

OUR CULTURAL DIVERSITY PLAN



Education
and Training

EARLY CHILDHOOD / SCHOOLS /
TRAINING AND SKILLS



SECRETARY'S FOREWORD

Our Cultural Diversity Plan

I am pleased to present the Cultural Diversity Plan for 2019-2021 for the Department of Education and Training.

The Department is progressing the Victorian Government's Education State, putting education at the centre of a thriving Victoria, and supporting economic development, justice and health and human services. The Education State strives for excellence and equity in education so that our early childhood services, schools and VET system create opportunities for every Victorian, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Victoria is vibrant multicultural state. Our diversity is a key aspect of our success and underpins why we are one of the most liveable places in the world. The services and educational settings which the Department supports provide a vital gateway by which immigrant families become part of Victorian society, enriching it further.

DET is an open and inclusive organisation. Through the Education State we have a clear vision to create a Victorian education system that gives every Victorian the best learning experience, making our state a smarter, fairer and more prosperous place.

The Cultural Diversity Plan will enable us to provide more effective learning and development services to culturally and linguistically diverse people, and continue to help grow Victoria as a multicultural community that values diversity and the needs of new immigrants.

Importantly, the Plan recognises our existing strengths, the progress of the Education State and how we can continue to build on both.

This Plan has been developed in consultation with staff, with a focus on the cultural and linguistic diversity associated with immigration, especially people from non-English speaking backgrounds. This includes migrants who choose to leave their country to seek a better life, refugees who are forced to flee their country and cannot return, and asylum seekers.

The Plan includes objectives focused on intercultural capability, providing appropriate and accessible information, and engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities to inform the planning and delivery of services.

DET is committed to the actions outlined in the strategy and we will continue to work to ensure that all elements of the plan are implemented. Our commitment to implementation of the Plan will unlock the value a diverse and inclusive workforce brings to our services.

We know that our early childhood, school and post-secondary learning spaces are environments where all Victorian children, learners and their families must feel safe and welcomed. I look forward to seeing the positive impact that this Plan has on the DET community and our learners.

Jenny Atta

Secretary
Department of Education and Training

INTRODUCTION

This Cultural Diversity Plan sets out how the Department of Education and Training will be working to improve Victoria's learning and development services to meet the needs of families, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly recent immigrants. It also sets out the work being undertaken to equip all Victorian children and young people to understand and navigate cultural and linguistic differences within an increasingly interconnected world.

The Plan reflects the importance the Department places on recognising and celebrating this diversity across the community, including our own workforce.

Our community has benefited greatly and continues to benefit from this diversity. It enriches the experiences of the children, young people and families who use Victoria's early childhood services, schools and vocational education and training (VET), as well as the experiences of the Department's own workforces. In addition to appreciating the rich cultures of our First Nations Peoples, experiencing this wider diversity opens gateways to other parts of the globe and to other cultures and their heritages. It brings new voices to deepen our understanding of the world.

The Department recognises that our early childhood, school, and VET settings are essential environments in which to cultivate an awareness and acceptance of diversity amongst our children and young people and adults. Education is key to promoting social inclusion and providing pathways to opportunity, by breaking down communication and language barriers, providing connection to the broader Victorian community and enhancing engagement.



Overall, Victorians speak **200 languages** and dialects and follow **130 faiths**.

This rich diversity is reflected in the children, young people and adult learners in our early childhood education and care services, schools and training.



24.8%

of the Victorian population are born overseas in a non-English speaking country



27.7%

of Victorians speak a language other than English at home



4.49%

of Victorians speak English 'not well or not at all'



28.3%

of the Victorian population are born overseas

High proportions of Victorians are also born in:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| England (2.9%) | Vietnam (1.4%) |
| India (2.9%) | New Zealand (1.6%) |
| China (2.7%) | |

SCOPE OF THIS PLAN

The Cultural Diversity Plan focuses on the cultural and linguistic diversity associated with immigration, especially of people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Its scope includes:

- Migrants choose to leave their country to seek a better life. They choose where they might migrate to and they are able to return whenever they like.
- Refugees are forced to flee from their country and cannot return unless the situation that forced them to leave improves. Some may need to flee without warning and many have experienced torture and trauma. Refugees seek safety and protection from persecution from human rights abuse, rather than economic advantage.
- Asylum seekers are seeking protection as refugees and are waiting to have their claims assessed. Every refugee has, at some point, been an asylum seeker.

