

SECTION 3: NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT ETHNIC AFFAIRS ACTION PLAN 2000

As described in Section 1 of this Report, the NSW Government is committed to developing and implementing an Ethnic Affairs Action Plan Towards the Year 2000 in order to build on the cultural diversity of this State.

This Section outlines the key elements of this Action Plan. It begins by outlining four roles for the NSW Government in ethnic affairs. Secondly it identifies three Key Result Areas, together with clear outcomes, that all Government agencies are expected to act on. And lastly it describes how the Action Plan will be implemented, monitored and reported upon.

It should be noted, that while this section describes the Government's ethnic affairs agenda for the next five or so years, it will be the responsibility of individual Government agencies to implement plans to ensure that these commitments become a reality before the year 2000.

The introduction of this Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 demonstrates the Government's commitment to improving all areas affecting the social, economic, cultural and political life of the people of New South Wales.

It is a Plan about removing barriers which prevent people from various linguistic, cultural, racial and religious backgrounds from participating fully in the community. It is a Plan which recognises the value of cultural diversity. It is outcome driven and these outcomes will be measured and monitored.

While the Plan is focused on the State Government, clearly action is required throughout New South Wales by individuals, community organisations, the private sector, unions, the media and the three spheres of Government - Commonwealth, State and Local - if the needs and aspirations of people from all ethnic backgrounds are to be met.

The State Government recognises it must work in partnership with individuals and groups throughout New South Wales including, importantly, members of ethnic communities and their organisations. Action is required by each Government agency, and by agencies working together on ethnic affairs issues.

3.1 ROLES OF THE NSW GOVERNMENT IN ETHNIC AFFAIRS

As Section 2 of this report illustrates, ethnic affairs involves a complex network of issues and relationships. Within this network the State Government needs to have a clear direction. To do this the New South Wales Government will perform four important roles in ethnic affairs:

- ◆ **PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN ENCOURAGING AND VALUING A CULTURALLY DIVERSE SOCIETY AND IN PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION**

The Government will use its influence and authority to endorse, support and promote the value of cultural diversity and to ensure members of ethnic communities have the greatest opportunity to participate fully in public life. This leadership role is not just relevant to public sector agencies, but also to Government Trading Enterprises, to other spheres of Government, to the private sector, the media, unions, and the community sector. The Government will also perform a leadership role in stressing the importance of social cohesion and unity in the community.

- ◆ **ENSURE POLICY, LEGAL AND PLANNING FRAMEWORKS SUPPORT OUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE SOCIETY**

The Government's budget, policy, legal and planning frameworks shape day-to-day life and work. These include Government activity in consumer law, civil and criminal law, the police service, the juvenile justice system, environmental planning and regulation, State industrial laws, land use planning and business regulation. Cultural diversity will be considered when Government frameworks are planned, developed, implemented and evaluated.

- ◆ **ENSURE ACCESS TO QUALITY GOODS AND SERVICES, AND AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THOSE GOODS AND SERVICES**

The Government provides goods and services of high quality which must be accessible to all people, regardless of their linguistic, racial, cultural or religious backgrounds. In addition these goods and services must be allocated to ensure equity. The Government will also encourage Local Councils, the private sector and community sector to ensure their goods and services are accessible and equitable.

◆ ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The State Government will encourage ethnic communities to develop culturally, socially and economically so that they can, over time, meet their own needs and priorities. The Government recognises that for communities to become self-sustaining, Government assistance must be based on the principles of self-help, self-determination and independence from Government. The Government will continue to support community development through the provision of services, grants programs or other mechanisms.

These four roles - *Providing Leadership*, *Ensuring Appropriate Frameworks*, *Ensuring Accessible Goods and Services*, and *Encouraging Community Development* - provide opportunities and challenges to all Government agencies. Each agency needs to ensure it performs in these roles and identifies ways to deliver outcomes against the three Key Result Areas described below.

3.2 KEY RESULT AREAS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 is based on delivering outcomes against three Key Result Areas:

- ◆ Social Justice
- ◆ Community Harmony
- ◆ Economic and Cultural Opportunities.

What follows is an explanation of each of these result areas, together with some indication of where activity is needed and outcomes are expected. This section lists examples of how this will be achieved. It should be noted however that these statements are only some of the strategies that will be pursued across the public sector. All agencies are expected to reflect upon the outcomes listed and initiate ways they can demonstrate progress on these and other outcomes consistent with the key result areas.

3.2.1 KEY RESULT AREA: SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Government will ensure that resources are fairly distributed, that ethnic communities are consulted about decisions relating to Government program development and service delivery, that the rights and responsibilities of all people are recognised, and that services are effectively targeted to meet the needs of members of ethnic communities.

