

| Queensland Multicultural Policy |

Our story, our future



Respectfully journeying together

*As Queenslanders, we honour the Aboriginal peoples
and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians,
whose lands, winds and waters we all now share,
and their ancient and enduring cultures.*



Message from the Premier

As Queenslanders, no matter who we are or where we come from — we all share a common dream of opportunity and belonging.

We live in a diverse, dynamic and cohesive community — one of the most diverse in the world.

This is a big part of what makes Australia, and Queensland, so great. My own cultural heritage is Polish, and Australia has been home for my family since my grandparents moved here following World War II, joining many migrants who have helped build and develop our state.

Diversity is more than cultural diversity. It means acknowledging and recognising gender, age and abilities — the richness and variety of people, groups and communities who make up our society. Gaining the benefits of diversity is about actively seeking diversity of thought, ideas and approach.

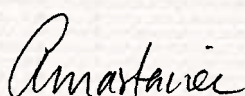
The Queensland Government promotes an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland — a place where opportunities are maximised and the contribution of all members of society is valued and recognised.

That's why we developed the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*, with the Multicultural Queensland Charter (the charter) at its core.

The charter has eight principles to guide us to a Queensland that provides economic opportunities, and social and cultural participation for everyone. The charter is the foundation for promoting an inclusive, harmonious and united community along with the work of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council and implementing the multicultural policy and action plan.

We all benefit from diversity in so many ways — in the vibrancy of our communities, in our economic connections with the global community, and even in our differences of perspective that help us create new ideas.

Together, we will continue to build an even better Queensland into the future.



The Honourable Anastacia Palaszcuk MP
Premier of Queensland and Minister for the Arts

Message from the Minister

We are all Queenslanders whether we were born here or overseas, whether we can trace our ancestry to the Dreamtime or just a few years or generations on Australian soil.

Cultural diversity is part of Queensland's story. Many generations of migrants and refugees have contributed to making our great state what it is today. As the daughter of Italian migrants I am proud of my heritage and the way our state's diversity has shaped our society into the rich array of cultures and perspectives we have today.

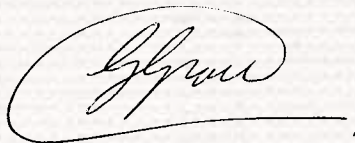
Collectively, Queenslanders speak more than 220 languages, hold more than 100 religious beliefs and come from more than 220 countries and territories. Cultural diversity is part of who we are.

Getting the most benefit from our multicultural future will take effort. Everyone has a part to play in creating a Queensland where we advance together and prosper.

It is about our policies, programs and practices working collectively to prevent discrimination in any form. It is about our social institutions, agencies, organisations and services, being open and accessible. It is about communities offering a helping hand and empowering ourselves and others. It is about connections — across all groups — and being welcoming and inclusive.

I am proud that this government has developed the policy and its action plan to help bring the charter to life. The policy addresses three priority areas where the community expects government action. The action plan helps make these priorities a reality.

Through this policy and its action plan we will work together for a harmonious Queensland.



The Honourable Grace Grace MP
Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations
Minister for Racing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs





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Introduction

Our vision is an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland where people of all cultures, languages and faiths feel a strong sense of belonging and can achieve their goals.

Queenslanders are from many backgrounds, starting with the rich cultural traditions of the First Australians, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Since the nineteenth century, Queensland has had a strong history of migration, including the first settlers, refugees displaced by conflict and many generations of migrants from across the globe. People from more than 220 countries and territories now call Queensland home.

Multiculturalism is one of Queensland's greatest strengths. Harnessing the benefits of our diversity and creating equality of opportunity for all Queenslanders will help our state thrive.

The passing of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* demonstrates Queensland's commitment to recognising our diverse cultural heritage and the vast benefits diversity offers for our state. The key provisions of the legislation are outlined in diagram 1.

The Queensland Multicultural Policy delivers on the requirements of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* and is the Queensland Government's framework for achieving an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland.

The policy sets priorities for Queensland Government action to achieve positive outcomes for Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds. It focuses on achieving culturally responsive government policy, services and programs; inclusive, harmonious and united communities; and improved economic opportunities.

The Queensland Multicultural Action Plan sets out specific actions Queensland Government entities will take to achieve positive outcomes under each policy priority.

