



# Community Engagement Strategy Outcomes

## Family consultation

**Partners:** Department for Child Protection and Department for Communities

In 2010 and 2011, the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) conducted a series of consultations as part of its Community Engagement Strategy. These contributed to the following four objectives detailed in OMI's Strategic Plan 2009–2013:

### Public sector

- Facilitate CaLD engagement in government decision-making processes, policies and programs.
- Support the public sector to achieve substantive equality for CaLD communities.

### Empowering CaLD communities

- Provide CaLD communities with the information, skills and opportunities to support settlement, integration and citizenship.
- Undertake research, consultation and partnerships to identify, address and advocate for the needs of CaLD communities.

### Broad community consultation outcomes

At a broad level, the community consultations:

- increase CaLD community engagement in government decision making
- connect CaLD communities and State Government agencies
- increase the capacity of agencies to engage effectively with CaLD communities
- increase information on government services and gaps in services to CaLD communities
- increase knowledge of CaLD community groups, leaders and issues among government agencies
- increase cultural awareness of government agencies
- develop the capability of OMI staff to work with communities and deliver its overall community engagement program.

### As part of the consultation process, OMI:

- consulted on the needs and priorities of CaLD communities
- researched and prepared pre-consultation discussion papers on relevant themes in partnership with government agencies
- planned and delivered consultations in partnership with other government agencies
- prepared and published summary reports following each consultation
- worked with partners and stakeholders to implement actions arising
- monitored, tracked and reported on outcomes.

The consultation process as a whole has some general outcomes for government and non-government agencies, CaLD communities and OMI staff.



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## About the consultation

The consultation was focused on how to support families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in Western Australia. A large forum was held on 28 October 2010 at the Agonis Centre, Gosnells. Eighty-nine people attended. This was followed by a roundtable held on 1 November 2010 at the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre's Youth Centre in Mirrabooka, attended by 18 people.

The two forums aimed to:

- ▣ provide information about parenting-related services and programs provided by relevant government agencies
- ▣ listen to the concerns of community members and service providers about parenting issues and explore possible solutions.

The consultation was organised in two parts:

- ▣ an information session comprising presentations from representatives of the Department for Communities' Parenting WA Centre and Department for Child Protection
- ▣ a facilitated discussion in small groups of approximately 10 participants in which OMI sought input on issues affecting families from CaLD backgrounds.

Participants identified the following **priority issues**:

- ▣ parenting challenges—loss of parental control and intergenerational conflict between parents and children

- ▣ information provision—the need for agencies to reduce their reliance on written communication and to adopt a multi-faceted and community development approach to information provision with greater involvement of CaLD communities
- ▣ social isolation — the need for programs that create community spaces for families to come together and develop support networks
- ▣ parenting programs and services—the importance for relevant agencies to:
  - ▣ focus on parents as well as children in developing their programs
  - ▣ increase the level of cultural competency and be aware of cultural parenting practices when making decisions
  - ▣ improve connections with communities and employ more mediation, bilingual and outreach workers in order to communicate and service CaLD communities more effectively
  - ▣ provide more education for parents regarding the cultural differences in parenting between Australia and some other countries
  - ▣ introduce community development models of service delivery and adopt a flexible approach to parenting models that accommodate cultural differences
  - ▣ increase collaboration and partnerships between agencies as well as between agencies and CaLD communities to improve service delivery.

Following the consultation, OMI wrote to relevant government agencies highlighting issues pertinent to them and inviting comment. Outcomes are listed on the next page.



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## Outcomes

- On 29 August 2011, the City of Stirling, the Department for Child Protection and the Department for Communities hosted a workshop for agencies who work with CaLD communities (particularly new and emerging communities from Middle Eastern, African and Burmese backgrounds) to continue the discussions held at the OMI consultation forum. This led to the establishment of the Supporting Multicultural Families in the Mirrabooka Region Group with representation from government agencies and non-government organisations. The group meets every six weeks and is currently supported administratively by the City of Stirling.
- The Department for Child Protection (DCP)** advised that:
  - the CaLD Services Framework was reviewed and updated in 2012 and implements a range of strategies to increase cross-cultural skills and knowledge for the department's staff and improve responses to culturally diverse families and children
  - a range of CaLD information and resources to inform practice have been placed on the department's SharePoint site and are available to all staff via the intranet
  - the central CaLD Working Group has been refocused to inform policy development and now comprises broad representation from various directorates
  - CaLD Practice Networks have been developed in several district offices to build and develop learning at a local level
- training on working with children and families from CaLD backgrounds has been redeveloped to include a dedicated CaLD module in the Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention
- the department is reviewing and updating the current one-day workshop on working with people from CaLD backgrounds to provide increased practice guidance and build cultural competence in workers
- languages policy practice guidance on use of interpreters is accessible for all staff
- specialist community child protection workers at Mirrabooka and Joondalup district offices, and the central CaLD senior officers, liaise with CaLD non-government agencies, community groups and religious leaders/elders on a regular basis
- the Mirrabooka District Office has a dedicated community education and information package on WA's child protection laws, and system and a similar community education and information package targeted at non-government agencies servicing CaLD clients



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- ▣ the *Secondary Family Support State Plan 2010–13* is being implemented with the development of the Armadale Family Support Network Innovations Site, which commenced in April 2012 and sees Parkerville Children and Youth Care, as lead agency, partner with other local services to provide a range of supports to families through a common entry point
- ▣ eight community sector services providing parent–adolescent counselling are funded on an ongoing basis
- ▣ funding is provided for 48 services for young people at risk across metropolitan and regional areas.
- ▣ **The Department for Communities** advised that:
  - ▣ it is currently in the process of translating its key message outlining its services and programs into six languages—Chinese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Farsi, Dinka and Somali—for inclusion in its updated website.

## What next?

OMI continues to work with stakeholders and provide regular updates on progress and achievements in response to issues raised.