MAJOR OUTCOMES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE:

- ◆ **Accessible and Quality Government Programs and Services**

Quality government programs and services will be provided consistent with the principles of access and equity for all people regardless of their backgrounds.

This will be achieved through the new Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) process (outlined in Section 3.3), better cross agency coordination and co-operation, together with broad community consultation.

This will also be achieved through the effective use of accredited interpreting services, and improved monitoring of the impact of service delivery for clients, including those in rural and isolated areas. Where required Government services and programs will be targeted to meet priority needs within ethnic communities, for example the needs of young people, older people, people with disabilities, refugees, and women from non-English speaking backgrounds.

- ◆ **Responsive and Equitable Policy**

Policy and program development will be responsive to linguistic, cultural, racial and religious diversity.

This will be achieved through ensuring that the Government's budget and planning processes are equitable and reflect the Government's priorities in ethnic affairs .

This will also be achieved through the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements process (outlined in Section 3.3), through the Government's Social Justice agenda, and through community consultation.



Photo: NSW Department of Community Services

- ◆ **Participation on Decision Making Bodies**

Increased participation by members of ethnic communities at all levels of Government decision making and on advisory and consultative bodies.

This will be achieved by encouraging increased community participation and representation of members of ethnic communities on the Government's advisory boards. Usage and effectiveness of the NSW Government's Register of people of non English speaking background, which is maintained by the Public Employment Office, will be actively monitored with a report prepared annually to the Premier on the composition of Government advisory boards.

- ◆ **Cultural Diversity in Government Services**

Increased understanding by Government service providers of cultural diversity, particularly in essential service areas such as health, education, community welfare, housing, police and justice.

This will be achieved through the implementation of cross cultural training programs at all levels within agencies, with a particular focus on induction and orientation programs. For service providers, this training will include how to work with interpreters. The Ethnic Affairs Commission will monitor implementation through the EAPS and Ethnic Affairs Agreement processes and report to Parliament on progress on an annual basis.

- ◆ **Cultural Diversity in Funded Services**

Increased understanding by Government funded organisations of cultural diversity.

This will be achieved through requiring not-for-profit organisations funded by the State Government to provide evidence that the services being funded are provided in culturally appropriate ways to target groups. Private and non-government agencies tendering for contracts will also be required to indicate in their contractual agreements how they will deliver culturally appropriate services, where relevant.

- ◆ **Culturally Diverse Workforce**

Increased valuing and productive use of cultural diversity within the public sector workforce.

This will be achieved by requiring all agencies to implement strategies to increase cultural diversity at all levels in their workforce. The results will be monitored by the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment (ODEOPE). Large service delivery agencies will be expected to demonstrate best practice in this area. ODEOPE will establish specific agreements with agencies where progress is inadequate.

- ◆ **Access to Interpreters and Translators**

Increased access to accredited interpreters and translators for customers of Government services.

This will be achieved by the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Health Care Interpreter Service providing improved access and usage of accredited interpreters and translators and through ensuring greater cooperation between language service providers in NSW. This will also be achieved by ensuring government staff are familiar with how to book and use language services, and that there are adequate protocols and resources to ensure language services are effective.

- ◆ **Accessible Local Government**

Accessible programs and services delivered by Local Government.

This will be achieved by the Department of Local Government working in partnership with Local Councils and the Local Government and Shires Associations to ensure effective access and equity strategies are implemented at the local level and that Councils report annually and receive feedback on their access and equity performance as required by Section 428(2) j of the Local Government Act 1993.

This will also be achieved by the Department of Local Government establishing a Local Government Multicultural Committee to provide advice and assistance on appropriate policies and programs to address multicultural issues.

- ◆ **Planning for Cultural Diversity**

Urban and regional planning will reflect the current and future needs of our culturally diverse community and ensure that housing, social and community infrastructure are accessible.

This will be achieved through ensuring that budget and planning decisions in urban and regional areas are made with the needs of our culturally diverse community in mind, and that housing and development proposals are appropriate to the changing needs of the community.

This will also be achieved through ensuring that essential infrastructure, including social and community facilities and services, is accessible to all members of the community.

- ◆ **Improved Settlement Services**

Planning and provision of settlement services will be improved to ensure new migrants are better supported.

This will be achieved through the State Government taking an active role in facilitating greater coordination of Commonwealth, State and Local Government services to migrants. The State Government will develop proposals for the reform of settlement services for discussion with other State, Territory and the Commonwealth Governments, and for consideration by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) forum.

3.2.2 KEY RESULT AREA: COMMUNITY HARMONY

The Government will foster a climate of mutual respect by highlighting the benefits of cultural diversity to the community, by supporting anti-discrimination measures and by promoting and maintaining community harmony. As Australia moves into the next century, major issues will include those of cultural identity and shared values. The challenge is to develop a common understanding that cultural diversity is one of the defining characteristics of a united, modern Australia.