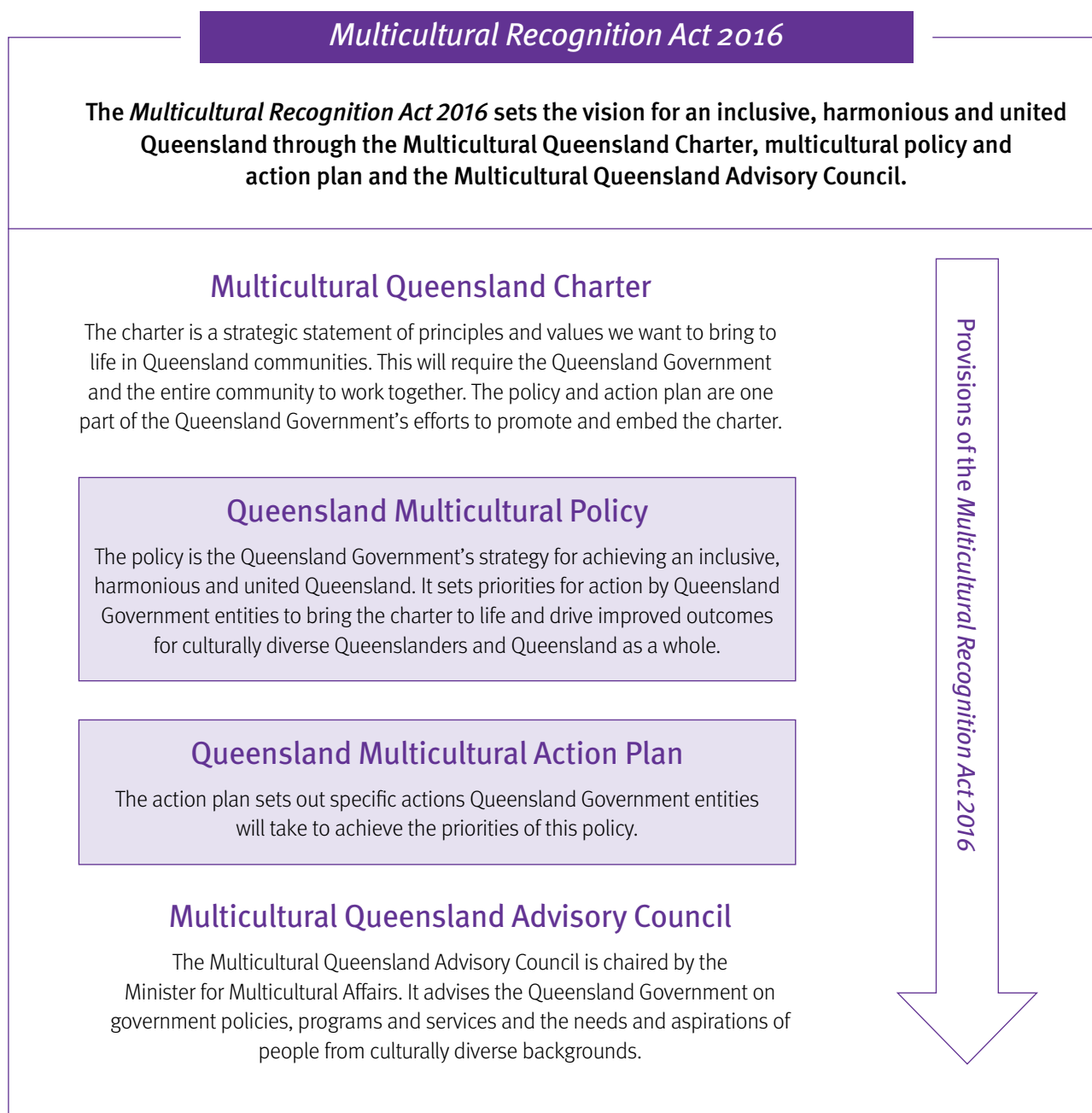
Together, the policy and action plan translate the principles of the Multicultural Queensland Charter into actions and outcomes for culturally diverse Queenslanders and for all of Queensland.

The multicultural policy and action plan complement government efforts to achieve improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as driven through a range of other policies, programs and initiatives across government.





Diagram 1: Provisions of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*





Multicultural Queensland: Our past, present and future

Cultural diversity is part of who we are as Queenslanders. Queensland is a vivid mix of cultures, languages, faiths and traditions — enriching our communities and creating opportunities for our future.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history in Australia dates back between **50,000** to **65,000 YEARS**.¹

More than **1 in 5** Queenslanders was born overseas and **1 in 3** Queenslanders was born overseas or has at least one parent born overseas.²



Almost **1 in 10** Queenslanders speaks a language other than English at home.³



Queensland received **21,860** permanent migrants in 2015–16.⁴

Our cultural diversity is increasing.

In 2011, **20.5%** of Queenslanders were born overseas, an increase from 17.9% in 2006.⁵



Setting priorities for the Queensland Multicultural Policy and Action Plan

The Queensland Multicultural Policy promotes the principles of the Multicultural Queensland Charter, outlining priorities and outcomes that will benefit people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Diagram 2: Charter principles, priorities and outcomes for Queensland Government action

