

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

24 July 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000409

Question subject: The Multicultural Access and Equity Assessment Toolkit

Type of Question: Written

Senator: 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'.

1. Can you please provide what the Department of Health responded to the above statements in their most recent Access and Equity toolkit response?

The Department of Health's responses to the *Multicultural Access and Equity Annual reporting template 2018-2019* are below.

In relation to the statements above for the Department of Health:

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

Rachel Balmanno – First Assistant Secretary, People, Communication and Parliamentary Division

3. 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.

The internal committee that monitors delivery of multicultural access and equity activities is the weekly Executive Committee meeting. Executive meetings are attended by the Secretary, Associate Secretary and Deputy Secretaries, with relevant business areas attending based on the agenda.

Multicultural access and equity activities are also discussed at the:

- National Staff Participation Forum – meet approximately every three months.
- Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group – meet quarterly.
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Staff Network – meet monthly.

4. 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?

Staff are able to progress concerns through multiple areas of the People Services and People Strategy Branches, including the Culture and Inclusion Team, or with the relevant business area.

Health has a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Staff Network with approximately 240 members. Generally the Network aims to meet monthly. The last meeting was held on 19 November 2020.

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

Translation or adaption of materials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse audiences are considered in development of any communication strategy and supporting materials.

Where materials requires translation, specific instructions are included as part of the procurement. This includes:

- Translations must be translated by a NAATI Accredited Professional Translator (formally level 3) as a minimum and then checked by an independent NAATI Accredited Professional Translator (formally level 3).

- Translation company to assess and check the document/s to be translated for any potential cultural or legal issues and advise the Department of any concerns prior to commencement.

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

Special audiences, including CALD audiences, are considered as part of the development of all campaign communication materials. The needs of people with CALD backgrounds are also considered as part of the development of mainstream communication materials.

Creative campaign materials are adapted for special audiences, using specialist communication agencies who provide advice on ways to adapt messaging so credible communications can be accessed for people with low English proficiency.

Translated services are used where the target audience predominately speak a language other than English. Communication materials are also concept tested with the audience to determine the effectiveness of the messages.

Where applicable, program information is translated into different languages and made available within the community. As an example, the Cervical Screening Program information is translated into 24 foreign languages, and 6 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages. Materials for COVID-19 are available in more than 63 languages.

All new content on the Department's website www.health.gov.au is consistent with the Digital Transformation Agency's content guidelines: www.guides.service.gov.au/content-guide. This includes:

- using plain English,
- providing information in different ways, such as with videos and infographics,
- using short paragraphs, clear headings and lists so content is easy to scan and read and
- using language understood by the general community.

7. Please provide the communication guidelines that promote the use of multicultural media as a way to engage with clients from CALD backgrounds.

The use of multicultural media forms a component of all advertising campaigns delivered by the Department. The Department works with the Australian Government's master media agency, currently Universal McCann, to provide a strategic approach on how CALD audiences can be reached through paid advertising.

Key mass media formats for reaching CALD audiences include television, print, radio and online (digital video, banners and social media).

Public relations activities are also undertaken to broaden the reach of messages for these communities including editorial style content and partnerships with key media outlets such as SBS radio and non-English print outlets.

The Department also provides resources to key community groups and the Department of Home Affairs' Community Liaison Officers to further extend the reach of campaign messages.

8. Please provide which forums the Department maintains and accesses to engage with representatives of multicultural communities.

Given the broad range of policies and programs managed by the Department, the Department uses a variety of mechanisms to engage with representatives of multicultural communities on specific issues.

For example, the Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group provides stakeholder direction and guidance to the Australian Government on the ways the aged care system can better cater to people with diverse characteristics and life experiences on the website: www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/aged-care-sector-committee#subgroups. This includes people from multicultural communities.

In relation to aged care, the Department also support the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care Program (PICAC). The PICAC provides support to the aged care sector in delivering appropriate aged care to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Department regularly engages with the PICAC Alliance – a unified national body comprising of each state and territory specific PICAC funded organisation.