MAJOR OUTCOMES IN COMMUNITY HARMONY:

- ◆ **Community Development**

Community development and unity in the community supported.

This will be achieved through ensuring that Government funding to non-government organisations assists communities to become self-sufficient and enables community members to participate fully in public life.

It will also be achieved through providing access to culturally appropriate services and facilities at the local level.

- ◆ **Religious Tolerance**

All religions practise their beliefs free of discrimination and in the spirit of tolerance.

This will be achieved by the State Government ensuring the public sector allows people to practise their religious beliefs, through flexible work practices that allow for religious leave and prayer in the workplace.

- ◆ **Harmonious Communities**

The development of a harmonious community and a decrease in the incidence of racial vilification and racially based violence.

This will be achieved through the encouragement by agencies, including the Ethnic Affairs Commission, of community development to ensure ethnic communities are able to advocate for themselves and use mainstream dispute resolution processes.

This will also be achieved through the development of early intervention strategies (to be implemented by agencies including the Ethnic Affairs Commission) which will resolve potential or existing community tensions and conflicts.

This will also be achieved through ensuring the Government's ethnic liaison activities are effective and allow both Government staff and members of ethnic communities to understand their respective roles and responsibilities as regards community harmony.

- ◆ **Valuing Diversity**

Diverse cultures and languages other than English will be valued and respected.

This will be achieved through the development by the Department of School Education of a multicultural education plan for action to the year 2000, and by extending recognition by the Department's schools of the study of languages other than English undertaken in Community Language Schools.

- ◆ **Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination**

Within the context of the Australian legal system, all members of ethnic communities will be allowed to practise their religious and cultural beliefs free of harassment and discrimination.

This will be achieved by ensuring the effective implementation of existing anti-racism and anti-discrimination laws and through ensuring agencies such as the Anti-Discrimination Board efficiently and equitably enforce these laws.

- ◆ **Harmonious Workplaces**

Public sector work environments are free from harassment and discrimination.

This will be achieved by ensuring that the NSW public sector is a model employer which creates and maintains a work environment free of harassment and discrimination.

This will also be achieved by ensuring that agencies implement effective cross-cultural awareness programs as part of their broader training and development strategies, focused on harassment prevention and non-discriminatory work practices and service delivery.

- ◆ **Aboriginal Reconciliation**

Reconciliation with indigenous Australians based on an awareness, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and heritage within the wider context of a multicultural society.

This will be achieved through the New South Wales Government working with Aboriginal organisations as well as Commonwealth and Local Government bodies on means to involve ethnic communities in the reconciliation process, and in implementing community education and awareness programs.

3.2.3 KEY RESULT AREA: ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Government will promote the benefits of multiculturalism in the economic and cultural life of the State. The Government will recognise cultural diversity as a positive force in the development of the State's economic opportunities and in enriching our community through social and cultural activities.

MAJOR OUTCOMES IN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES:

- ◆ **Trade and Business Activities**

The cultural diversity of the State will feature prominently in trade and business activities. The Government will utilise the language and cultural skills of the people of New South Wales to attract business and expand overseas trade.

This will be achieved through the Department of State and Regional Development working in partnership with local ethnic communities and local ethnic business groups to generate investment in New South Wales and encourage exporting by local businesses.

This will also be achieved by language service providers such as the Ethnic Affairs Commission, ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of professionally trained and accredited interpreters available to assist both Australian and overseas business endeavours.

- ◆ **Improved Employment Outcomes**

Improved employment opportunities and outcomes for members of ethnic communities.

This will be achieved through the removal of restrictive barriers to employment through strategies including improvement in the recognition of overseas qualifications and skills, equal opportunity in public employment, vocational education and training and better workplace participation.

This will also be achieved by the Department of Training and Education Coordination improving access to English language, literacy and numeracy training in the workplace, and assisting in the removal of barriers so that individuals are able to be employed at a level commensurate with their skills, qualifications and experience.

- ◆ **Contributions by Ethnic Communities**

Improved public recognition of the positive contributions by ethnic communities to the social, economic and cultural life of the State.

This will be achieved by ensuring information about business opportunities in NSW is accessible to ethnic businesses and by giving due public recognition to their successes.

This will also be achieved by proper preservation and showcasing of objects commemorating the contribution of ethnic communities to this state's development, by naming of public places to reflect our cultural diversity, and by ensuring public recognition is given for significant achievements.

- ◆ **Multicultural Arts**

Multicultural arts and artists will become an integral part of the cultural life of the State.

This will be achieved by providing opportunities for the increased participation of ethnic communities in the State's cultural institutions, arts activities, arts bodies and in high profile cultural events, and by providing improved access to the Government's grants and cultural programs. Within this context, Carnivale will remain an annual state-wide festival celebrating multicultural arts in NSW.