Charter principles	Policy priorities	Outcomes
<p>Equal rights and responsibilities under the law and equitable access to the services provided or funded by the government for all people of Queensland helps build a fair community.</p> <p>A shared commitment to Queensland and Australia, and a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law, fosters a strong and unified community.</p>	Culturally responsive government	<p>Improved knowledge about customers' diversity.</p> <p>Culturally capable services and programs.</p> <p>A productive, culturally capable and diverse workforce.</p>
<p>A unified and harmonious community promotes a sense of belonging among its people and builds community confidence and resilience.</p> <p>A shared commitment, among members of the Queensland community, to mutual respect, fair treatment and valuing the diversity of peoples in the community fosters a caring, safe and inclusive community.</p> <p>The people of Queensland should be able to express and celebrate, in a lawful way, their cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.</p> <p>Sustained, respectful and inclusive engagements between all individuals, groups and the government are a basis for mutual understanding.</p>	Inclusive, harmonious and united communities	<p>Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture.</p> <p>Queenslanders celebrate our multicultural identity.</p> <p>Connected and resilient communities.</p> <p>A respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity.</p>
<p>The people of Queensland come from many diverse backgrounds and have worked, and continue to work, together to build a prosperous, fair and harmonious Queensland.</p> <p>The creation of opportunities that encourage the full participation of people from diverse backgrounds in the cultural, economic, political and social life of Queensland helps build a prosperous state.</p>	Economic opportunity	<p>Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections.</p> <p>Individuals supported to participate in the economy.</p>





Priority 1: Culturally responsive government

Charter principles

- » Equal rights and responsibilities under the law and equitable access to the services provided or funded by the government for all people of Queensland helps build a fair community.
- » A shared commitment to Queensland and Australia, and a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law, fosters a strong and unified community.

Policy priority

Culturally responsive government

Outcomes

- » Improved knowledge about customers' diversity.
- » Culturally capable services and programs.
- » A productive, culturally capable and diverse workforce.

Culturally responsive government is about planning our services and programs for a multicultural community, tapping into the benefits of diverse workforces and ensuring that every Queenslander feels respected and supported when using Queensland Government services.

To ensure Queensland Government services meet customer needs, **all Queensland Government entities** are required by the legislation to consider the principles of the Multicultural Queensland Charter, which speaks of equity, fairness and inclusion, in developing its policies, programs and services.

Queensland's culturally diverse communities will be supported to participate in all aspects of life and achieve their goals through coordinated action across the government's many services.

This includes:

- » supporting **education systems** that people of all cultural backgrounds can benefit from — from early childhood education and care through to every stage of learning and skilling
- » supporting an improved system for recognising overseas **qualifications and skills**, and helping migrants find work in a field relevant to their skills and abilities
- » ensuring our **hospitals and health services** are responsive to the unique needs of each person
- » ensuring our **justice systems** support a fair, safe and just Queensland
- » supporting **community services**, such as police and fire and emergency services to be more culturally capable





- » supporting excellence in the delivery of **human services**, strengthening and protecting the wellbeing of all Queenslanders so that everybody, particularly those who are vulnerable, can participate regardless of culture, language, faith, age, sexual orientation or gender identity
- » helping to build better **housing** futures for all Queenslanders so that everybody has safe, secure and affordable housing options
- » supporting improved access to **transport** to help people participate.

Improved knowledge about our customers' diversity

Excellent service delivery starts with knowing the customers we are serving.

Section 19 of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* requires that the multicultural policy provides a consistent approach across government for collecting statistical information about the diversity of people who use services provided by government entities.

Better collection and analysis of customer information will help the Queensland Government plan for and deliver services that meet customer needs. A consistent and clear approach for information about our customers' diversity is integral to effective service delivery. This information enables agencies to examine the system they are working in, identify who may experience barriers to participation, and target policy, program and service responses

to areas of identified need. This means that as a government and as a state, we get the best value for our investment, because people are supported in the right way, at the right time.

Queensland Government agencies in diagram 3 must have systems and mechanisms in place to support the collection of customer information regarding their country of birth, preferred language and whether they require an interpreter.

Customers will be encouraged to provide this information and can choose, if they wish, not to provide this information.

As Queensland Government agencies renew their systems and procedures, they may also decide to collect information about ethnicity (or cultural identity) as a further indicator to assist with planning effective services and programs.

