

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number: CV19-128**

**Subject: Whole of Government review report**

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

According to the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Guide, the Department of Home Affairs, in consultation with the Australian Multicultural Council, are 'obliged' to prepare a whole-of-government review report on the [Access and Equity] policy to the Government for tabling in Parliament every three years. When was the last report tabled? What time period did that report pertain to?

**Answer:**

The last Multicultural Access and Equity Triennial Report (the Report) was tabled in April 2017 by the Department of Social Services (DSS) as the Multicultural Affairs function resided with DSS at the time. The reporting period was for 2013 - 2015.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number:** CV19-129

**Subject:** Annual snapshot of Access and Equity reporting

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

When was the last annual 'snapshot' of Access and Equity reporting provided to the Australian Multicultural Council? Please list the date, location, and AMC members who were present.

**Answer:**

The last annual snapshot of the Access and Equity reporting was provided to the Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) on 12 November 2019. It was sent via email, from the Department of Home Affairs AMC Secretariat.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number:** CV19-130

**Subject:** Procedure - minimum standards in relation to Access and Equity

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

Please outline the procedure for how the Department assesses how other Departments have met minimum standards in relation to Access and Equity?

**Answer:**

The Department of Home Affairs writes to departments and agencies annually to seek their input about how their agency responded to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians and to share best practice initiatives. An Access and Equity Assessment Tool template is provided for them to use. The assessment tool enables departments and agencies to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. Responses to the assessment tool are collated into a summary report which is submitted to the Australian Multicultural Council.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number: CV19-131**

**Subject: Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Guide - addressing non-compliance**

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

What measures does DHA take to address non-compliance? Please list the Departments which have been found to be non-compliant over the past three years

**Answer:**

There are no formal obligations regarding compliance with the policy. Departments and agencies provide information on the steps they have taken to implement the policy in their annual reports and through the three yearly report tabled in Parliament.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number:** CV19-132

**Subject:** Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Guide - FTE

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

Within the Department of Home Affairs, how many FTE positions are assigned for administration and oversight of Access and Equity?

**Answer:**

Oversight of Access and Equity falls under the responsibility of a Senior Executive Officer (Band 1). A number of staff perform work relating to this function alongside other duties, for which the ASL equivalent is 4.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number: CV19-133**

**Subject: Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Guide - meetings**

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

When was the last time a DHA official met with a Department of Health official to discuss Access and Equity?

**Answer:**

The Department of Home Affairs writes to all departments and agencies annually, including the Department of Health, regarding their input to the Access and Equity survey. Since March 2020, Home Affairs officials have held weekly discussions with Department of Health Officials about translations and the dissemination of COVID-19 information in order to support CALD communities.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number:** CV19-135

**Subject:** Access and Equity toolkit - Senior Executive Officer

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

The 'Multicultural Access and Equity Assessment Toolkit' lists the following statements for Federal Government Departments to respond do:

- Assign a Senior Executive Officer to be a dedicated point of leadership for multicultural access and equity implementation
- Have an internal committee to monitor delivery of multicultural access and equity activities
- Have an internal network of contact officers to help identify and respond to multicultural access and equity concerns
- Provide staff with clear guidelines about when and how to use translating and interpreting services
- Ensure information products use strategies for effective communication with CALD clients, such as plain and Easy English
- Have communication guidelines that promote the use of multicultural media as a way to engage with clients from CALD backgrounds
- Maintain, or have access to, a forum to engage with representatives of multicultural communities
- Include representatives from diverse communities on advisory bodies and reference groups
- Have funding partnership/contract/grant agreement templates that include clauses specifying multicultural access and equity accountabilities, such as the provision of appropriate translating and interpreting services and the collection of CALD data
- Have performance indicators to monitor and evaluate progress in removing barriers to access and equity in the delivery of policies, programmes and services
- Have feedback mechanisms that include arrangements to allow clients with CALD backgrounds, including those with limited or no English language skills, to provide their views on policies, programmes and services

Departments can select: 'Not started', 'Getting there', 'Working well', and 'NA'

In relation to the statements above for the Department of Home Affairs:

Who is the assigned Senior Executive Officer to be a dedicated point of leadership for multicultural access and equity implementation

***Answer:***

The Assistant Secretary, Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion.



