AEC
Australian Electoral Commission

Australian Electoral Commission Multicultural Plan 2013–15

Multicultural Access and Equity Policy:
Respecting diversity. Improving responsiveness.

Our vision

To promote knowledge of and participation in Australia's electoral system equitably across the Australian community.

Our department or agency

Australia's electoral system has some unique elements – enrolment and voting are compulsory for Australians eligible to participate. Secrecy of the vote is also a key tenet of our electoral system.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is responsible for conducting federal elections and referendums and maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll. The AEC also provides a range of electoral information and education programs and activities.

All Australian citizens over the age of 18 are eligible to vote. This is approximately 15.8 million people.

The AEC's audience is diverse. Its diversity requires the AEC to develop specific strategies that target different audiences to ensure people understand their obligation and are easily able to participate in Australia's electoral system.

Our AMP

Assistant Commissioner Education and Communications (ACE&C) has overall responsibility for the AMP.

The AEC's AMP seeks to engage with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to encourage and make easy their participation in federal elections and referendums.

Focus

In 2013 the AEC's focus will be on engagement activities around the federal election.

1. Leadership

Provide strategic guidance and ensure commitment to the plan from senior leaders. Senior leaders support the purpose and objectives in the AMP and promote an organisational culture in which the AMP is considered and acted upon.

Minimum obligations

1.1   **Executive accountability:** Department or agency to assign a senior executive officer to be responsible for implementation of multicultural access and equity obligations.

1.2   **Department or agency commitment:** Department or agency leadership to ensure that staff understand and are committed to multicultural access and equity implementation.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1.1	**Executive accountability** ■ AEC to appoint a Senior Executive (Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications, ACE&C) as multicultural champion responsible for planning, policy and implementation of new policy obligations. ■ Establish ongoing reporting mechanism to monitor AMP implementation.	First Assistant Commissioner Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	July 13 half yearly	SES officer appointed. Reports on implementation provided to the Executive Leadership Team regularly.
1.2	**Department or agency commitment** ■ AMP will be launched on the intranet to staff with a message from the Electoral Commissioner. ■ ACE&C to chair a working group to develop new initiatives, monitor progress to implement strategies for special audiences and report.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	July 13 Over the 2-year AMP period	Working group will meet quarterly and report half yearly on progress of AMP implementation.

2.   Engagement

For the AEC, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are an important target group as our research indicates that people for whom English is a second language are more likely to vote informally, meaning that their votes cannot be counted.

Minimum obligations

2.1   **Stakeholder engagement:** Department or agency to have an engagement strategy to understand culturally and linguistically diverse communities' interactions with department or agency.

2.2   **Language and communication:** Department or agency to have a language and communication plan for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including on the use of languages other than English and incorporating the use of interpreters and translators.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
2.1	**Stakeholder engagement**			
	■ After a trial at the 2010 election, the AEC is rolling out a refreshed community education workshop program ahead of the 2013 election (using bi-lingual educators) with the aim of shaping it into an ongoing, tailored education program.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	July–August 2013	Educators employed and trained. Education Workshops held. Ongoing relationship established and maintained with educators.
	■ As part of its ongoing school and community visits program (SCVP), AEC will continue to take advantage of opportunities that present to engage directly with people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities through presentation of education sessions, attendance at forums, conferences and shows, and provision of information to relevant groups and bodies.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	July 2014	Number of SCVP sessions held meet program targets.
	■ AEC will continue to support new citizens to enrol by providing relevant information to DIAC for inclusion in citizen application packs, providing partially completed enrolment forms to new citizens at their citizenship ceremonies (with the assistance of DIAC) and, wherever possible, having AEC staff available at ceremonies to assist with completing and collecting enrolment forms.	Assistant Commissioner Roll Management	Monthly	Number of new citizens enrolled to vote within 3 months of their conferral meets agency target for this activity.
	■ Review existing programs to ensure they align with access and equity considerations.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	Annually	Analyse results of existing activities and compare past outcomes to determine ongoing effectiveness.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
2.2	**Language and communication** The AEC: ■ Publishes translated material on its website.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications/Assistant Commissioner Elections	over the 2 year AMP period	All CALD-specific services provided at election time operate as planned to reduce informal voting directly related to English proficiency. Electoral information provided for CALD audiences. Existing communication strategies reviewed to ensure they are contemporary in taking into account needs of CALD communities.
	■ Provides access to a telephone translator service for phone enquiries.		over the 2 year AMP period	
	■ Translates its advertising campaign material into languages other than English (as required by Government campaign guidelines).		September 13	
	■ Uses a specialist consultant (and ABS data) to determine the priority languages into which to translate material, and regularly updates this advice.		over the 2 year AMP period	
	■ Provides translated materials in polling places and aims to employ as many as possible bi- or multi-lingual staff in those polling places.		September 13	
	■ Has created a new category of bi/multi-lingual polling staff for polling places with high levels of informal voting. Staff will explain voting procedures to voters.		September 13	
	■ AEC communication strategies include communication accessible to CALD communities.		over the 2 year AMP period	

3. Performance

The AEC needs to ensure that it is delivering appropriately focused and structured services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Minimum obligations

3.1 **Performance indicators and reporting:** Department or agency to develop a set of KPIs relating to engagement with, or outcomes of services to, culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