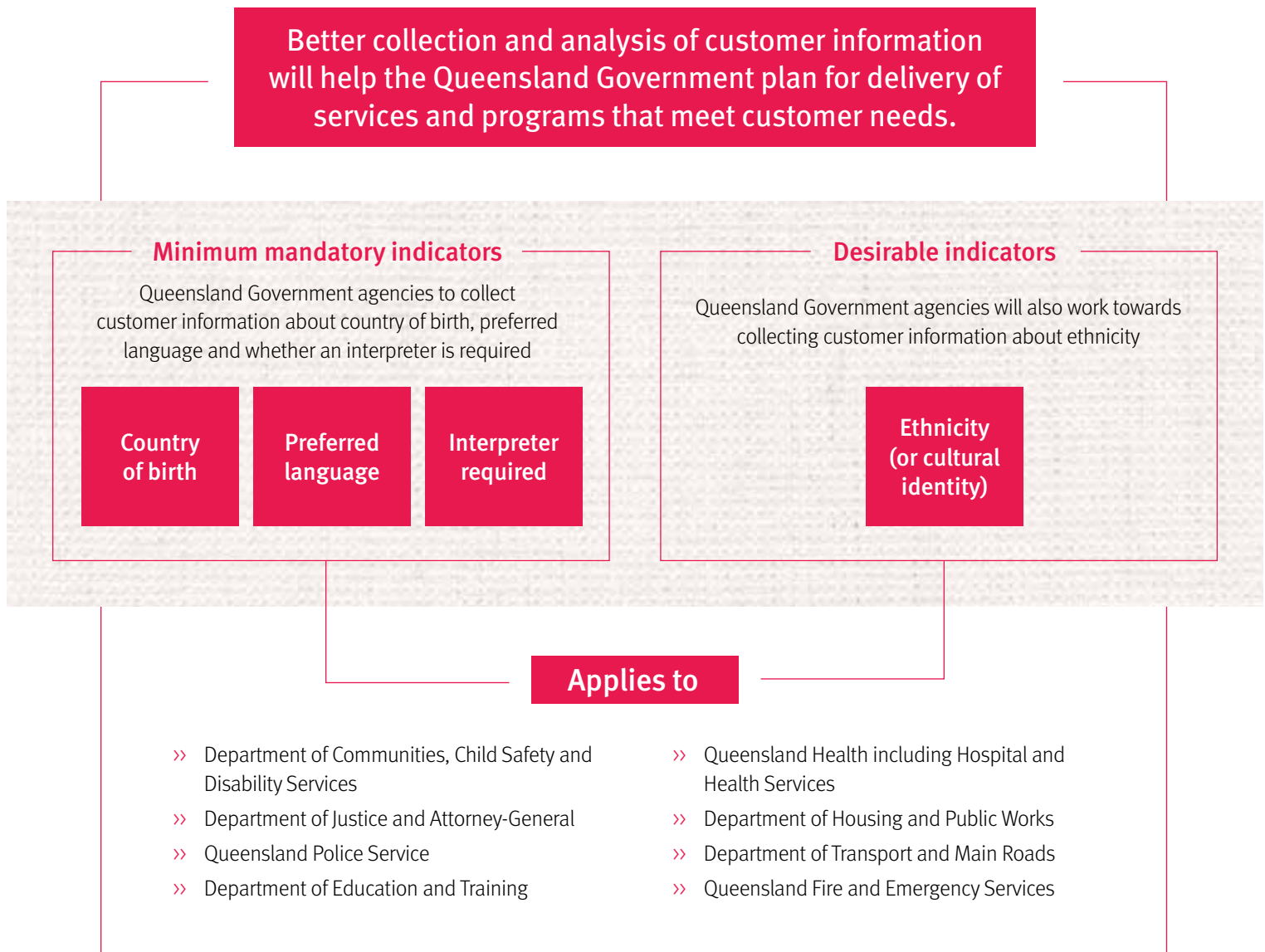
Queensland Government agencies will improve their knowledge and understanding about customers' diversity through better collection of customer information and planning.

Who are Queensland Government customers?

'Customer' refers to any individual who is the end recipient of the goods, services or products of a Queensland Government entity. Customers may voluntarily access government services or be an involuntary recipient, such as in youth justice, child protection, corrections and policing.



Diagram 3: Queensland Government approach for collecting statistical information about the diversity of people who use Queensland Government services





Culturally capable services and programs

Effective services and programs are ones that work for everybody.

Everybody should feel safe and respected when accessing services provided and funded by the Queensland Government. Good and accessible services deliver better outcomes for people, supporting them to achieve their goals, in turn improving the return Queensland gets on its investment.

Queensland Government services will engage with local communities to better understand and respond to customer feedback and needs.

The **Queensland Government will** ensure services are accessible, including developing systems and tools that make services safe and comfortable for all users.

The **Queensland Government will** build staff and service-level cultural capability and promote the values of the Multicultural Queensland Charter.

The **Queensland Government will** increase its efforts in implementing the Queensland Language Services Policy and improving access to interpreters and multilingual resources. The Queensland Language Services Policy aims to ensure people who have difficulty communicating in English are able to access services. This multicultural policy works together with the Language Services Policy.

A productive, culturally capable and diverse workforce

Our workforce can only get better by tapping into cultural diversity.

Diversity supports innovation and productivity in the workforce.

Our workforce needs to reflect the diversity of our communities to ensure our policy, services and programs are truly informed by and reflect customer needs.

The **Queensland Government will** implement strategies that build inclusive work cultures and practices and promote and harness the benefits of a diverse workforce.

The **Queensland Government will** deliver strategies that address discrimination and unconscious bias in recruitment and build a workforce that reflects the diversity of its customers.





Our commitment

Support for refugees and asylum seekers

Queenslanders have a long tradition of welcoming and assisting people escaping persecution.

Just as we have stepped up before in times of crisis, we will welcome refugees into our Queensland community and recognise multiculturalism as one of our greatest strengths.

Most recently, Queenslanders have shown compassion and generosity in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. The Queensland Government has shown its support for people living in Queensland by opting in to the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) arrangement, a visa option for eligible people to progress towards permanent residency in Australia.

We are committed to ensuring Queensland communities are welcoming and inclusive for all.

We want people who come to Queensland to be able to seek out job opportunities, contribute their skills and build a new life.

The **Queensland Government will** support refugees and asylum seekers to reduce barriers and create opportunities for them to participate and contribute to our economic, social and cultural future.

