

Queensland Multicultural Policy ‘Our story, our future’
Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2022–24
Annual Reporting for 2023–24
Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works



The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works (DHLGPPW) has commitments listed under key actions 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the *Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2022–2024* (QMAP). Under Section 24 of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*, agencies with actions in the QMAP are required to publicly report on their progress on an annual basis.

QMAP KEY ACTION 2: Recruitment and workplace culture

Barriers to participation facing culturally and linguistically diverse communities will be removed so they can join the Public Sector and Queensland Government boards, through **culturally inclusive recruitment practices and workplace cultures**. As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

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

DHLGPPW activities supporting Key Action 2	Progress status for 2023–24	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
<p>Drive leadership and accountability through establishing a senior executive multicultural champion and providing data to support planning for diversity and inclusion.</p>	<p>Delivered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-established senior executive workforce diversity, equity and inclusion champions for focus areas with existing employee network groups or specific actions from the former Department of Housing, Equity and Diversity audit plan, following the machinery-of-government changes on 18/12/2023 creating the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works (DHLGPPW). • Conducted the DHLGPPW 2024 Equity and Diversity audit and conducted focus groups with employees, including those from multicultural backgrounds, to learn about workplace experiences and inform future actions. Through this collaboration, the department identified actions to create systemic change and updated the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan 2024–27 (the DEI Plan). <p>The DEI Plan includes actions to progress DEI in employment and references Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees, though actions apply to all diversity groups, under the following seven goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systems, policies, and processes are inclusive and enacted in a way that enhances DEI in our workplaces and drive better outcomes for the community. - Workplaces are accessible for all, including for hidden disabilities and taking into account cultural considerations and background. - Our workplaces are respectful and safe, and enable a sense of belonging, underpinned by an inclusive culture. - Responsive, diverse, compassionate and flexible. Work in partnership to achieve better outcomes, culturally capable and respectful workplaces. - Inclusive and culturally capable workforce, contributing to an inclusive culture of respect, diversity and belonging, free from discrimination and racism. - We foster a culture of inclusion, belonging and continuous improvement by integrating DEI considerations into our ways of working. - DEI intelligence informs inclusive and evidence-based decision making and future activities.

DHLGPPW activities supporting Key Action 2	Progress status for 2023–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
Develop more options to better enable inclusive recruitment and selection processes	Delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced reviewing recruitment and selection processes and resources, following the machinery-of-government changes on 18/12/2023 and the updated Recruitment and Selection Directive (07/23) in July 2023. Commenced collaboration with the Public Sector Commission and other agencies to implement Action 18 of the Even Better Public Sector Strategy, <i>Develop practical tools and guidance to support successful implementation of the new recruitment and selection processes which support equity and diversity under the Public Sector Act 2022.</i> Delivered recruitment and selection training 'Understanding unconscious bias and other influencing factors', ensuring panels embed inclusive recruitment and accessible recruitment and selection tools, and understanding the <i>Public Sector Act 2022</i> provisions to consider diversity and equity.

Key Action 2 Achievements (Recruitment and workplace culture):

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024–27

A goal in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024–27 is *Our workplaces are respectful and safe, and enable a sense of belonging, underpinned by an inclusive culture*, and includes the following actions:

- Drive DEI promotion through an annual DEI communication plan, using multiple communication channels, including messaging from the DG and DEI champions, sharing staff spotlights and storytelling to deliver targeted messages.
- Acknowledge, celebrate, and educate the workforce on DEI matters through observing significant DEI events such as NAIDOC Week, Disability Action Week, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), Multicultural Queensland Week and Queensland Women’s Week including International Women’s Day.

QMAP KEY ACTION 3: Culturally responsive services

Over the next two years, Queensland Government agencies will improve their cultural responsiveness by undertaking an **audit of critical areas of service delivery** (funded or directly delivered). As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

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

DHLGPPW activities supporting Key Action 3	Progress status for 2023–2024	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
Ensure the audit is embedded in agency planning cycles and appropriately resourced.	Delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer feedback is sought through emails and paper-based surveys available from Housing Service Centres, supporting the department’s understanding of customers’ experiences. The data assists the department to identify areas for improvement. Reducing language and literacy barriers for customers accessing services continues to be the department’s focus. • The Customer Feedback Approach was developed in response to recommendations made in the Service Delivery Customer Experience Process Internal Audit Report 2021. • In 2023–24, through the customer feedback channels, the department received feedback from 52 customers who speak a language at home other than English.

