



Tasmanian Multicultural Policy 2014



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Premier's foreword

Tasmania has a rich cultural, religious and linguistic heritage of which Tasmanians are proud.

As Premier of Tasmania, my vision is of a strong, confident and inclusive society where all people in Tasmania are treated fairly, with respect and without discrimination; and have an equal opportunity, and responsibility, to engage in Tasmanian life.

The *Tasmanian Multicultural Policy 2014* seeks to achieve that vision.

It provides a basis for drawing on the economic and social benefits of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, promoting social cohesion, and addressing the need to balance the rights and responsibilities of all citizens.

It supports economic and social participation, encourages community engagement and representation, and celebrates cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

Comprehensive consultation with all levels of government, community associations, service providers, peak bodies and the broader community during 2013, illustrated widespread commitment to a multicultural Tasmania, and the desire to promote diversity as an asset for the State.

The Tasmanian Government takes a lead in encouraging collaboration, modelling social inclusion and communicating and working with the community. The Government also works on cross-cultural initiatives, innovative programs and services and partnerships across the State to enhance cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

Importantly, the ability to enhance a dynamic and productive multicultural society will be a significant influence on the success of the State in the future.

I take pride in our cultural, religious and linguistic diversity and commend the *Tasmanian Multicultural Policy 2014* as a means of strengthening the potential of multiculturalism for all Tasmanians and setting the future direction for our multicultural community.

Lara Giddings MP
Premier

Multicultural Tasmania

Tasmania is a dynamic and culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse State, with a long history of migration.

The Tasmanian Aborigines first arrived in Tasmania over 35 000 years ago. They were followed by British settlers from 1803, further European and Asian settlers with the gold rush of the mid-1800s, and expanding European migration post World War II.

Today, more than 57 650 people, or 11.6 per cent of the Tasmanian population, were born overseas, while over 24 per cent of Tasmanians, or 113 969 people, have one or both parents born overseas. In total, Tasmania has residents from over 170 countries, with 24 religions and over 75 languages spoken¹.

During 2012, just over 900 000 visitors, including over 140 000 international visitors, came to Tasmania for travel, employment or business purposes². Of the 26 000 tertiary students in Tasmania, 3 000 are international students from over 100 countries³.

Regardless of the reason for migration or when they arrived, the resulting cultural, religious and linguistic diversity is a key asset for the State. It brings economic and social benefits that enhance and strengthen communities, and is an integral component in building a socially inclusive society.

An inclusive society is one where all Tasmanians have an equal opportunity and responsibility to contribute to Tasmanian life. It means that people are treated with respect, dignity and without discrimination. As such, it is important to respect and make provision for a diversity of cultures, languages and religions within the context of Australian and State law.

Regardless of country of birth, language, culture, religion, or time of arrival, all people in Tasmania share common aspirations for good health and wellbeing, equitable access to affordable Tasmanian Government services, societal acceptance and participation in the community.

The Government acknowledges Tasmania's first people and their significant and ongoing cultural contributions in Tasmania. The Government endeavours to develop and implement policies which support cultural continuity and facilitate social inclusion.

The Government affirms its commitment to promoting a multicultural society that values diversity, cohesion and harmony.



Vision

A strong, confident and inclusive society where all Tasmanians are treated fairly, with respect and without discrimination; and have an equal opportunity, and responsibility, to engage in Tasmanian life.

Aims

All Tasmanians have an equal opportunity and responsibility to contribute to Tasmanian life, are treated with respect, dignity and without discrimination; and have the right to cultural, religious and linguistic expression within the framework of Australian and State law.

Equitable access to affordable Tasmanian Government services and participation for all Tasmanians to reach their full social, economic and cultural potential.

Tasmanian Multicultural Policy principles

The Tasmanian Multicultural Policy principles underscore the Tasmanian Government's commitment to multiculturalism and aim to enhance social cohesion, social and economic participation and access to services in our State.