The **Queensland Government will** work with our government and non-government partners to support refugees and asylum seekers to participate in all aspects of life.

No matter how people came here or where they came from, the Queensland Government will support all the people of Queensland to participate and feel they belong.



Priority 2: Inclusive, harmonious and united communities

Charter principles

- » A unified and harmonious community promotes a sense of belonging among its people and builds community confidence and resilience.
- » A shared commitment, among members of the Queensland community, to mutual respect, fair treatment and valuing the diversity of peoples in the community fosters a caring, safe and inclusive community.
- » The people of Queensland should be able to express and celebrate, in a lawful way, their cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.
- » Sustained, respectful and inclusive engagements between all individuals, groups and the government are a basis for mutual understanding.

Policy priority

Inclusive,
harmonious and
united communities

Outcomes

- » Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture.
- » Queenslanders celebrate our multicultural identity.
- » Connected and resilient communities.
- » A respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity.

Building welcoming, inclusive and harmonious communities is about recognising our common hopes and dreams.

We all want the best for our families, to fulfil our potential, to contribute and feel a sense of belonging as members of our local community, as Queenslanders and as Australians.

A welcoming, inclusive and harmonious community is one where people understand, appreciate and celebrate difference — where we recognise the vast potential and benefits that diversity offers us as individuals and as communities, and where we embrace new perspectives and develop together.





Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture

Any conversation about welcoming and inclusive communities should start with recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the traditional custodians of the land, have a unique history and a special place in Queensland and Australia.

Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture is fundamental to supporting and welcoming inclusive and harmonious communities across Queensland.

This complements the Queensland Government's broader policy agenda for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including ensuring that agencies and funded organisations are culturally capable and provide efficient, effective and responsive services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are an inherent part of core business.

As Queenslanders we will respectfully journey together and act in the spirit of reconciliation, learn from the past and positively engage in the present to build a trusting and respectful future.

The **Queensland Government will** work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to increase recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their rich cultures and histories.

The **Queensland Government will** seek support from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, drawing on their strength, resilience and past experiences, to build a more welcoming and inclusive community for all Queenslanders, including those who are newly arrived.

Queenslanders celebrate our multicultural identity

Our cultural diversity is who we are as Queenslanders.

Queensland has a rich history of welcoming migrants and refugees, who have helped shape and build our industries, communities and economy. This is an important part of our shared history.

The **Queensland Government will** work with our partners in business, industry, funded services and community to bring the vision of the Multicultural Queensland Charter to life.

The **Queensland Government will** recognise and celebrate our cultural diversity, leading by example in showcasing the positive contributions our diversity has brought to the social and cultural life of Queensland.

The **Queensland Government will** support communities to showcase and celebrate our rich and vibrant multicultural identity.





Recognising Australian South Sea Islanders

Australian South Sea Islanders are the Australian-born direct descendants of people who were brought to Australia between 1863 and 1904 to work as indentured labourers in the primary industries. More than 50,000 people, predominantly men, came from some 80 Pacific Islands, primarily Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, and the majority were kidnapped, ‘blackbirded’ or deceived into coming.

Australian South Sea Islanders have contributed significantly to the social, cultural and economic development of Queensland.

Australian South Sea Islanders have helped to build local economies and key industries, including the development of farming and grazing, the maritime industry, pearling, mining, the railways, domestic services, child care as well as serving as members of the defence force.

The Australian South Sea Islander community was recognised by the Commonwealth Government as a distinct ethnic group in 1994. This was followed by the Queensland Government’s adoption of a formal Recognition Statement recognising Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct cultural group in 2000.

Connected and resilient communities

A resilient community is one where all people feel a sense of belonging.

It is one where people can connect and provide support. When we look out for each other and work together, we create connected and resilient Queensland communities. Building belonging and welcome takes effort, and everyone has a part to play.

A caring, safe and inclusive community is created when we are treated fairly and with respect.

It is about taking the first step by creating welcome.

It is about creating welcome for newcomers to Queensland by inviting people in, connecting, and learning about each others’ stories and experiences.

It is about making schools, workplaces and communities places where people feel respected and have a strong sense of belonging.

Connecting with each other builds understanding, increases our sense of belonging and inclusion, and makes our communities more resilient.

When we are included and valued in the community we are empowered to contribute and participate. Connected and empowered local communities will create a Queensland community that is harmonious and respectful of diversity.

We each have the power to make a positive difference in our neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces through simple actions that help people feel welcomed and included.

The **Queensland Government will** work to build respect and bridge connections between cultures and communities. This includes ways to create new connections, such as supporting community-based project and events.

The **Queensland Government will** invest in building stronger communities. This includes supporting initiatives that increase community awareness of the benefits of diversity and foster community cohesion, helping everybody to thrive.





Success story

Building connection through the Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS) program

Good Shepherd Parish in Mount Isa is funded under the Queensland Government's CAMS program. In Mount Isa, the program focuses on improving the lives of migrant women who have relocated to the region by connecting them to others and with services.

Starting with a target of one van to provide transport assistance to 10 women to build a support network, numbers quickly grew to 40 women and their families who connected through a range of activities, including sharing

culture, developing English language skills, participating in arts and crafts activities, and developing job application and interviewing skills.