3.2 **Feedback:** Department or agency to have arrangements in place to ensure affected culturally and linguistically diverse communities are able to provide feedback on department or agency multicultural access and equity performance.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
3.1	**Performance indicators and reporting** The AEC will: ■ Have in place performance indicators for its community education program, against which it will report – in full to the AEC Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and in summary in its annual report.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	December 2013	Reports against performance indicators provided as agreed with ELT. Performance will be reviewed with the aim of business improvement.
	■ Use its post-election evaluation process and data capture mechanisms to identify activities for which feedback was received (positive and negative) and take appropriate follow up action– particularly those where feedback indicates improvement is required or expansion of activity is warranted and report in the annual report.	Assistant Commissioner Strategic Capability/ Assistant Commissioner Elections	October 2014	Changes determined as part of post-election evaluation process are implemented in time for next electoral event. Performance will be reviewed with the aim of business improvement.
3.2	**Feedback** ■ The mechanism for providing feedback is set out on the AEC website. The AEC will use the relevant feedback captured, as well as relevant statistical data from the election, to evaluate and improve service.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	Every six months over the 2 year AMP period	Existing feedback mechanisms have been reviewed to ensure they are contemporary in taking into account needs of CALD communities. If this review identifies a need for additional or targeted mechanisms these are in place by June 2014.
	■ Feedback from CALD communities will be taken into account to improve business practice.			Feedback and data collected and used to inform business improvements.

4. Capability

The AEC wishes to foster a workplace where the diverse skills, abilities and cultural perspectives of individuals are respected, and equip our workforce to deliver services in a tailored, professional manner to all of our clients.

Minimum obligations

4.1   **Cultural competency:** Department or agency to have training and development measures to equip staff with cultural competency skills.

4.2   **Research and data:** Department or agency to collect ethnicity data on the culturally and linguistically diverse groups with which the department or agency engages and to which it delivers services directly or indirectly.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
4.1	**Cultural competency** ■ Review and identify opportunities for staff to access cultural competency training, such as DIAC's e-learning to equip staff with cultural competency skills suitable to their roles.	Assistant Commissioner People Services	June 2015	80% of staff to complete e-learning cultural competency training.
4.2	**Research and data** ■ The AEC will continue to use ABS data to inform the development and delivery of services and programs, including forward planning towards changing demographics.	Assistant Commissioner Strategic Capability	June 2014	Use of data enables AEC to have a contemporary understanding of its diverse audiences to ensure services and programs remain relevant and effective.
	■ The AEC will continue to seek inclusion of a diverse audience in market research activities.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	December 2013	Election market research methodologies in line with industry best practice in respondent selection.

5. Responsiveness

The AEC will continue to review its business processes to remain responsive to the contemporary needs of its clients including those from CALD backgrounds. By doing this the AEC can ensure that the way it carries out its business is accessible and equitable for clients from CALD backgrounds. The AEC will encourage and respond to feedback, and review its data with the aim of improving business practices under the MA&E policy.

Minimum obligations

5.1   **Standards:** Any whole-of-government standards and guidelines developed by the department or agency must address multicultural access and equity considerations.

5.2   **Policy, program and service delivery:** Provision to ensure that policies, programs, community interactions and service delivery (whether in-house or outsourced) are effective for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

5.3   **Outsourced services:** Where relevant, provision for incorporation of multicultural access and equity requirements into contracts, grant agreements and related guidance material of which the department or agency has carriage.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
5.1	**Standards** ■ Promote awareness of and adherence to relevant Australian Government standards and guidelines.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	July 2013	AMP published to website and relevant action included in annual report.
5.2	**Policy, program and service delivery** ■ The AEC will maintain current business planning processes that include CALD community clients especially in service and communication strategies.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	July 2013	Strategies include relevant considerations and are reported upon in AEC annual reports.
	■ Promote to staff the need to adhere to relevant Australian Government Standards and guidelines on the intranet with links to those documents.			Intranet news item issued and links added to policy reference page.
5.3	**Outsourced services** ■ Multicultural access and equity considerations are to be built into all relevant outsourcing activities, including documentation, cultural capability of staff/contractors delivering services, language and communications used in carrying out business, etc.	Chief Legal Officer	30 June 2014	Contracts, funding agreements, partnerships will include MA&E considerations.

6. Openness

As an independent statutory body the AEC embraces the values of the Australian Public Service (APS) in the high standards of behaviour we display day-to-day.

In particular, we:

- conduct our business in a non-partisan manner with fairness and impartiality
- maintain high standards of integrity and ethical behaviour
- respect and uphold the law
- are tolerant of difference, sensitive to special needs and show respect for one another
- are open, transparent and accountable in what we do, and
- respect and listen to our clients and stakeholders and each other.

Minimum obligations

6.1   **Publishing:** Department or agency to publish AMPs on department or agency websites and performance reports against KPIs for culturally and linguistically diverse clients in department or agency annual reports.

6.2   **Data:** Department or agency to make culturally and linguistically diverse data available to other departments or agencies and the public.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
6.1	**Publishing** ■ The AEC will publish its AMP on its website and report on related activities in its annual report.	Assistant Commissioner Education & Communications	October 2014	AMP published on website July 2013 and reported against in annual report October 2014.
6.2	**Data** ■ In line with relevant legislation (such as the Privacy Act) which restrict data collection to that necessary for the conduct of business, the AEC does not collect data on the ethnicity of its clients.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.