A further example is the time-limited expert group convened to advise on changes to the self-collection policy for the National Cervical Screening Program. The Self-Collection Expert Advisory Group membership includes a women’s health coordinator with specific experience in cultural diversity in recognition of the particular issues/barriers to cervical screening experienced by a number of communities in Australia.

9. Please provide the names of people for CALD-related Department of Health advisory bodies and reference groups.

As noted above, the advisory arrangements are generally at the program level. For example, to support national COVID-19 health campaign activity, the Department and the multicultural media specialist in Universal McCann engaged with peak CALD community bodies such as FECCA and PICAC to gain feedback and assistance in the most effective way to engage with these communities.

The department has established regular meetings and consultation processes with FECCA to gain feedback and insights on COVID-19 campaign materials and resources to ensure appropriate messaging and accurate translations. This approach has also enabled the Department and FECCA to identify and address potential communication gaps and issues. This process is ongoing and the Department has shared the state-based CALD community stakeholder kits and national campaign materials with FECCA and seeks feedback on additional mechanisms to communicate with multicultural communities in outbreak and hot spot areas.

The Department also works closely with the Department of Home Affairs and their state and territory based Community Liaison Officers about information and content needed to engage with communities. In addition, the needs of CALD communities is regularly discussed with state and territory Health departments and information and resources are shared across jurisdictions.

10. Please provide the 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.

The department uses the Grant Opportunity templates, administered by the Department of Finance, for grant funding agreements. They are available at:

<https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/tools-and-templates>

The department uses the Commonwealth Contracting Suite (CCS) templates, administered by the Department of Finance, for procurement of goods and services. Templates are available at <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/procurement/commonwealth-contracting-suite-ccs>

While the CCS templates do not include specific clauses for multicultural access and equity accountabilities, where appropriate, specific instructions are included as part of the work order. For example, when translations are required the following is added:

- Translations must be translated by an NAATI Accredited Professional Translator (formally level 3) as a minimum and then checked by an independent NAATI Accredited Professional Translator (formally level 3).
- Translation company to assess and check the document/s to be translated for any potential cultural or legal issues and advise the Department of any concerns prior to commencement.

11. Please list the performance indicators to monitor and evaluate progress in removing barriers to access and equity in the delivery of policies, programmes and services.

Evaluations or monitoring strategies are customised based on the specific objectives of the program/service. For this reason, bespoke rather than standard KPIs are used. Specific examples of how communication campaigns measured for CALD audiences include:

- Campaign evaluation tracking and research is conducted by Hall and Partners under a whole-of-government deed. This research identifies the effectiveness of communication campaigns (including CALD communications) by monitoring changes in the target audiences' attitudes, knowledge and intended/reported behaviour in relation to the key campaign messages.
- Media placement for CALD audiences is measured by the master media buying agency while the campaign is active, providing opportunities to optimise the placement and adapt messages as required.
- Other measures used by the department and considered when evaluating campaign performance include:
 - Social media analytics – video views, click-throughs, comment sentiment and likes.
 - Website analytics – page views, video views, downloads (CALD-specific resources).
 - Reach and Frequency – paid TV, digital, print, radio and out of home placement (determined by UM, master media buying agency).
 - Feedback from key community stakeholders – FECCA, PICAC, Community Liaison Officers at Home Affairs, state based multicultural agencies and CALD media outlets.

12. Please provide the 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.

All Australians are able to provide feedback to the Department on policies, programs and services through a variety of feedback mechanisms available on health.gov.au, including:

- General enquiry (www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/general-enquiries).
- Complaints (www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/complaints).
- Website feedback (www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/general-enquiries).

The Department's Consultation Hub (www.consultations.health.gov.au) is also used to gather feedback from all Australians.

Consultation on policies, programs and services include mechanisms to engage with people from CALD backgrounds – including through advocacy groups.

Programs delivered by the Department also offer a range of telephony and face-to-face interpretive services. The Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National) is also available for people who do not speak English and for agencies and businesses that need to communicate with their non-English speaking clients.

Feedback from key CALD stakeholders such as FECCA and PICAC, is sought to ensure messaging and resources are appropriately relevant and effective.