This will also be achieved by the Ministry for the Arts ensuring that multicultural arts are treated as a living, dynamic aspect of mainstream culture through the development of a NSW multicultural arts policy statement.

- ◆ **Tourism, Culture and Sport**

Tourism and international cultural and sporting exchange activities will be supported by a skilled, culturally aware workforce, and a responsive Government infrastructure. The cultural diversity of the State will enable it to become an exciting, unique and cosmopolitan tourist destination.

This will be achieved by New South Wales Tourism encouraging tourist activities to be supported by a culturally aware workforce and a responsive Government infrastructure.

This will also be achieved through ensuring the implementation of the New South Wales Tourism Master Plan provides the necessary framework to allow the promotion of the benefits of multicultural activities and sights. Marketing activities will also be used to contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity as a positive force in the state's economic, cultural and recreational development.

◆ **Sydney 2000 Olympics**

The activities associated with the Sydney 2000 Olympics will be culturally inclusive and reflect the rich diversity of Australian Society.

This will be achieved through consultation by the Government and the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) with ethnic communities. SOCOG will set up a Multicultural Advisory Committee to advise on the involvement of ethnic communities in planning for the Games.



Photo: Gilbert Rossi

The Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 requires all Government agencies to demonstrate progress in each of the three Key Result Areas. How this will be implemented, monitored and reported is described in the following section.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING

This section describes the steps that need to be taken to implement the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000. It introduces the new reporting requirements that Government agencies will be required to fulfil, describes what agencies are expected to do, and describes the role of the Ethnic Affairs Commission in this process.

3.3.1 REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure the timely and efficient implementation of the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000, a three part monitoring and reporting arrangement will be implemented, comprising:

- ◆ Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements (EAPS), to be prepared by all NSW Government agencies;
- ◆ Ethnic Affairs Agreements, to be entered into by select agencies, with the Ethnic Affairs Commission; and
- ◆ Annual Ethnic Affairs Report to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs, to be prepared by the Ethnic Affairs Commission, for tabling in Parliament.

1) Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements

To ensure that all Government agencies take up the opportunities and challenges posed by our culturally diverse society, all agencies will be required to report annually on their achievements and future activities in ethnic affairs via the preparation of an Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS).

These Statements, similar to the previous Implementation Plans under the Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society, will document the agency's strategies to achieve outcomes in the three Key Result Areas, together with performance measures and plans for future action.

A report on EAPS progress and future strategies will be printed in each agency's Annual Report, which will enable public access to EAPS. The EAPS document will also be supplied to the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

As described in more detail below (see 3.3.2), these statements should not be written as stand-alone documents but rather reflect planned activities and strategies of the agency, and be reflected in its corporate and strategic plans. Where EAPS are prepared for a period of more than one year, the agency will still be required through its annual report to monitor achievements to date and report on future priorities and initiatives on a yearly basis.

In addition to preparing EAPS statements agencies will be expected to:

- ◆ Implement legislation and Government policies in ethnic affairs;
- ◆ Ensure ethnic affairs is integrated into agency core business and that there are appropriate accountabilities for ethnic affairs in all levels of the organisation; and
- ◆ Work together with other agencies on mutually beneficial initiatives to address issues of concern to ethnic communities.

2) Ethnic Affairs Agreements

The second aspect of implementing the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 is the introduction of Ethnic Affairs Agreements.

Ethnic Affairs Agreements are agreements between one or more Government agencies and the Ethnic Affairs Commission, to address specific issues affecting members of ethnic communities that can be remedied by joint activity and cooperation.

Each year a select number of agencies will be approached to enter into an agreement with the Ethnic Affairs Commission to address specific issues. These Ethnic Affairs Agreements will enable the Commission and the respective partner agency to work cooperatively to resolve specific challenges.

In most cases Agreements will be negotiated with agencies that will benefit from having a formal partnership with the Commission, which may include utilising the Commission's expertise. All Agreements will be negotiated between the Commission and the partner agency or agencies and will define outcomes that will be reached within a defined period of time, and according to agreed performance indicators.

The outcomes of Ethnic Affairs Agreements will also be reported in each agency's Annual Report.

The ability of the Commission to enter into Agreements will be included as an amendment to the Ethnic Affairs Commission Act.

