NORTHERN TERRITORY
MULTICULTURAL PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK
2016-19
Discussion Paper
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Purpose of the Discussion Paper

The Northern Territory Multicultural Participation Framework (the Framework) is being developed in consultation with the Minister’s Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs and with the broader community. This discussion paper sets out the current policy and service delivery context to inform a discussion with community about what should be included in the Framework. The questions below are designed to guide community feedback and input in development of the Framework.

The Northern Territory Government is keen to hear from the broader community about the areas they see as important to focus on for our migrant and multicultural community.

We would like to hear from you, so please provide feedback to the Office of Multicultural Affairs via email at multicultural.dcm@nt.gov.au or phone 08 8999 3891 by 15 February 2016. You can also complete a short survey or comment online at www.haveyoursay.nt.gov.au.

Key Questions

Context - A Multicultural Territory: Is there any other additional data or information that could be included?

Principles: Do these principles reflect what we value as a multicultural society?

Priority Areas for Action: The priority areas for action mirror the Strong Society, Confident Culture Strategy; are these appropriate and relevant? Should there be other priority areas included?

Objectives: Are the objectives right and do they support our multicultural community?

Key Actions: Are there other actions that can be included?

Structure: Does the document flow, have relevant information and an appropriate style to engage the community?
The Northern Territory is a rich, diverse and inclusive multicultural community that we can all be proud of. Our cultural and linguistic diversity has strengthened and enriched our society for many years and continues to do so. We recognise and value the social, cultural, political and economic contributions of our established and newly emerging multicultural communities and are committed to continuing to support initiatives that strengthen these communities.

The Northern Territory Government’s vision for a strong and diverse multicultural Northern Territory is underpinned by the principles of valuing our diversity, ensuring opportunities for participation, supporting access and strengthening our respect for each other; with the objective of achieving social cohesion.

The Northern Territory Government’s long-term and sustainable plan is in Framing the Future that sets our direction towards achieving a strong and confident culture, recognising that our multicultural community is a significant contributor to our prosperity, both socially and economically.

Linked to Framing the Future is the Northern Territory’s Social Participation Framework Strong Society, Confident Culture Strategy, building on the cultural and social strengths which connect Territorians. The Northern Territory Government has also endorsed the National Settlement Framework, a collaborative blueprint between the Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments for the effective planning and delivery of services that support the settlement of new arrivals in Australia.

These documents provide the policy context and direction that supports the development of a targeted Multicultural Participation Framework to guide investment in and coordination of services and support to benefit the multicultural community.

I invite you to take the time to read this draft framework, discuss ideas with your colleagues and provide your valuable feedback.

Thank you

The Honourable Peter Styles MLA
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Principles

The Framework will be guided by supporting principles that encompass our values and commitments. Our strength and richness as a multicultural community are underpinned by the following set of common principles that are embraced and enjoyed by all Territorians.

VALUING OUR DIVERSITY

- The cultural and linguistic skills of Territorians are valued as social and economic assets to be supported and valued. These assets are recognised and promoted for the significant benefits they bring to the Northern Territory.

SUPPORTING ACCESSIBILITY

- All Territorians regardless of their background have a right to fair and equitable access to services and programs throughout our community.

ENSURING PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

- All Territorians should have the greatest possible opportunity to participate in, be included in, and contribute to the Territory’s social, cultural and economic life.

STRENGTHENING MUTUAL RESPECT AND SOCIAL COHESION

- All Territorians are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds.

In exercising the rights and freedoms that these principles provide all Territorians, it is acknowledged that we all have a responsibility to uphold these rights and freedoms for each other.
A Multicultural Northern Territory

The Northern Territory’s rich cultural diversity is reflected in our population. The 2011 Census gives us an indication of our multicultural demography with an estimated 35,174 (16.6%) of the Territory’s population born overseas. Over 100 different languages are spoken in the Territory by people who have come to live here from Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe. The Northern Territory’s religious diversity is also reflected in the religions practiced including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism among others. We recognise and support the multicultural community and new arrivals who play an important role in the cultural, social and economic development of our Territory.

Top Ten Overseas Birthplaces (Source 2011 Census)

We welcome new arrivals from all nationalities including those who have arrived here under various circumstances including skilled workers, humanitarian entrants and those who are reunited with their families here. The Northern Territory Government acknowledges the contribution new arrivals make and will continue to support established and emerging multicultural communities in keeping the spirit of their cultures strong for their future generations.