Participants from the program highlight the region's diversity, which includes women from Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Spain and Sri Lanka.

By connecting women with each other and the wider community, Good Shepherd continues to strengthen acceptance and deliver outcomes in social connectedness for culturally diverse Queenslanders.



A respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity

When our conversation about who we are is respectful and fact based, it builds understanding and connection and makes us stronger.

Having a fair and fact-based public conversation about multiculturalism is important. It is about preventing misconceptions that cause divisions in our community and making sure the voices of all Queenslanders are valued and heard in our public conversations.

Our governments, communities and industries must lead in making clear statements that build our story of inclusion.

This is about acknowledging our past and the positive contributions all Queenslanders have made to our society and economy.

It is about recognising our present and the benefits of multiculturalism — a strong economy and vibrant community — which enrich us all.

It is about valuing the important role of diversity and the opportunities it offers in shaping our future.

It is about taking action to ensure our future is inclusive and provides opportunities for everybody.

The **Queensland Government will** challenge racism and discrimination that undermine our community cohesion and connectedness as Queenslanders.

The **Queensland Government will** increase community awareness of the benefits of multiculturalism to build more inclusive communities, including promoting and embedding the charter.

The **Queensland Government will** support communities and businesses to build Queensland's story of inclusion. This includes helping to build an informed public conversation and supporting all individuals, including young people, to have their voices heard.

The **Queensland Government will** work to build understanding of the experiences and journeys of refugees and asylum seekers, including the international political, economic and social factors that contribute to conflict and displacement.





Our commitment

Racism has no place in Queensland

Racism can take many forms.

Racism can occur among individuals and at institutional levels through policies that disadvantage certain groups. It often manifests through unconscious bias or prejudice.⁶

It can be seen in jokes or comments that cause offence or hurt, sometimes unintentionally — name-calling or verbal abuse, harassment or intimidation, or commentary in the media or online that inflames hostility towards certain groups.

No matter what form racism takes, its impact is profoundly damaging. It makes people feel excluded, impacts negatively on mental health and it can entrench disadvantage in our communities.

The Queensland Government condemns racism in all forms.

We can all help end racism by encouraging understanding, respect and acceptance in our communities, including where we work, study and volunteer.

Celebrating our multiculturalism, supporting strong, connected communities and building a narrative of inclusion and respect will help change attitudes and reduce the negative impacts of racism.

The **Queensland Government** will take action against racism by working with government, businesses and industries to promote the Multicultural Queensland Charter, which speaks of equity, fairness and inclusion.

‘There are significant harms that racism causes. Prejudice and discrimination are barriers to fair treatment and equal opportunity. They harm an individual’s freedom to participate as a citizen in the community. Where it exists in sufficient doses, racism can impair social cohesion.’⁷

Dr Tim Soutphommasane, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission



Priority 3: Economic opportunities

Charter principles

- » The people of Queensland come from many diverse backgrounds and have worked, and continue to work, together to build a prosperous, fair and harmonious Queensland.
- » The creation of opportunities that encourage the full participation of people from diverse backgrounds in the cultural, economic, political and social life of Queensland helps build a prosperous state.

Policy priority

Economic opportunities

Service outcomes

- » Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections.
- » Individuals supported to participate in the economy.

Queensland's cultural and linguistic diversity is one of our greatest strengths.

Our cultural diversity is part of who we are as Queenslanders and offers remarkable opportunities and benefits for our future economic development. To get the most from our diversity, we need to build a community and economy where all individuals can participate, successfully navigate systems and overcome barriers, and achieve their economic goals.

Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections

Immigration supports a strong economy by increasing our population, participation and productivity.

Migrants bring new perspectives and skills, expand our links to overseas markets and support international trade and tourism.

Working holiday makers and skilled migrants fill skills gaps and labour shortages — keeping our industries strong.

Refugees and asylum seekers make substantial contributions to our state, bringing in new skills, creating employment and filling employment gaps and strengthening our links to new markets.⁸