3) Ethnic Affairs Report to the Minister

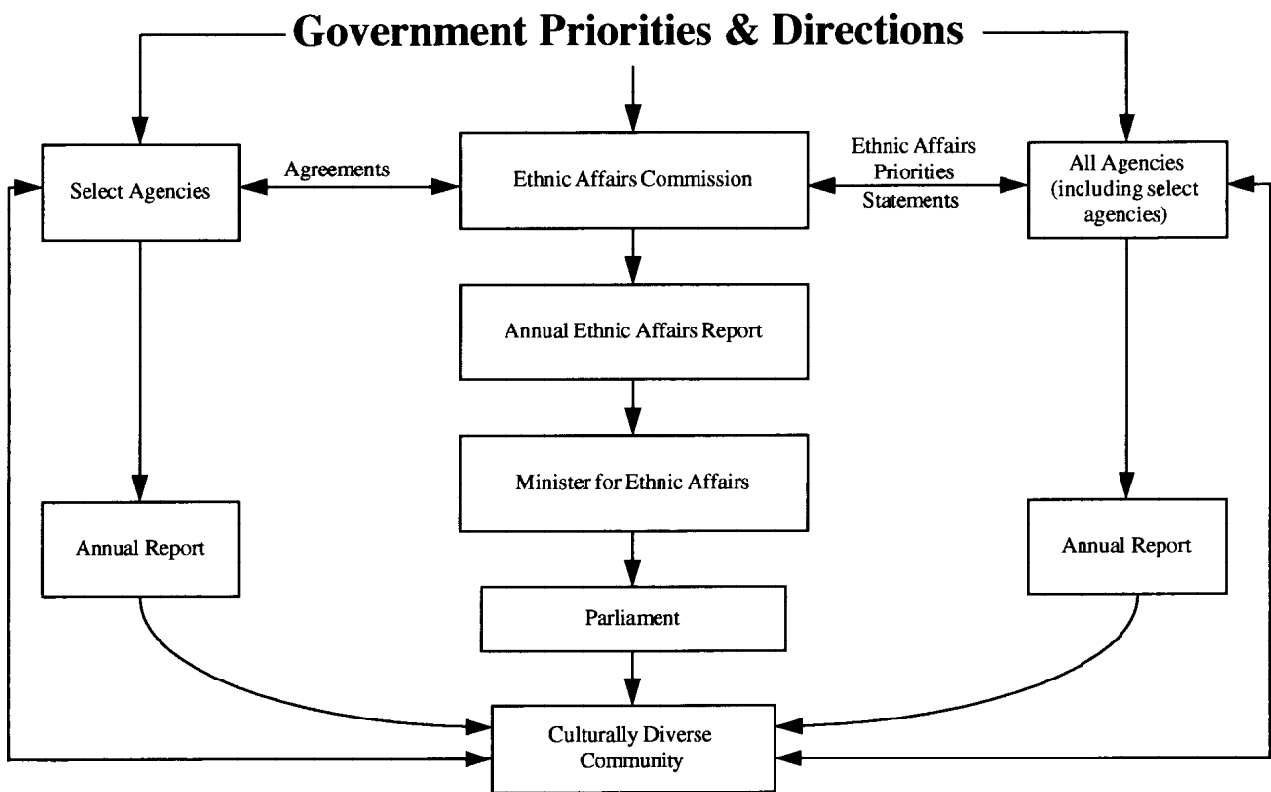
The third component of reporting on ethnic affairs issues is the preparation of an annual Ethnic Affairs Report. This report, to be prepared by the Ethnic Affairs Commission, will be submitted to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs at the end of each calendar year.

The Ethnic Affairs Report will include an overview of progress made in terms of implementing the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 and report on achievements and outcomes made through agencies' Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements and Ethnic Affairs Agreements.

The Ethnic Affairs Report will assist in identifying areas for future action by Government, and note issues which may require the development of new Ethnic Affairs Agreements. The Ethnic Affairs Report will be tabled by the Minister in Parliament and be available to the public.

As described in more detail in Section 4.3 below, a number of mechanisms will be used to evaluate the above reforms. The most substantial of these will be the preparation of a report in 2001 evaluating the effectiveness of the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000. This will analyse the degree to which outcomes under the three key result areas have been achieved, and the effectiveness of the monitoring and reporting arrangements. This evaluation will be presented to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs and will recommend changes as necessary.

The combination of Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements, Ethnic Affairs Agreements and the annual Ethnic Affairs Report will provide a comprehensive reporting arrangement which will assist agencies, the Government, Parliament and the public to evaluate progress in ethnic affairs. A flow chart showing these reporting arrangements follows:



To support the above reporting arrangements, and ensure the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 is able to be implemented, it is important for the roles and responsibilities of Government agencies, including the Ethnic Affairs Commission, to be clarified.

3.3.2 WHAT AGENCIES ARE EXPECTED TO DO

The New South Wales Government believes that to be effective ethnic affairs strategies need to become fully integrated into all Government agencies' practices. This approach ensures agencies, which are most familiar with the issues affecting their clients from culturally diverse backgrounds, are able to take appropriate action to deliver outcomes consistent with the Government's three Key Result Areas.

Section 2 of this report lists many issues that are currently affecting members of ethnic communities in this state. In preparing their Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements agencies are asked to reflect on these issues and take appropriate action to ensure that these and other related issues are addressed.