Top ten main languages excluding English and Indigenous languages (Source 2011 Census)
Northern Territory Government support for a multicultural Territory

The cultural and linguistic diversity of the Northern Territory’s people is recognised, celebrated and supported through the Office of Multicultural Affairs in the Department of the Chief Minister. The Northern Territory Government:

- **supports** our multicultural community and enables the sharing and celebration of our diverse cultures with all Territorians through a grants funding for multicultural programs, Harmony Day and the Charles See Kee leadership scholarship.

- **advises and informs** government on matters important to the multicultural community through coordination of the Minister’s Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs.

- **works with** stakeholders in the government and community sector to identify issues across the multicultural community, including families, youth and seniors.

- **provides advice and coordination** on multicultural affairs across all levels of government through various Commonwealth and Northern Territory governance groups.

- **endorsed** the National Settlement Framework in June 2015. The National Settlement Framework enables the three tiers of government to work in collaboration for the effective planning and delivery of services to support the settlement of new arrivals and humanitarian entrants in Australia.
Policy Context

Framing the Future is the Northern Territory’s plan for the way forward. It encapsulates the objectives and priorities on which to build on our economic, environmental, cultural and social advantages in a sustainable manner; while ensuring that everyone is empowered to access opportunities and resources to participate in the Territory lifestyle.

The Northern Territory’s Strong Society, Confident Culture Strategy: Social Participation Framework complements Framing the Future, providing a framework to build on our cultural and social strengths that connect Territorians. A key action included in the Strong Society, Confident Culture Strategy is the development of a Multicultural Participation Framework.

The priority areas in the next section of the paper are drawn from the Strong Society, Confident Culture Strategy: Social Participation Framework. The objectives and key actions under each priority area are specific to the multicultural context. The rationale for structuring the discussion paper in this way is to provide continuity across the various Northern Territory Government policy frameworks.
Priority Areas for Action

Community

Why are we focusing on this area?

Participation is maximised by ensuring all Territorians are empowered and supported to access appropriate services. The Northern Territory Government funds programs and support services that assist our new arrivals and multicultural communities to access available services, thereby helping them to participate in all aspects of Territory life.

While we celebrate our diversity, all Territorians, regardless of cultural and religious backgrounds share common values around the importance of good health, living in a safe community and access to good education. These values strengthen the social cohesion in our society.

It is acknowledged that new arrivals need various levels of support to assist them with their settlement in the Territory and to life in Australia generally. The Northern Territory Government acknowledges that many of our multicultural communities and associations are supported by the tireless work and efforts by their volunteers who make things happen. These volunteers ensure events and celebrations are organised and also assist with the settlement of new arrivals to the Territory. These efforts are valuable and complement funded programs to support these activities. Community groups play an important role in providing leadership and promoting social cohesion.

OBJECTIVE

People from diverse backgrounds are empowered to access opportunities to participate in all aspects of Territory life

KEY ACTIONS

Continue to fund government and non-government service providers to deliver programs and support services to our culturally diverse community to assist them to fully participate in all aspects of Territory life.

Engage with stakeholders through consultative mechanisms such as the Minister’s Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs and its associated working groups.

Provide advice and coordination across the Northern Territory Government on issues affecting the multicultural community.

Collaborate with the Commonwealth, state and territory and local governments on the National Settlement Framework.
Diversity

Why are we focusing on this area?

The Northern Territory’s rich multicultural community has continually and confidently demonstrated its identity in our society. Our religious and cultural diversity is a valued asset to be supported and celebrated. The principles that promote a sense of belonging and social connectedness in the multicultural community contribute to community wellbeing and mutual respect.

As new arrivals and the multicultural community exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens, they are participating in all aspects of Territory life, thereby maximising and contributing to the benefits of multiculturalism.

OBJECTIVE

The Northern Territory’s cultural, religious and linguistic diversity is respected and valued and our multicultural community has a sense of belonging.

KEY ACTIONS

Support our multicultural community to showcase, celebrate and promote the vibrant cultural diversity of the Northern Territory through grants programs.

Fund service providers that are accessible and appropriate for the Northern Territory’s multicultural community.

Maintain a Language Services Policy to ensure that all Territorians irrespective of their language background receive equitable access to Northern Territory Government programs, services and information.

Coordinate and engage with key stakeholders on issues pertinent to the multicultural community.

Continue to fund programs and support for service providers to deliver services to our diverse multicultural communities.
Economic Security

Why are we focusing on this area?

Economic security is integral to wellbeing, independence and having an appropriate standard of living. Secure employment is integral to economic security and social connectedness and is a key part of successful settlement.