QMAP KEY ACTION 4: Cultural diversity data

The Queensland Government will collect, analyse, and use **cultural diversity data** to improve service delivery and better meet customer needs. As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

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

DHLGPPW activities supporting Key Action 4	Progress status for 2023–2024	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
Ensure the right systems are in place to collect diversity data.	Delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department continues to collect voluntary equity and diversity workforce information through the Workforce Diversity census on the HR information system. Employees may identify their birthplace, first language, language spoken at home and whether they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or Australian South Sea Islander. • Equity and Diversity data is also captured through the confidential annual Working for Queensland staff opinion survey. Employees can respond to questions on linguistic diversity and identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or Australian South Sea Islander. • The department analyses both sets of data in the annual equity and diversity audit process. This enables the department to better understand the workforce composition, including the proportion of staff who are Culturally and Linguistically diverse (CALD), and this representation by workgroup, salary level and average pay. The data also informs the department’s progress towards one of its diversity targets, to reach 12 per cent of the workforce to be from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • In 2024, the audit analysis and staff consultation was used to inform the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan 2024–27, outlining actions to address inequities and improve workplace experience for diversity groups, including those who identify as CALD.

Key Action 4 Achievements (Culturally responsive services)**How our systems support our staff**

Dashboards that include cultural diversity data drawn from the optional Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) survey are available to the department's Executive Leadership team (ELT) and People and Culture staff (including key supporting staff). While paused for a short period due to Machinery of Government changes, the dashboards have been reinstated. The re-introduction incorporates the new divisions of Planning, Local Government, and Public Works, to give a full departmental snapshot of inclusion and diversity data.

Figures on cultural and linguistically diverse peoples are readily available in the ELT via a monthly dashboard, including comparison to the sector targets (both are currently minimally under the sector target based on the 57 per cent response rate) and data dating back 12 months to provide insight into recent trends.

Information provided to the ELT includes: more details on the sector strategy (including comparison of the overall recent end of month figures with the sector targets, and the diversity composition); and a deeper dive into each of the measures broken up by characteristics such as organisational unit, classifications, sex and region.

In an effort to increase the EEO response rate, the People and Culture team also has a prompting process where those who have not completed the survey are notified by email and encouraged to provide their response.

Whole of department dashboards targeted at a leader/manager level (AO8 and above) are forthcoming and expected to be available by the end of 2024. While accompanied with other HR data, focus will be given to the diversity measures when the dashboard is rolled out and demonstrations are conducted. These dashboards will equip leaders within the department with accurate and up to date cultural diversity information.

Overall, reporting of this nature has long been at the forefront and will continue to be woven into the key Business Intelligence reports available to leaders within the department, providing insight to inform workforce planning and workforce management decisions.

QMAP KEY ACTION 5: Interpreters and communication strategies

Queensland Government agencies will ensure people who have difficulty communicating in English can access information and services at the right time and in the right manner, through **improved access to interpreters and implementing multilingual and multi-modal communication strategies**. As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

- *Improved knowledge about customers’ diversity.*
- *Culturally capable services and programs.*
- *A productive, culturally capable, and diverse workforce.*
- *Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections.*
- *Individuals are supported to participate in the economy.*

DHLGPPW activities supporting Key Action 5	Progress status for 2023–2024	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
<p>Develop tools, education, and support to help guide agency communication with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This could include a focus on engagement of qualified interpreters in circumstances where people experience difficulties communicating in English, the provision of multilingual information and communication strategies and training staff in how to work with interpreters (building on learnings from COVID-19 and disaster preparedness).</p>	<p>Delivered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided mandatory training which is monitored monthly to ensure completion and re-completion of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence (yearly re-completion required) - Public Entities and <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> (only one completion required) <p>This training supports a culturally supportive and sensitive workforce.</p> • Adoption of multi-modal training to better support culturally and linguistically diverse communities, in particular the Local Government Leaders training course. This free training is available for all councillors and council officers in Queensland. It adopts adult learning techniques including narrative story telling in filmed videos, cartoons, interactive activities and animation to address obligations and responsibilities of this cohort. Feedback from the sector on its impact when compared to traditional talk and chalk learning is very positive. Overall, the message is that the training sticks! • Ensured all communication and engagement plans consider how to appropriately reach CALD community members and employ a range of tactics as appropriate including translated resources and easy read materials.