To implement the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 fully all Government agencies will be required to take a number of steps as follows:

- ◆ Implement legislation and Government policies related to ethnic affairs;
- ◆ Ensure ethnic affairs is integrated into their core business;
- ◆ Work together with other agencies on joint initiatives; and
- ◆ Report on progress and outcomes.

1) Implement legislation and Government policies

New South Wales Government agencies currently undertake various activities which support cultural diversity which are based on state legislation, including Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Anti-Discrimination initiatives. They are also required to implement other ethnic affairs policies that are introduced. Over recent years these have included:

- ◆ Government policy on advertising in the Ethnic Media (Premier's Memorandum 95-47);
- ◆ Government requirements to increase the representation of people of non-English speaking background on Government boards and committees (Premier's Memorandum 95-33);
- ◆ Consulting with people from different ethnic communities as is consistent with the Government's equality policies;
- ◆ Ensuring interpreters are provided when clients require assistance in interacting with Government agencies; and
- ◆ Providing culturally appropriate services and information in various community languages consistent with quality customer service measures .

These activities and other ethnic affairs policy initiatives will continue to be implemented by all agencies.

2) Ensure ethnic affairs is integrated into agency core business and that there are appropriate accountabilities for ethnic affairs in all levels of the organisation

The Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 requires agencies to deliver outcomes in each of the Government's Key Result Areas in Ethnic Affairs: *Social Justice, Community Harmony* and *Economic and Cultural Opportunities*. This requires a fundamental change in how agencies plan, develop and deliver goods and services, monitor achievements and manage core activities.

New ways of doing core business are required, for example:

- ◆ Agencies need to be more *people focussed*, which includes catering better for the culturally diverse clients of their services;
- ◆ Agencies need to be more *flexible*, so that they can provide cost-effective goods and services to meet the changing needs of the different communities and individuals that live in NSW;
- ◆ Agencies need to be more *innovative* in the ways that services are delivered to ensure that the changes which are occurring in our population can be responded to efficiently;
- ◆ Agencies need to ensure there are *appropriate resources* (human and financial) to implement ethnic affairs policies effectively, including the use of accredited interpreters and translators;
- ◆ Agencies need to be more *responsive and strategic* and take proactive steps to deal with specific ethnic affairs issues as they arise, rather than wait until the issue has become a problem;
- ◆ Agencies need to be more *accountable* and ensure that all levels of the organisation take appropriate responsibility for successfully implementing ethnic affairs initiatives; and
- ◆ Agencies need to better *measure the results* and benefits for the population of the goods and services being provided.

When implementing the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000, agencies should not simply continue to do core business as usual, whilst developing some new "add-on" program or service applicable to people of non-English speaking background.

Agencies will therefore need to ensure they create a mix of policies, strategies, practices, programs and services that address the needs of our culturally diverse community. This mix of approaches must be developed as an integral element of each agency's corporate planning process. This will require appropriate budget allocation by the organisation, as well as ensuring staff at all levels, including chief executive and senior executive staff, have clear roles and responsibilities in terms of successfully implementing ethnic affairs strategies.

In implementing their EAPS and any Ethnic Affairs Agreements, agencies will develop and utilise quantifiable indicators of their performance and planned outcomes for ethnic communities. The development of these indicators should be a component of agency corporate planning.

Consultations with ethnic communities will be undertaken by agencies in the planning of policy and delivery of services, where appropriate.

It is expected that agencies will integrate ethnic affairs initiatives into their corporate planning and core business. The Government will track this process by monitoring outcomes and progress made on a regular basis. Agencies will be required to identify specific priorities in ethnic affairs that will be addressed and specify performance indicators and measures of expected and achieved results. As described at 3.3.1 above, these priorities will be summarised in a document prepared by each agency called an Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) which will be printed in the Agency's annual report.

As described in Section 4.2 below, the Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW will prepare a detailed Resource Kit to assist agencies with this process. This will include a proposed format for EAPS reporting as well as guidelines on how best to design an appropriate response to the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000.

Key Agencies

While all public sector agencies are required to undertake the strategies described above, the Government has resolved that specific attention and focus should be given to those agencies deemed by the Minister for Ethnic Affairs to be Key Agencies. These agencies are chosen either because they provide essential human services that need to be particularly responsive to cultural diversity, or because they have an important role to play in terms of delivering on the Government's Ethnic Affairs Key Result Areas.

Included at Attachment 6 are those agencies that the Minister has determined are Key Agencies for 1996-97. These agencies are expected to consult with Ethnic Affairs Commission staff to ensure their Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements are appropriate and best meet the Government's and the community's expectations. Under normal circumstances, this will be achieved by Key Agencies providing to the Commission a detailed Draft EAPS document that is the subject of feedback and input.