Principle 1

To recognise and place value on Tasmania's cultural and linguistic diversity; to acknowledge that the skills of all Tasmanians provide social and economic benefits; and to develop and use these resources and skills for the overall benefit of Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government recognises that the knowledge, skills and contacts of migrant and multicultural communities are a key asset for Tasmania's social and economic development. People bring strong work ethics, skills and experience to the workplace, and make a major contribution to life in the arts, sport, science, research, business and the community.⁴ Moreover, global cultural and commercial connections can enhance trade and investment opportunities for all Tasmanians.

Principle 2

To accept and respect the culture, language and religion of all Tasmanians within the framework of Australian and State laws.

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges and celebrates the State's cultural and linguistic diversity and conducts programs to promote positive community relations. The Government proposes all individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the diverse culture, language and religions of others within an Australian legal and institutional context. Promoting understanding and acceptance while responding and taking a firm stand against expressions of intolerance and discrimination is essential⁵.

Principle 3

To recognise the rights of all Tasmanians to fair and equitable access to the services of the Tasmanian Government, taking into account the needs arising from the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community.

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges the right of all Tasmanians to fair and equitable access to services, regardless of their cultural or linguistic backgrounds. The Government also acknowledges that some people may need additional support and assistance to access services. In line with best practice in access and equity, it is important that Government services are 'accessible by all eligible Australians, responsive to their needs, and deliver equitable outcomes to them'⁶.

Principle 4

To recognise and encourage the right of all Tasmanians to participate in, and contribute to, the social, political, economic and cultural life of Tasmania.

It is important that individuals and communities have access to the personal, social, economic and civic resources and relationships that make life healthy, productive and happy⁷. The Tasmanian Government seeks to assist community development and encourage full and equitable participation by all Tasmanians in social and economic life, irrespective of their backgrounds.

Building community relations

A community relations approach addresses Principle 1 and 2; it links the expression of cultural diversity with the acknowledgement that diversity is a key asset for the State.

It also encourages a greater degree of acceptance and respect for people of different national, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds; acknowledging the significant social, cultural and economic contribution they make to the State.

The Tasmanian Government takes a firm stand against expressions of intolerance and discrimination in this State and assists in strengthening the positive interactions with and within communities.

The Government is building community relations through:

- promoting cultural, religious and linguistic diversity as a social, cultural and economic asset for Tasmania;
- celebrating Tasmania's cultural heritage and identity, promoting multiculturalism and engaging all Tasmanians;
- making Tasmania welcoming as a strong, diverse and inclusive State;
- increasing cultural education among communities and community organisations; and
- denouncing racism and discrimination and supporting initiatives that raise awareness and address racism and discrimination.

Enhancing access and equity

The strategy of enhancing access and equity addresses Principle 3.

The Tasmanian Government is keen to ensure that all people in Tasmania have equitable access to services and that service delivery is responsive, of high quality, and enables equitable outcomes.

The introduction of a multicultural access and equity framework across Government will assist agencies to provide more responsive services to meet the needs of people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

It is important that culturally and linguistically diverse communities are able to provide feedback on agency multicultural access and equity performance, and that strategies are developed to capture information related to consumer satisfaction so services can identify issues and needs and respond with practical, effective solutions.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead this important work and support agencies to develop and implement the multicultural access and equity framework. This will ensure a continued focus on culturally responsive service delivery and on implementation of the multicultural principles.

The Tasmanian Government enhances access to its services by:

- identifying the needs of people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, including drawing on feedback from consumers; and
- addressing barriers to service access and equity of outcomes through a multicultural access and equity framework.

Fostering social and economic participation and community development

The strategy of fostering social and economic participation and community development addresses Principle 4.

Social and recreational participation includes being connected with community, engaged in decision making, involved in volunteering and supportive of local networks. Awareness and access to existing community events and programs can also provide an invaluable resource.