The Plan recognises but does not include other forms of diversity. In particular, the distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds of Koorie people in Victoria; specific strategies are in place to support improved outcomes for Koorie people.

PARTICULAR CHALLENGES FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Refugees and asylum seekers come to Australia to seek a safe environment, away from persecution and the challenges of conflict, where they can forge a better life for themselves and their families. Refugees can be in Australia on different types of visas, with various restrictions, but all school-aged children are entitled to attend school. The Department, and schools and services, need to adapt to respond to the changing profile of immigrants settling in Victoria.

Approximately 4000 refugees have settled in Victoria annually over the last decade, with many being children and young people. The Department estimates that in 2018, approximately 13,000 Victorian students from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds attended government schools.

In September 2018, there were over 6824 asylum seekers in Victoria with a Bridging Visa E (BE); 1499 of whom were children. BVEs allow people to stay in Australia temporarily while they make arrangements to leave or await an immigration decision. In November 2018, there were 175 asylum seekers in Victorian community detention, including 79 children.

Refugees and asylum seekers are motivated to achieve in education and training, even those who lack previous formal education. For example, the Building a New Life in Australia study of over 1500 newly-arrived humanitarian migrants revealed that 15 per cent of adult respondents had never attended school, 34 per cent had less than 10 years schooling, and 65 per cent intended to study in Australia; of these, 42 per cent wanted to pursue a trade or technical qualification and 30 per cent aspired to achieve a university degree. Whilst three quarters reported that they understood English 'not well or not at all' on arrival in Australia.

BUILDING AN EDUCATION STATE

The Education State ambition reflects the community's expectation that it is possible to improve educational outcomes for every student, regardless of their background or circumstances. It is about building a world class education system, achieving excellence and creating opportunities through education.

Building an Education State means better learning opportunities and pathways for children and young people, from early childhood into vocational and higher education.

The Education State **Early Childhood** Reform Plan has set out the Victorian Government's vision for the early years, to give every child the best start in life. Through a record \$202.1 million investment, the Plan is delivering systemic change, targeted support to the children who need it most, to create a higher quality, more equitable and inclusive early childhood system that helps Victorian families get their kids ready for kinder, ready for school and ready for their lives ahead.

The Government's introduction of two years of kindergarten education for all children will provide particular opportunities for children to form connections, learn English and foundational skills.

The Education State **Schools** statement outlined the Government's plan to build a system that provides every student with the knowledge, capabilities and attributes that will see them thrive throughout their lives, able to gain the skills that industry needs and that employers expect. The Victorian Government has invested \$5 billion to improve outcomes for all students, regardless of their start in life, promoting foundational learning domains such as reading, mathematics and science, alongside other important areas, such as critical thinking, the arts, physical education and resilience.

Building excellence and equity in equal measure means that all students will have access to the same quality education, regardless of their background or circumstance. The Education State in Schools initiatives have included changes to Government school funding that allow schools to invest in evidence-based, targeted programs appropriate for their students, families and school.

The Education State vision supports learning beyond school, widening opportunities and ensuring Victorians have the skills needed to support our changing economy.

Skills First sets out the Government's commitment to the **vocational training and TAFE system**. It ensures Victoria's training and TAFE system is better managed. A new approach to training has been implemented, setting a high benchmark for training quality, and supporting the courses that are most likely to lead to employment training for real jobs.

The Government will continue to invest \$1.2 billion annually in the training and workforce development of Victorians, including supplementary funding for high needs learners and to support regional and specialist training.

In particular, TAFE courses in a wide range of priority areas will be free, offering a pathway to a range of jobs of community importance.

Initiatives to improve access, participation or educational outcomes for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds under each of these Government strategies are included in this Cultural Diversity Plan.

A STRONG, DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

The Education State is central to realising the Government's vision for Victoria as a strong, diverse and inclusive community that maximises the potential of all Victorians. The Victorian Government's Multicultural Policy Statement, *Victorian. And Proud of it* sets out how the Government is acting to safeguard social cohesion and to ensure that every Victorian is able to contribute and belong. It detailed policies, programs and services that have continued to build upon our strengths as a multicultural state, and sets out the key steps being taken to advance this vision and clear outcomes to measure progress. The Department has developed this Cultural Diversity Plan to align with *Victorian. And proud of it*, and will contribute to delivering its commitments.

PROTECTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL

This Plan is informed by a clear legislative context that not only protects the rights of all Victorians, but requires Government departments to ensure that this diversity is recognised and planned for so that barriers are reduced.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. The Charter requires state and local governments, and public servants to take human rights into consideration when making laws, setting policies and providing services. The Department's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Implementation Guide sets out the process for staff to follow for considering human rights when developing policy. This guide draws on the obligations outlined in the Charter.

Section 19(1) states that:

'All persons with a particular cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy his or her culture, to declare and practise his or her religion and to use his or her language.'

The Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2006 prohibits public behaviour that incites or encourages hatred, serious contempt, revulsion or severe ridicule against another person or group of people because of their race and/or religion. This legislation is supported by other forms of action.

The Government's Social Cohesion and Community Resilience Ministerial Taskforce identified a range of priority investments totaling \$25 million to support Victorians to have a strong sense of belonging, whatever their religion, ethnicity, skin colour or cultural identity.

The *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* recognises the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of Victorians. One of the requirements of this Act is for departments to develop cultural diversity plans.



WHAT THE PLAN WILL DO

This Plan sets out six objectives to respond to cultural diversity as part of delivering the strategic intent of the Department of Education and Training – *Together we give every Victorian the best learning and development experience, making our state a smarter, fairer, more prosperous place.*

These objectives are to:

1. **Build the intercultural capability of both learners and their teachers**
2. **Make the Victorian learning and development system welcoming and inclusive to all**
3. **Provide appropriate and accessible information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities**
4. **Sustain and improve supports for refugees and other new immigrants to respond to their needs**
5. **Engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities to inform planning and delivery of services**
6. **Improve our information and reporting systems and program evaluation so the effectiveness and value of services to culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians can be monitored**

The 22 actions, to deliver on these objectives over 2019 to 2021, will continue the Education State ambition to deliver a strong, diverse and inclusive Victoria which protects the rights of all.

TOP 10 LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH SPOKEN AT HOME BY VICTORIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS



| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Vietnamese | 11375 |
| Arabic | 11372 |
| Mandarin | 10151 |
| Chinese (not further defined) | 6863 |
| Punjabi | 6015 |
| Hindi | 5753 |
| Dari | 4943 |
| Cantonese | 4349 |
| Singhalese | 3835 |

OBJECTIVE 9

BUILD THE INTERCULTURAL CAPABILITY OF VICTORIAN LEARNERS AND THEIR TEACHERS

All Victorian young people need the skills and knowledge that will allow them to flourish in a diverse and interconnected world, where exposure to different cultures is commonplace. We want learners and people in education workforces to be able to reflect on their own cultural perspectives and to gain insight and understanding from the differences they observe. In turn, a greater intercultural capability amongst our learners and workforce helps education strengthen the foundations of a more cohesive Victoria.

ACTIONS

To build the intercultural capability of both learners and our education workforces, we will continue to support young people to build positive relationships, and encourage our education workforce to utilise effective practice methods through the following eight actions.

| | Description |
|---|--|
| 1 | Offer the Victorian Young Leaders to China, Indonesia and India programs to Year 9 students and teachers, providing access to an immersion experience that builds leadership and global citizenship with a particular focus on intercultural capabilities. |
| 2 | Design and pilot the Indian Diaspora and School Partnerships Program to provide Victorian schools with access to information and financial support to enhance their relationship with their local Indian community and to enrich students' engagement with India. |
| 3 | Develop and provide schools with resources to support teaching of Intercultural Capability, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An Intercultural Capability Assessment Tool that comprises a suite of assessment tasks and associated materials covering the Intercultural Capability curriculum levels, to support best practice assessment in Victorian schools• Teaching and learning resources including: sample units of work and student work samples annotated against a formative assessment rubric; a teacher guide and supporting poster fostering cultural sensitivity in the classroom; and teacher reflections. |
| 4 | Design and pilot a new offering of global learning professional development experiences that expose teachers and school leaders to innovative international approaches to teaching and learning and enhance their ability to teach the Intercultural Capabilities as part of the F-10 Victorian Curriculum. |
| 5 | Identify and promote effective practice in developing Intercultural Capability of pre service teachers through the Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPPs) and other interactions with initial teacher education stakeholders. |
| 6 | Design and pilot an Intercultural Champions project to provide intensive training and support for up to 40 teachers who will be local champions in the delivery of the Intercultural Capabilities in the Victorian Curriculum. |
| 7 | Update the Internationalising Schooling Guide to include specific resources and references for school leadership teams to support the development of Intercultural Capabilities, with advice on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building a whole-school approach to internationalisation• Informing curriculum, assessment and instruction• Creating sister schools and overseas learning experiences• Forging community partnerships and;• Integrating international students. |
| 8 | Develop a proposal to enhance the cultural competency of the Department's corporate workforce and implement the approved approach through the Department's VPS Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. |