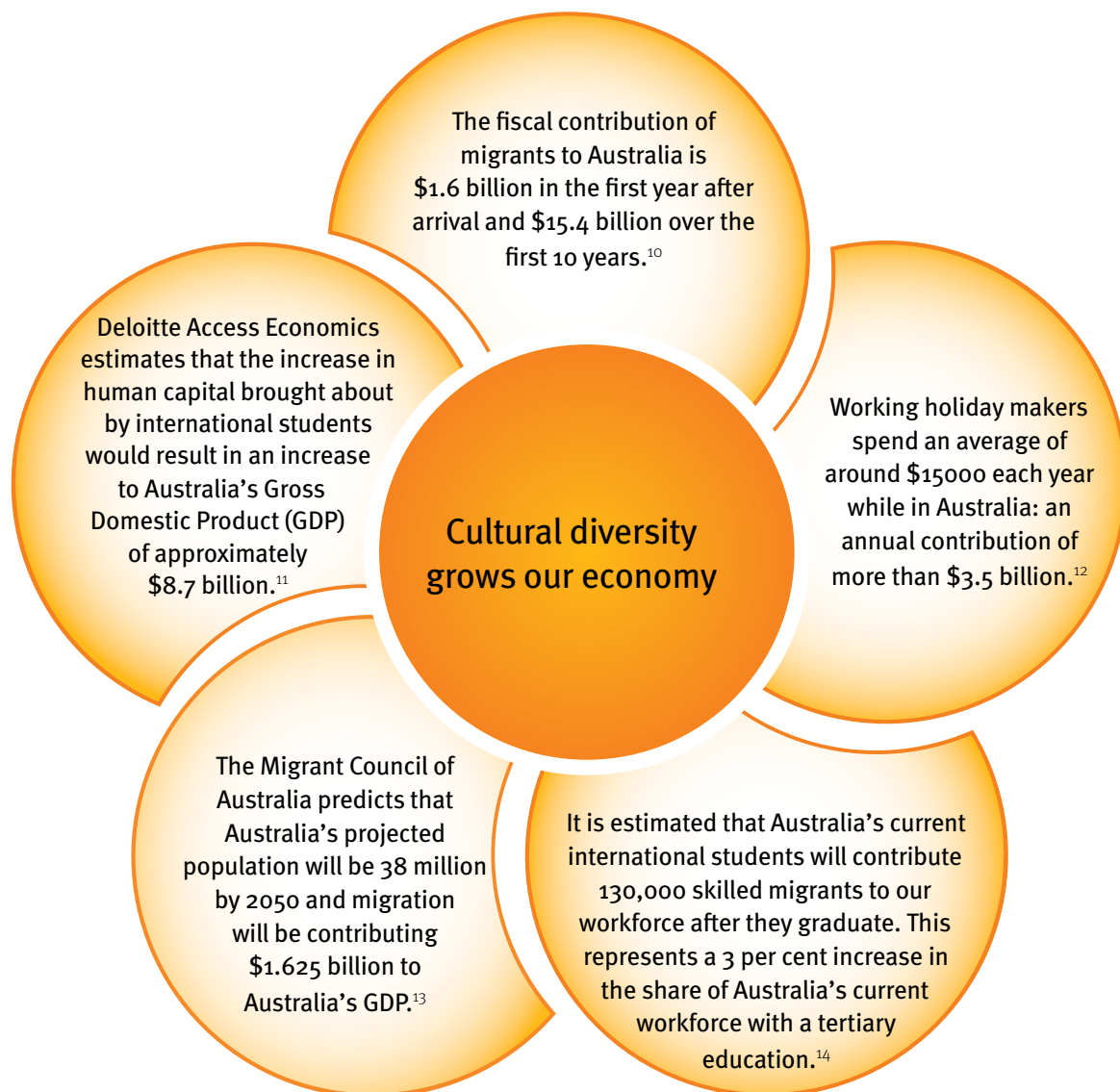
International students contribute significantly to our economy. Queensland's estimated total export revenue for international education in the financial year 2014–15 was almost \$2.9 billion.⁹

Diagram 4 demonstrates the economic value of cultural diversity.

Our diversity positions us to benefit from the move into knowledge-based industries as well as supporting small business and entrepreneurship.



Diagram 4: Economic value of cultural diversity



Benefiting from our diversity means investing in our knowledge economy, working towards fair, equitable, culturally capable workforces across all sectors, and promoting our state as a welcoming and harmonious community so migrants, investors, international students and tourists continue choosing Queensland.

Our culturally diverse community means Queenslanders have strong international connections with our regional neighbours and further afield, opening up new markets and opportunities for our economy.

The **Queensland Government will** maximise the benefits of our increasing cultural diversity, driving Queensland's economic growth and positioning our state as a global destination to live, work, visit, build connections, do business and invest.

To gain the benefits of our diversity the **Queensland Government will** work collaboratively with partners across government, in the community, private sector, non-government organisations and individuals.



Success story

Remarkable contributions

Dr Homa Forotan was just 13 when she fled Afghanistan with her family, more than a decade ago.

After achieving remarkable academic results in Years 11 and 12, achieving an OP1, Homa studied science at the University of Queensland majoring in Biomedical Science and Neuroscience. Always wanting to become a doctor, she then studied a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at Griffith University.

Homa is now giving back to communities working as a Medical Registrar at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, aiming to specialise in cardiology. She is undertaking a dual master's degree in international public health and health economics with the University of New South Wales.



'I am just one of countless success stories in Australia today,' Dr Forotan says of the contribution she has made coming from a refugee background.

Individuals supported to participate in the economy

All Queenslanders benefit when everyone has fair and equitable access to opportunities that let us thrive and achieve our goals.

Each of us has the potential to participate in and contribute to the economy — this may include gaining further education or training, getting the right job, launching a start-up business or getting more involved in volunteering. Cultural background should not block any person from achieving their goals.

Despite the extraordinary benefits Queensland's cultural diversity offers, many Queenslanders still face obstacles to being part of our community and economy.