DHLGPPW activities supporting Key Action 5	Progress status for 2023–2024	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
<p>Develop targeted communication and engagement plans that consider multiple formats and modes of delivery, including use of Plain English and audiovisual resources, and targeted and trusted communication channels utilised by diverse communities.</p>	<p>Delivered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the Homes for Queenslanders (HfQ) communication strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key communication materials were translated into ten key languages (Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Samoan, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese) for sharing with customers from diverse backgrounds through the department’s Housing Service Centres. - People from CALD backgrounds and First Nations peoples were a priority audience for the HfQ major campaign which aimed to raise awareness of the HfQ plan, significant initiatives within the plan, and where to get help. - Creative assets were translated into five languages (Mandarin, Vietnamese, Thai, Korean and Cantonese) across relevant in-language/in-culture media environments (including Wechat and Chinese apps, radio across SBS and 4EB, programmatic activity and Tonic TV) to reach a diverse audience so they feel engaged and supported. • Continued to look for ways to raise awareness for CALD audiences of housing and renting products and services. The department has consulted Multicultural Affairs Queensland languages services guidelines which provided guidance on the best approach. • Continued to source talent for photo and video shoots to represent people from diverse backgrounds to reflect across our communication materials. • Continued to implement the department’s Digital services design and publishing policy and procedures which requires all departmental digital information and services to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessible, accurate, current, and consistent - easy to find, understand and use - designed with customers at the centre. • Continued to use human-centred design to ensure a deep knowledge of the customer and their context for accessing the information or service. • Continued to design Communication materials to be accessible for all customers including diverse communities, with alternate formats made available as standard practice. • Continued to link departmental websites to information in other languages which includes the 1800 512 451 interpreter phone line. • Supported key communication staff members with training in CALD appropriate communication techniques.

Key Action 5 Achievements (Interpreters and communication strategies):[Public housing and determination pave way to own home | Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works](#)**Public housing and determination pave way to own home**

When Rwandan refugee Aline and her young son were offered public housing in Toowoomba in 2015, she was excited to be able to leave her mother's house and be independent.

But she had no intention of staying there long. Aline was determined to buy her own home – and within 6 years that's what she did!

Aline had a turbulent start to life. The 31-year-old was 2 years old when her family fled the genocide in Rwanda. For the next 13 years, she stayed with her mother and brother in a refugee camp in Tanzania. Her sister was separated from the family when they fled and, for many years, they had no idea if she'd survived. Her father eventually left them at the camp to return to the Congo to see if his parents were still alive.

Aline said they struggled to survive. 'It was very hard, to be honest. 'Mum was a captain in the camp, giving out food. On the days she worked, she'd get more food and that's how we survived.'

Eventually, the family applied to move to another country. The United States and Norway rejected their applications, but they were accepted by Australia. They moved to Toowoomba in 2007, when Aline was 15. After completing school, Aline met a man who'd also come from Rwanda and they had a son, Chris. However, the relationship ended, so Aline and Chris stayed with her mum until 2015 when she was offered public housing.

Aline had started saving money when Chris was just a baby and set a goal to buy her own home. 'I'd work and give the money to my mother to keep safe so I wouldn't spend it. She put it in a tin and then, when I'd have enough, she'd give it back to me to put in a term deposit. That way I couldn't touch it.'

Over the next 6 years, Aline worked and studied to get ahead. She also married and had 2 more children – Idris and Leyla.

I told my husband, "We need to save and get our own place so someone else can have this house". She said that having public housing enabled her to keep saving, even when she had her children and wasn't working.

'It made a lot of difference for me personally because it was affordable, so I was able to work to a budget and save money.

'If it wasn't for public housing, I wouldn't have saved. The rental market was too high, plus with childcare and school fees, I wouldn't have been able to afford it.'

Six years after Aline entered public housing, she'd saved enough for a deposit. But then property prices started rising beyond her loan approval.

'My budget was small. I looked at 30 or 40 houses and even started looking at units to find something I could afford.

'I was very lucky to find this house. I'd been looking for months. The price on the house went up nearly \$20,000 but I said to the agent "Please, we need this house".

'He sent me back to the broker and the bank to make sure I could get it, and I managed to increase my deposit with a little help from my mum and some money I'd been investing for my son. We moved in during July 2021. We have 3 bedrooms and 2 sitting rooms. It's fantastic.'

Aline is now a single mum and continues to work hard and save. After studying human services, she works in government and residential care, and also works as an interpreter while running her own laundry and cleaning business.

She said she wanted to encourage others, especially single mums, to not give up.

'If you put your mind into something, you will achieve it. It doesn't matter if someone says you can't – just put your mind into it.'