The Tasmanian Government promotes acceptance, understanding and participation through targeted employment and training programs that offer people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds opportunities to develop their skills and abilities.

It is important to support Tasmania's culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse organisations and associations, recognising the important role they play in strengthening and enhancing Tasmania's multicultural community. It is about building local capacity, leadership, investment in the community sector, and participation in local, state and national councils and forums.

The Tasmanian Government fosters social and economic participation and community development through:

- building local capacity and encouraging community participation;
- supporting community leadership;
- developing resources to enhance social and economic participation; and
- facilitating strategic partnerships between culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities, peak industry bodies, and employment sectors.



Community consultation and engagement



The Tasmanian Government is committed to strengthening community consultation and engagement as a key mechanism for information sharing, decision-making and developing culturally appropriate services, so that:

- critical information can be provided and shared and is in an accessible and understandable format;
- community needs and priorities can be addressed;
- the needs and issues affecting communities can be taken into account in the development and implementation of policies and strategies; and
- access to services can be improved.

Community consultation and engagement can also help ensure feedback is provided on the quality and effectiveness of services, policies, and programs. The Tasmanian Government will:

- draw on the *Tasmanian Government Framework for Community Engagement*;
- convene annual forums with people from culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- convene whole-of-community forums on multicultural issues; and
- work in partnership with the multicultural peak organisation, community associations, service providers and the community.



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Glossary

Community

A community is a group of people who share something in common. It may be location, interests, culture, language, beliefs, values or traditions. Individuals can be members of many communities. Communities can also identify and form around an issue.

Culturally-based associations

A group of people who share and connect based on similar cultural background or heritage. They may not be mono-cultured associations: people have many identities, including many cultural identities, and can be members of many communities. However, culturally-based associations may form on the basis of a strong shared background.

The association may be formally or informally constituted.

Diverse cultural, religious and linguistic background

In this Policy diverse cultural, religious and linguistic background is a broad concept which encompasses the differences that exist between people, such as language, dress, traditions, food, societal structures, art and religion.

Migrant

This Policy takes a broad definition, where migrant means 'any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country'⁸.

By this definition, a person who comes as a skilled worker, international student, former humanitarian entrant, or through a family-reunion scheme, is considered a migrant. It is acknowledged that such a definition does not differentiate between those who exercise a degree of choice to come to Tasmania and those who arrive having been displaced or forced to leave their homes.

Multiculturalism

'Multiculturalism' is a policy and practice approach aimed at enabling cultural, religious and linguistic diversity within a goal of social cohesion and inclusion.

Social cohesion

In this Policy social cohesion is defined as a concept that 'describes social connectedness, including family and community well-being, taking account of economic inequalities. Social cohesion is developed through the nature and quality of interrelationships, and manifests in a sense of community. Social cohesion is also linked to economic development, and policies which support social cohesion may also increase investment attractiveness and business competitiveness'⁹.



Notes

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 *Census of Population and Housing Tasmania* ABS, Canberra.

2. Tourism Tasmania, www.tourismtasmania.com.au accessed 12 April 2013.

3. University of Tasmania, www.international.utas.ed.au/static/aboutUTAS.php accessed 12 April 2013.

4. Hugo, G (2011) *A Significant Contribution: The Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants* Commonwealth of Australia.

5. The Tasmanian *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of certain attributes and in areas of activity.

6. *Access and Equity for a Multicultural Australia*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-multicultural-australia/government-approach> accessed January 2013.

7. Tasmanian Social Inclusion website, www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/siu accessed January 2013.

8. UNESCO International Migration and Multicultural Policies, http://www.unesco.org/most/migration/glossary_migrants.htm accessed 12 April 2013.

9. OECD, 2001 and Hulse 2005 cited in *City of Melbourne Issues Paper: Social Cohesion*, www.futuremelbourne.com.au/wiki/.../Social_Cohesion_Study.DOC accessed 15 April 2013.



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