People who have been in Australia for less than five years and are from a non-English speaking background experience significant disadvantage entering the labour market. In 2011, the unemployment rate for migrants from a non-main-English speaking country was 8.1 per cent, compared with 5.8 per cent for the rest of the state's population.¹⁵





Some people are discriminated against when trying to get a job or pursue better opportunities in the workplace. Unconscious bias by employers and a lack of cultural capability in workplaces present very real barriers to people's ability to participate and reach their goals.

In addition, many newcomers to Queensland are unfamiliar with local systems such as the steps to follow in getting overseas qualifications recognised, or the particular rules that business owners and employers have to follow to meet Queensland's laws and regulations. Many people living in Queensland simply lack the networks and local connections that would help them on their way. There is a need for opportunities for people to gain Australian-based work experience.

We miss out on benefits for individuals, our economy and our state when we do not enable people to contribute their skills and experiences.

An environment where everybody can thrive is one where people can:

- » be on an equal footing
- » get the most out of opportunities, including getting the right support in the way they need it, when they need it
- » get a job that makes the most of their skills and knowledge
- » be mobile within the labour market to pursue different goals and diversify their skills
- » navigate the system.

In pursuing our economic goals — such as finding employment, starting a business, or gaining a qualification or skill — we navigate many systems and structures in government, community and private sectors. These systems and structures can either create a pathway to success, or can be complicated and confusing, and create barriers to success.

A system that works for everybody is one that responds to the diversity of our community — such as culture, language, faith, disability, age, gender identity or sexual orientation.

From early childhood programs through every stage of learning and life, all Queenslanders should enjoy safe, comfortable and fair learning and economic opportunities that will help them succeed and have a good life.

The whole community has a role in shaping equitable systems and structures that give everyone a fair go.

The **Queensland Government will** work with our partners to break down barriers to economic participation. An important part of this is promoting the Multicultural Queensland Charter with its principles of equity, fairness and inclusion right across Queensland, including in business, industry and institutions.

The **Queensland Government will** take action and support collaboration across all sectors to achieve flexible, joined up systems that allow everybody to thrive and Queensland to get the most advantage from our cultural diversity.





Success story

Skilling Queenslanders for Work: helping people gain work experience and employment

The Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) — Community Work Skills program offers tailored assistance to disadvantaged Queenslanders, enabling them to gain nationally recognised skills and vocational qualifications up to a certificate III level.

Through this initiative, Townsville Intercultural Centre Ltd was funded to deliver the Skilling Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) North Queenslanders for Work project.

More than 90 per cent of project participants have been migrants and refugees from a range of backgrounds including Somali, Burmese, Sudanese and Filipino.

Participants are being supported to complete qualifications in customer contact; security operations; business; hospitality; or individual support, including obtaining a security licence and a Responsible Service of Alcohol certificate.

Out of 36 participants who have successfully completed training so far, 32 have secured employment with various local employers, including the Mercure Inn and The Ville Resort-Casino.

More than 17 per cent of Queenslanders participating in SQW are from CALD backgrounds. More than 60 per cent of exited CALD participants are in employment and/or further training.





Implementation

Building and maintaining inclusive, harmonious and welcoming communities takes sustained effort. By working together and focusing on our priorities we will achieve our goals.

The Queensland Multicultural Action Plan sets out actions and timeframes for Queensland Government entities to advance outcomes under each of the policy priorities.

We will add to, modify and update the Queensland Multicultural Action Plan to ensure the Queensland Government is responsive to changing needs and new opportunities.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, through **Multicultural Affairs Queensland**, has a leadership role in ensuring Queensland Government policies, programs and services are responsive to our culturally diverse communities.

This includes working with government partners on issues that matter, such as improved settlement outcomes for people who come to Queensland as humanitarian entrants, fair treatment of people seeking asylum in Australia and fair work conditions for working holiday makers and international students.

At the state level, Multicultural Affairs Queensland will lead strong governance mechanisms to make sure actions are achieving real outcomes, systems are working and government is fulfilling its role in creating a multicultural future for all Queenslanders.





Monitoring and reporting

The monitoring and reporting approach supports implementation of the policy and action plan, aligned with the requirement of the Act. Key components are outlined below:

Annually

- » Government agencies with actions in the action plan must report publicly on their actions and provide a summary of their progress every year.

After 3 years

- » The Minister for Multicultural Affairs must report to Parliament on progress towards multicultural policy outcomes at least every three years. This will allow the community to track how the government is achieving positive change. It will also provide a picture of where changes to investment or services are needed.

After 5 years

- » The Queensland Government will evaluate the implementation of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* after it has been operating for five years.
- » This evaluation will look at the impact of the policy and action plan, the charter and the advisory council on achieving an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland.

Leveraging the Queensland Government's strategic policy efforts

The policy and action plan intersect and complement a range of strategic efforts by the Queensland Government to achieve its objectives for the community.

Key government strategies include those focused on youth, women and seniors, building financial inclusion and investing in our future to harness innovation and diversify our economy.

Together with this policy and its action plan, these Queensland Government strategies will help build an inclusive, harmonious and united Queensland for people of all cultural, language and religious backgrounds.



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