**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number:** CV19-136

**Subject:** Access and Equity toolkit - internal committee

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

The 'Multicultural Access and Equity Assessment Toolkit' lists the following statements for Federal Government Departments to respond do:

- Assign a Senior Executive Officer to be a dedicated point of leadership for multicultural access and equity implementation
- Have an internal committee to monitor delivery of multicultural access and equity activities
- Have an internal network of contact officers to help identify and respond to multicultural access and equity concerns
- Provide staff with clear guidelines about when and how to use translating and interpreting services
- Ensure information products use strategies for effective communication with CALD clients, such as plain and Easy English
- Have communication guidelines that promote the use of multicultural media as a way to engage with clients from CALD backgrounds
- Maintain, or have access to, a forum to engage with representatives of multicultural communities
- Include representatives from diverse communities on advisory bodies and reference groups
- Have funding partnership/contract/grant agreement templates that include clauses specifying multicultural access and equity accountabilities, such as the provision of appropriate translating and interpreting services and the collection of CALD data
- Have performance indicators to monitor and evaluate progress in removing barriers to access and equity in the delivery of policies, programmes and services
- Have feedback mechanisms that include arrangements to allow clients with CALD backgrounds, including those with limited or no English language skills, to provide their views on policies, programmes and services

Departments can select: 'Not started', 'Getting there', 'Working well', and 'NA

In relation to the statements above for the Department of Home Affairs:

Who sits on the internal committee to monitor delivery of multicultural access and equity activities? Please list the dates this internal committee met during 2019-20

***Answer:***

The Department has assigned a Senior Executive Staff officer (Band 1) to oversight Access and Equity policy and implementation. The SES officer draws on input and advice from a range of contact officers across the department and is establishing a more formal mechanism to support this function.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number:** CV19-137

**Subject:** Access and Equity toolkit - internal network

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

The 'Multicultural Access and Equity Assessment Toolkit' lists the following statements for Federal Government Departments to respond do:

- Assign a Senior Executive Officer to be a dedicated point of leadership for multicultural access and equity implementation
- Have an internal committee to monitor delivery of multicultural access and equity activities
- Have an internal network of contact officers to help identify and respond to multicultural access and equity concerns
- Provide staff with clear guidelines about when and how to use translating and interpreting services
- Ensure information products use strategies for effective communication with CALD clients, such as plain and Easy English
- Have communication guidelines that promote the use of multicultural media as a way to engage with clients from CALD backgrounds
- Maintain, or have access to, a forum to engage with representatives of multicultural communities
- Include representatives from diverse communities on advisory bodies and reference groups
- Have funding partnership/contract/grant agreement templates that include clauses specifying multicultural access and equity accountabilities, such as the provision of appropriate translating and interpreting services and the collection of CALD data
- Have performance indicators to monitor and evaluate progress in removing barriers to access and equity in the delivery of policies, programmes and services
- Have feedback mechanisms that include arrangements to allow clients with CALD backgrounds, including those with limited or no English language skills, to provide their views on policies, programmes and services

Departments can select: 'Not started', 'Getting there', 'Working well', and 'NA'

In relation to the statements above for the Department of Home Affairs:

How large is the internal network of contact officers to help identify and respond to multicultural access and equity concerns? When did this network last meet?

