans for Small Business Strategy, visit <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/79ba1140-cfae-4da4-a126-b020bc7407a9/big-plans-for-small-business-strategy-2021-2023.pdf?ETag=2f9e4301de0420c9b428fef636374fbf>



## Looking forward

The third Action Plan was released in August 2022 and builds on outcomes achieved under the first and second action plans. This plan focuses on six actions to build the economy and community, provide better access to interpreters, and improve cultural diversity data to enhance service delivery. It will continue to drive Queensland Government action to support an environment of opportunity and achieve improved social and economic outcomes for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A further Action Plan and progress report will be developed in 2024.

The Act requires all government agencies to report publicly on their actions in the plan and provide a summary of their progress every year. This allows the community to track how the government is achieving positive change and provides a picture of where we need to make changes to investment or services.

Over the next two years, agencies will be focused on ensuring the actions in the third Action Plan are delivered, with a particular focus on developing a target for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds on Queensland Government boards and committees.


DES will also consider the findings of the evaluation of the implementation of the Act and will also be working with the Australian South Sea Islander community to deliver the Australian South Sea Islander Community Plan.

Through the continued implementation of the Act and the Policy, the Queensland Government is working with our stakeholders and the Queensland community to celebrate and harness the benefits of our cultural diversity and ensure all Queenslanders have equitable opportunities to participate in the life of our State.

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## Appendix 1 – List of government entities (abbreviations)

DCYJMA	Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
DCHDE	Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
DCSSDS	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
DES	Department of Environment and Science
DESBT	Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
DLGRMA	Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
DoE	Department of Education
DoR	Department of Resources
DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
DSDSATSIP	Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
DTIS	Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport
ECQ	Electoral Commission of Queensland
PSC	Public Sector Commission
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
QH	Queensland Health
QHRC	Queensland Human Rights Commission
QPAC	Queensland Performing Arts Centre
QPS	Queensland Police Service
TAFE	TAFE Queensland
TIQ	Trade and Investment Queensland

## Appendix 2 – Multicultural Advisory Council members: 2019-22

### **Dr Nora Amath**

Dr Amath is a long-term advisor to the Queensland Government with a proven commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion.

She belongs to the Cham people, a Muslim minority from Vietnam who settled at a young age in the United States as part of a refugee family. She is an internationally respected expert in Islamic studies and has extensive experience working in human rights and women's rights.



### **Ms Dealonna Bickey**

Ms Bickey is a Rockhampton local who re-located to Mt Isa and is a passionate and experienced leader in the Australian South Sea Islander community. Currently working for non-government organisation Save the Children on community programs addressing domestic and family violence, she has experience in a number of public service roles.



### **Ms Irene Biedak OAM**

Ms Biedak is well known in south-east Queensland for 60 years of service in the aged care industry and multicultural communities through her work with OzPol. As the daughter of Polish refugees, she translated for members of the Polish community from an early age and understands the barriers for new and emerging communities, as well as more recently settled culturally and linguistically diverse community groups.



### **Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez**

Dr Correa-Velez is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Public Health and Social Work at Queensland University of Technology. He was the co-CEO for QPASTT. He brings a broad range of skills and experience to the role, from working as a GP in Colombia, to holding several academic research roles in Australia. He works actively to help diverse communities recover, settle and flourish in Queensland.



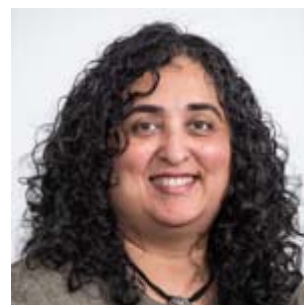
### **Dr Faiza El-Higzi OAM**

Dr El-Higzi is well-known in Queensland's multicultural community, with over 20 years' experience representing African, Arab and Muslim communities. She brings a strong focus in the areas of youth, women and refugee support and engagement. She is a non-executive Board Director with Queensland Council for Social Services and a member of the Queensland Government Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council.



### **Dr Aparna Hebbani**

Dr Hebbani is an expert in intercultural communication and has been working with and researching refugee settlement in Queensland for the past 12 years. With 20 years of teaching experience in the United States, Australia, India, Malaysia and Hong Kong, she is currently a tenured lecturer in the School of Communication & Arts at the University of Queensland. She is passionate about intergenerational communication and the role of media in migrant and culturally and linguistically diverse community integration and representation.



### **Dr Nkosana Mafico**

Dr Mafico received his PhD in Management from Monash University and as a field researcher he explores how entrepreneurs draw on intercultural experience to develop their ventures. He was a co-founder of the Council for Young Africans Living Abroad. He has been a non-executive Director of Australian Refugee and Migrant Care Services Ltd, an Advisory Council Member of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Young Social Pioneer with the Foundation for Young Australians.



### **Mr Tej Man Monger**

Mr Monger was resettled from a refugee camp in Nepal to Cairns in 2013 and has gone on to be a community leader and former President of the Cairns Bhutanese Community Inc. as well as involvement in sporting organisations. He has helped newly arrived refugees settle into a new life in Queensland through his work with Centacare Multicultural Services. He has also provided advice in his capacity as member of the Multicultural Affairs Committee of Cairns Regional Council and executive member of the Cairns and Regional Multicultural Association.



### **Cr Natalia Muszkat**

Cr Muszkat migrated to Australia from Argentina in 1999 and was elected as Councillor in the Gladstone Regional Council in 2018, the first migrant female to hold this position. Prior to being a Councillor, she co-founded Welcoming Intercultural Neighbours Inc, an organisation providing support to newly arrived residents in Central Queensland.



### **Mr Giridharan Sivaraman**

Mr Sivaraman is Principal at Maurice Blackburn, practicing discrimination law. A passionate social-justice advocate, he is also the Chair of Multicultural Australia's board, believing that migration has been the bedrock of success for Queensland.



### **Ms Vicky Yu**

Ms Yu is the President of the Queensland Chinese Forum (QCF) and the Chairperson of the Chinese Community Crime Prevention Consultative Committee. She is experienced with grassroots community participation and engagement with businesses, government and other agencies.



## Interpreter



*The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To talk to someone about the Second Progress Report 2019-2022 in your preferred language call **1800 512 451** and ask to speak with the Department of Environment and Science.*

## More information

Contact the Department of Environment and Science

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