The list of Key Agencies will be reviewed annually by the Minister with all agencies notified in a timely manner.

3) Work together with other agencies on mutually beneficial initiatives

The issues listed in Section 2.2 of this report indicate that frequently issues affecting members of ethnic communities are the responsibility of more than one Government agency. To address these issues effectively often requires agencies to work together to achieve agreed outcomes.

While cooperation and joint projects across Government are common, and will continue as a matter of course, in some circumstances it would be useful for this cooperation to be more formally defined in the form of an Ethnic Affairs Agreement.



Photo: Karen Mork

As described above (3.3.1), each year the Ethnic Affairs Commission will enter into specific Ethnic Affairs Agreements with a number of select agencies. These Agreements will contain clearly defined objectives and strategies for achieving an identified outcome. They will also contain performance indicators, the budget and other resources to be used in implementing the Agreement.

In some instances, agencies can best implement their ethnic affairs priorities by working with a number of other agencies in a coordinated way. Combined action by agencies at a policy, program or service delivery level may result in benefits to people from ethnic communities that could not be achieved by agencies working in isolation. For example, a specific project aimed at reducing levels of incarceration of juveniles of non-English speaking background may involve a number of Government agencies responsible for the administration of law and justice; education; community services; and policing.

4) Report to Government and the public on progress and outcomes

An important responsibility of Government agencies is to provide feedback to Government and the public, including members of ethnic communities, on the progress and outcomes of their ethnic affairs initiatives.

As described above, this will be made possible through the inclusion of the agency's Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement in their Annual Report together with a report on progress made in any Ethnic Affairs Agreements.

These documents will also be made available to the Ethnic Affairs Commission for possible inclusion in the Ethnic Affairs Commission's Annual Ethnic Affairs Report to Parliament.

In addition, the Annual Report of the Public Employment Office will provide information on the degree to which the composition of Government Boards and Committees reflects the cultural diversity of New South Wales. The Director, Equal Opportunity in Public Employment will also provide a report annually on progress in increasing the cultural diversity of the New South Wales public sector.

As all these Reporting instruments are in the public domain, they will assist community access to information on the status of ethnic affairs in New South Wales. This will improve public accountability for ethnic affairs outcomes and ensure that community members are in a position to approach the relevant Government agency if and when an issue needs to be further addressed or clarified.

3.3.3 WHAT THE ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION IS EXPECTED TO DO

1) Provide leadership and expertise to Government agencies as they develop and implement EAPS

The Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales is available to assist agencies to develop, implement and monitor their ethnic affairs initiatives. The Commission has expertise in identifying the needs of ethnic communities and individuals, communicating and consulting with specific ethnic groups, advising on appropriate ethno-specific services and enabling mainstream services to be better accessed or utilised by ethnic communities.

While Commission staff may be contacted for advice or assistance on any aspect of the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000, they are in a position to perform a special assistance role to Key Agencies as determined by the Minister for Ethnic Affairs (see Attachment 6).

This approach allows Commission resources to be focused on agencies that have the most crucial policy and services role in terms of ethnic affairs. Most Key Agencies forward Draft EAPS documents to the Commission to allow comment and input prior to their finalisation.

In addition to providing policy and liaison advice to Government agencies, the Ethnic Affairs Commission will also continue to improve the language services it provides and ensure greater education and awareness of the appropriate use of accredited interpreters and translators. This will include improving access to interpreter services in non-metropolitan areas.

2) Negotiate with agencies, or groups of agencies to develop Ethnic Affairs Agreements

Where an Ethnic Affairs Agreement is to be put in place, the Ethnic Affairs Commission will assist with the planning, consultation, development, implementation and/or evaluation phases of projects in partnership with an agency, or in partnership with two or more agencies.

The specific resources, roles and functions of the Ethnic Affairs Commission in Ethnic Affairs Agreements will be determined through dialogue with the partner agency or agencies and on a case-by-case basis.

3) Support and Consult with Ethnic Community Organisations and Individuals

The Ethnic Affairs Commission will continue to consult and liaise with a broad range of ethnic community organisations and individuals in order to identify and address issues requiring Government or community attention. Where necessary these issues will be communicated to other agencies for appropriate action.

The Commission will ensure that ethnic community organisations are supported in their community development activities. The Commission will also refer community organisations to other Government agencies that may assist. Where appropriate, the Commission will support specific ethnic community organisations with financial assistance in the form of grants.

In addition, the Commission will endeavour to assist other Government agencies with information on ways to contact or consult with ethnic groups, particularly in relation to the development of EAPS and Ethnic Affairs Agreements.