OBJECTIVE

MAKE THE VICTORIAN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE TO ALL

All Victorian children and young people, and their families, are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds. Recent immigrants can face a range of barriers when accessing education and training. These can include a lack of English proficiency, knowledge of cultural norms and fear of authority, as well as unfamiliarity with the services that are available to them. We want every Victorian child and adult to feel confident and welcomed when engaging with our services, and can access the appropriate support when necessary. Victoria is a diverse multicultural state and to ensure the learning and development system is welcoming and inclusive we are equipping it to identify and address the needs of learners, no matter their background. Below is a table that highlights the top 10 languages other than English that are spoken at home by Victorian school students. In order to make the Victorian learning and development system welcoming and inclusive to all, it is imperative that we provide information in these and other CALD languages.

ACTIONS

We will make Victoria's early childhood education and care services, schools and vocational and education training services welcoming and inclusive by building cultures of respect and inclusion, and supporting educational engagement of young people who might otherwise be excluded.

| | Description |
|----|---|
| 9 | Develop and publish new advice and resources for school staff, parents and students on preventing and responding to racist bullying, as part of the Department's Bully Stoppers online toolkit. |
| 10 | Develop and deliver the Respectful Relationships Professional Learning package for early childhood educators in funded kindergarten programs. |
| 11 | Support schools to promote the value of diversity, create cultures of belonging, and address racism via implementation of the "CurioUS" project delivered by the Centre for Multicultural Youth. |
| 12 | Manage the delivery of the Voice for Change initiative, in partnership with Mushroom Group Creative Victoria; ensuring effective engagement with schools with high numbers of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to foster music and DJ skills and help sustain engagement in education. |

OBJECTIVE

PROVIDE APPROPRIATE AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION TO CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

It is important that all Victorian children, young people and their families can participate in our community and that those who mostly communicate in languages other than English are provided with translated materials or access to a capable interpreter if necessary. The Victorian Government's Multicultural Communication Policy sets out how government services should cater appropriately to the people they serve. This includes providing support in different languages to help children settle into their new school environments and to feel part of the community, encouragement to learn English at home in order to support integration, and providing aides and community liaison officers for parents to talk to regarding their child's development. The Deaf and hard of hearing community may also need special materials and/or Auslan interpreters.

ACTIONS

Investment in a strategic approach towards culturally and linguistically diverse communities will ensure that we consider needs of these Victorian families in all priority communications that we facilitate, so that they get the information they need.

| | Description |
|----|---|
| 13 | As part of a Multicultural Communications and Engagement Strategy, provide translated resources on the Department's website and provide strategic advice to schools and services on how to make their information provision culturally appropriate. |
| 14 | Provide communication activities targeted to culturally and linguistically diverse communities across all communication and advertising campaigns, such as Back to School and Tech Schools. |



OBJECTIVE

SUSTAIN AND IMPROVE SUPPORTS FOR REFUGEES AND OTHER NEW IMMIGRANTS TO RESPOND TO THEIR NEEDS

Services across the learning and development system – in early childhood, school education and vocational education and training – are essential to family life and future opportunity for all Victorians. Children, young people and families from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds need assistance to access services fully. This support may be due to disrupted or no previous schooling, the need to develop English language and learning skills, dealing with migration and pre-migration experiences and the transition to mainstream schooling. Students often face additional challenges and these add complexity to their educational settings they are in and the supports they need.