Due to our proximity to various countries in the region, the Northern Territory has the opportunity to strengthen and develop the strong cultural, economic and business relations through our international linkages.

Overseas migration also plays an important role in boosting skills in addressing employment shortages in the Northern Territory.

With their valuable assets of overseas acquired skills, qualifications and knowledge, new arrivals contribute to the local workforce and strengthen the economy through their participation. Through engagement with stakeholders, the Northern Territory Government will explore the challenges faced by new arrivals and identify gaps in services and information for successful employment in the Northern Territory.

OBJECTIVE

The multicultural community successfully participates in and contributes to the economic prosperity of the NT

KEY ACTIONS

Facilitate engagement and foster effective partnerships with key stakeholders to address employment issues for the multicultural community.

Explore and address the challenges faced by new arrivals in accessing employment through the Skills and Employment Working Group of the Minister’s Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs.

Provide support and advisory services to assist people in obtaining recognition for their overseas qualifications and skills.

Implement the Northern Territory International Education and Training Strategy to build and strengthen productive education partnerships and collaborations locally, regionally and internationally that contribute to the economic and social development of the Territory.
**Education**

*Why are we focusing on this area?*

Schools play an important role in the fostering of cultural understanding and social cohesion. Students whose first language is a language or dialect other than English may require additional English language learning support to learn how to listen, speak, read and write in English. Schools also celebrate cultural diversity and foster the development of a strong sense of identity, pride and self-esteem for all students through the delivery of languages and cultural programs which include intercultural understanding.

**OBJECTIVE**

Young people from culturally diverse backgrounds have access to and are supported to participate in education

**KEY ACTIONS**

Provide access to age-appropriate curriculum while delivering and supporting English language learning.

Support the learning of languages and cultures in Northern Territory schools.

Deliver programs that meet the English language learning and educational needs of students to enable participation and inclusion in all aspects of living in the Northern Territory.

**Housing**

*Why are we focusing on this area?*

Safe and secure accommodation is a basic and important need that enables participation in other aspects of life such as education and employment.

Accommodation is particularly important for people who have newly arrived in Australia and may be vulnerable due to their circumstances and experiences. Access to accommodation through targeted assistance is a critical component of successful settlement.

**OBJECTIVE**

New arrivals have access to safe and secure accommodation

**KEY ACTIONS**

Coordinated and responsive service delivery to ensure accessible accommodation for new arrivals and the multicultural community.

Continue to provide housing support to the settlement services sector to assist new arrivals in their settlement journey in the Northern Territory.
Health and Well-Being

Why are we focusing on this area?

Health and well-being supports active participation in all aspects of society, this is also particularly relevant for new arrivals in their initial settlement in the Northern Territory.

The multicultural community, particularly new arrivals, require a range of health services. Timely and appropriate access to health, social and emotional well-being services provide long term benefits for healthy living.

OBJECTIVE
People from culturally diverse backgrounds have access to quality healthcare

KEY ACTIONS

Support new arrivals to access support and services that assist with transitioning into community.

Coordinated and responsive service delivery to ensure accessibility to health services for the multicultural community.

Continue to provide targeted health support to new arrivals.

Continue funding programs to support new arrivals maintain positive family relationships.
Community Safety

Why are we focusing on this area?

All Territorians seek to live in a safe environment for their families. The Office of Multicultural Affairs works with key stakeholders to share information and develop ideas to promote social cohesion and resilience in the multicultural community.

KEY ACTIONS

The Northern Territory Government will engage with key stakeholders and develop initiatives to respond to challenges to community safety.

Explore and address issues related to community safety through the Community Education Working Group of the Minister’s Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs.

Promote an environment that is free from discrimination and violence.

Provide information to new arrivals on legal and human rights issues in Australia.

Promote initiatives through the Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014-17: Safety is Everyone’s Right.

Promote education around child safe communities.
Lifestyle

Why are we focusing on this area?

Participation in art, recreation, sporting and cultural events encourages healthy active and connected communities. Multicultural communities have the opportunity to strengthen, showcase and share their culture in the Territory through many festivals and celebrations including the Big Day Out in Alice Springs, Greek Glenti, India@Mindil and Pesona Indonesia - all regular events in the Territory calendar.

Our diversity is also supported and celebrated through language classes, community activities and cultural festivals.

KEY ACTIONS

Provide grant funding through the Office of Multicultural Affairs to support and strengthen multiculturalism in the Northern Territory.

Work in partnership with community organisations to bring together the celebration of our cultural diversity at the annual Harmony Soiree.

Encourage Foster and Kinship carers within multicultural communities to encourage and maintain family and community connections.