***Answer:***

There is a dedicated team responsible for reporting to Access and Equity inquires alongside other duties. This team coordinates annual reporting and draws on information from officers across a range of areas of the Department of Home Affairs.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number: CV19-138**

**Subject: Access and Equity toolkit - translating and interpreting service**

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

The 'Multicultural Access and Equity Assessment Toolkit' lists the following statements for Federal Government Departments to respond do:

- Assign a Senior Executive Officer to be a dedicated point of leadership for multicultural access and equity implementation
- Have an internal committee to monitor delivery of multicultural access and equity activities
- Have an internal network of contact officers to help identify and respond to multicultural access and equity concerns
- Provide staff with clear guidelines about when and how to use translating and interpreting services
- Ensure information products use strategies for effective communication with CALD clients, such as plain and Easy English
- Have communication guidelines that promote the use of multicultural media as a way to engage with clients from CALD backgrounds
- Maintain, or have access to, a forum to engage with representatives of multicultural communities
- Include representatives from diverse communities on advisory bodies and reference groups
- Have funding partnership/contract/grant agreement templates that include clauses specifying multicultural access and equity accountabilities, such as the provision of appropriate translating and interpreting services and the collection of CALD data
- Have performance indicators to monitor and evaluate progress in removing barriers to access and equity in the delivery of policies, programmes and services
- Have feedback mechanisms that include arrangements to allow clients with CALD backgrounds, including those with limited or no English language skills, to provide their views on policies, programmes and services

Departments can select: 'Not started', 'Getting there', 'Working well', and 'NA'.

In relation to the statements above for the Department of Home Affairs:

Please provide the clear guidelines provided to staff about when and how to use translating and interpreting services

**Answer:**

Guidelines for staff on when and how to use translating and interpreting services is available through a dedicated page on the department's intranet.

Translating and Interpreting Services National (which has more than 50 years' experience in language services) also has resources available via video or transcript, and promotional material on its website at the following pages:

- <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/en/About-TIS-National/Materials-to-help-you-access-an-interpreter>
- <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/About-TIS-National/Videos/Hints-and-tips-for-working-with-interpreters-video.aspx>.

**OME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee on COVID-19

**QoN Number: CV19-139**

**Subject: Access and Equity toolkit - strategy for effective communication with CALD clients**

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

The 'Multicultural Access and Equity Assessment Toolkit' lists the following statements for Federal Government Departments to respond to:

- Assign a Senior Executive Officer to be a dedicated point of leadership for multicultural access and equity implementation
- Have an internal committee to monitor delivery of multicultural access and equity activities
- Have an internal network of contact officers to help identify and respond to multicultural access and equity concerns
- Provide staff with clear guidelines about when and how to use translating and interpreting services
- Ensure information products use strategies for effective communication with CALD clients, such as plain and Easy English
- Have communication guidelines that promote the use of multicultural media as a way to engage with clients from CALD backgrounds
- Maintain, or have access to, a forum to engage with representatives of multicultural communities
- Include representatives from diverse communities on advisory bodies and reference groups
- Have funding partnership/contract/grant agreement templates that include clauses specifying multicultural access and equity accountabilities, such as the provision of appropriate translating and interpreting services and the collection of CALD data
- Have performance indicators to monitor and evaluate progress in removing barriers to access and equity in the delivery of policies, programmes and services
- Have feedback mechanisms that include arrangements to allow clients with CALD backgrounds, including those with limited or no English language skills, to provide their views on policies, programmes and services

Departments can select: 'Not started', 'Getting there', 'Working well', and 'NA'

In relation to the statements above for the Department of Home Affairs:

Please provide the strategy for 'effective communication with CALD clients, such as plain and Easy English'

**Answer:**

The Department of Home Affairs seeks to maximise the accessibility of all public information, including by communicating in plain English, and making translated or infographic information available where appropriate.

In 2018-19, the Department's website was redesigned and split into three: [homeaffairs.gov.au](http://homeaffairs.gov.au), [abf.gov.au](http://abf.gov.au), and [immi.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au). The redesign process was based on user research, including a survey of more than 35,000 visa and citizenship clients globally, to understand their needs and expectations. The redesigned websites now contain fewer and more streamlined pages with a focus on user-centred content written in plain English (targeting a grade five education reading level) and online translating tools.

A continuous improvement approach in maintaining our websites has been embedded across the websites to ensure that user needs, in particular CALD clients, are identified and addressed. The website has embedded feedback links in the bottom right hand corner of most web pages.