ACTIONS

We will sustain and improve supports in early childhood, school education and vocational education and training for refugees and other new immigrants to respond to changing patterns of need and deliver on the Education State’s vision for Victoria – achieving excellence, equity and lifelong learning for all.

| | Description |
|----|---|
| 15 | Provide eligible asylum seekers and refugees holding temporary residence with access to government subsidised training along with a range of wrap around supports, through the extended Asylum seeker VET Program. |
| 16 | Continue specialist refugee education supports for teachers and schools, delivered by Foundation House and the Centre for Multicultural Youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) and RESP Plus• School Support Program – professional learning and outreach support for non- RESP schools• Learning Beyond the Bell (LBB), including Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs (OSHLSPs)• School Support Program – Early Years Program. |
| 17 | Support educational success for students from African communities through providing funding and resources to selected schools to deliver homework clubs and access to school community liaison officers build stronger community relationships as part of delivering on the Victorian African Communities Action Plan. |
| 18 | Increase per capita grants for all students attending Community Language Schools and expand community language schools to early childhood and preschool-aged children. |
| 19 | Support place-based partnerships to improve school engagement and completion and reduce youth offending among recent immigrant young people in selected areas, including holiday and after-school programs and stronger school-community partnerships. |

OBJECTIVE

ENGAGE WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES TO INFORM PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES

To improve the educational outcomes for children, young people and families from CALD backgrounds in Victoria, we need to know when families encounter barriers or difficulties when using our services, and what we can do about this. Refugees and asylum seekers may require specific approaches to assist in overcoming a disrupted education, as well as the effects of trauma they may have experienced.

Given the diversity within these groups, wide consultation is necessary to understand whether the services provided are appropriate and effective. Consultations need to include both the more established groups, as well as groups that represent more recently arrived refugees and asylum seekers, in order to identify barriers and develop culturally appropriate approaches to participation in early childhood, school education, higher education and training and skills programs.

ACTIONS

We will engage culturally and linguistically diverse communities to inform planning and delivery of services, and support schools, local service providers and networks to do the same.

| | Description |
|----|--|
| 20 | <p>Develop and implement a Multicultural Communications and Engagement Strategy to create opportunities to engage with local CALD communities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponsorship of Cultural Diversity Week• Promotion of key celebration days such as International Mother Tongue Day and Harmony Day. |
| 21 | <p>Facilitate community engagements through redevelopment of the Department's Stakeholder Engagement Framework by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing and updating the register of culturally and linguistically diverse community stakeholders for Departmental staff to facilitate consultation when appropriate, for program and policy development• Developing and advising schools on processes for consulting directly with culturally and linguistically diverse stakeholders from community organisations. |

OBJECTIVE 6

IMPROVE OUR INFORMATION AND REPORTING SYSTEMS AND PROGRAM EVALUATION SO THE EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUE OF SERVICES TO CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE VICTORIANS CAN BE MONITORED

Maintaining accurate datasets helps us to effectively plan and implement services to meet the needs of our diverse communities. Departmental programs collect data on the ethnicity, language spoken or country of origin of families or children where this is important for schools or services to know. Improving the quality of this information is an ongoing task for program areas. The Department draws on this administrative data for a range of reporting purposes, including the report on government services and budget papers. The Department has reviewed its evaluation policy and guidelines which are used to support program areas to plan and undertake evaluations, including of how long standing or recent initiatives are improving how our services meet the needs of families. This policy emphasises the importance of providing a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse families and children, where relevant.

ACTIONS

Our next priority to improve our data systems is to ensure we understand, and can respond to, the diversity of the Department's own workforce.

| | Description |
|----|---|
| 22 | Improve the Department's data collection in edupay to enhance the ability to monitor and report on the cultural diversity of the Department's workforces. |



ENSURING DELIVERY

Over the next two years, we will implement the actions outlined above and continue to improve our services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The implementation of this Plan and reporting on progress will be overseen by the Department's Intercultural Oversight Committee, which will monitor the implementation of the actions outlined above and consider their impact on Victoria's diverse communities.

The Department is required to report annually to the Department of Premier and Cabinet on how its services respond to migrant, refugee and asylum seeker groups. It also reports quarterly to the Victorian Auditor General's Office on its actions to ensure its services are meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse, asylum seeker and refugee communities.

Delivery of this, and future plans, are among the ways in which Victoria is continuing to deliver on the Education State ambitions. Inclusive schools, early childhood services and vocational education and training provide opportunities for all Victorian children and young people, no matter where their families are from, or the languages spoken at home. A renewed focus by the Department on people and place will allow regions to be more responsive to local needs and changes in Victoria's diverse mix of families, and begin to address the specific issues which particular communities may be facing.

During 2019 and beyond, the Department will continue to consult with key stakeholders as we develop future plans to develop measurable and meaningful strategies for the specific issues which culturally and linguistically diverse communities' face.