4) Oversee and report on the effectiveness and achievements of the EAPS and Ethnic Affairs Agreements processes

At the end of each calendar year the Ethnic Affairs Commission will provide a report to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs on the progress and achievements of the New South Wales public sector in implementing the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000. The Report will assess the specific achievements and directions contained in agencies' Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements and Ethnic Affairs Agreements. It will also recommend future strategies and priorities to be undertaken. The Report will be tabled in Parliament and be available to the public. Further details of the Annual Ethnic Affairs Report are given above (see 3.3.1).

To ensure that the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 is on track and has been effectively implemented, the Ethnic Affairs Commission will also prepare a report to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs on the effectiveness of its first year of operation, including analysis of the 1997 Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements and Ethnic Affairs Agreements process. The Minister for Ethnic Affairs will provide this report to the Cabinet Committee on Social Justice by December 1997 for its consideration.

In the year 2001, the Government will initiate a more comprehensive review of the success of the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000. This review will recommend the most appropriate way to proceed to ensure the NSW public sector is responsive to our culturally diverse community.

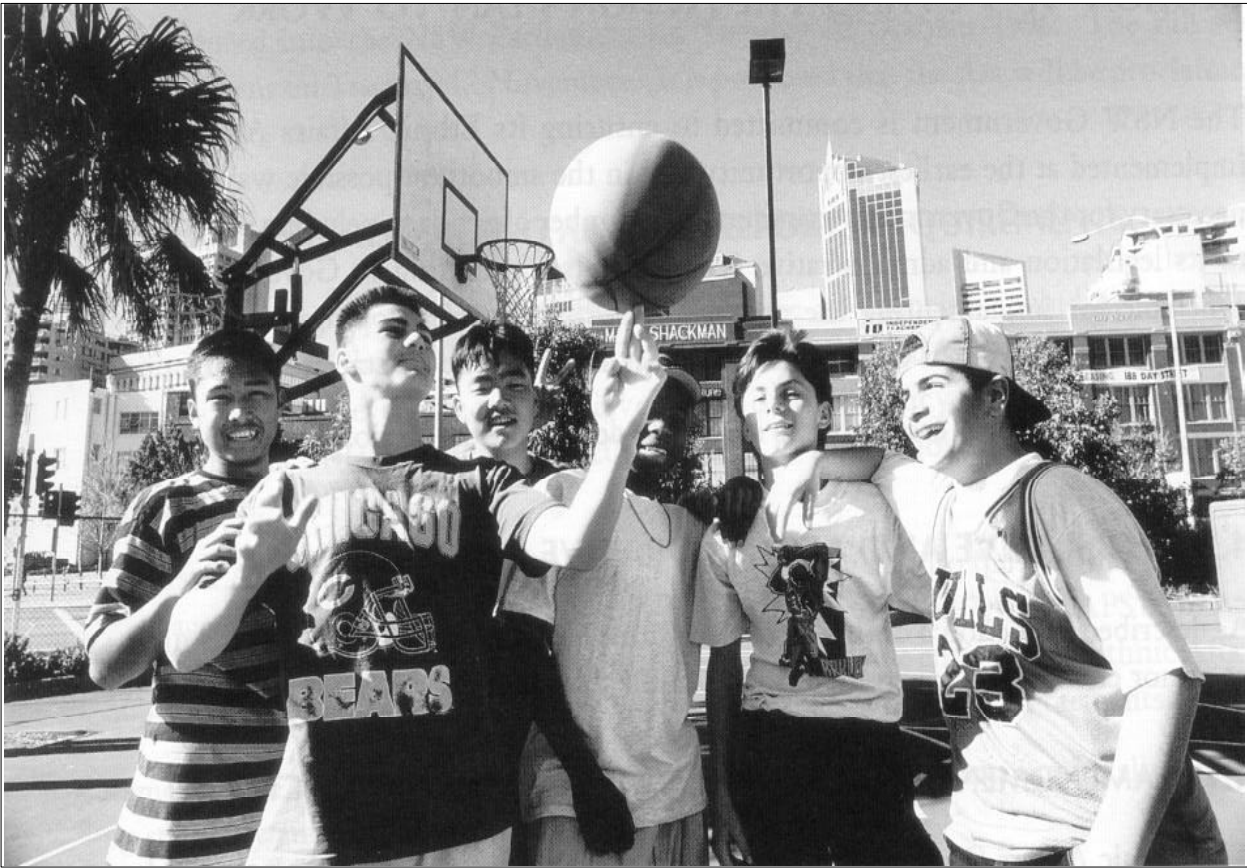


Photo: Karen Mork

CONCLUSION: ETHNIC AFFAIRS ACTION PLAN 2000

This section has described the various components of the Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000, including the roles of the NSW Government in ethnic affairs, the three Key Result Areas which agencies will be expected to deliver outcomes against as well as the monitoring and reporting arrangements.

As explained throughout this Report, the Government is firmly of the view that building on our cultural diversity is the responsibility of each and every Government agency. It must be a priority for each agency and thus must be built into the agency's core business.