

OMI Regional Consultation Summary

November 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) held the third of four consultations scheduled this year between 1 and 3 September 2010. The consultation was undertaken in response to the OMI Strategic Plan 2009-2013, as part of a state-wide community engagement strategy. Consultations were conducted in Karratha, South Hedland and Broome and were organised in partnership with the Shire of Roebourne, Town of Port Hedland and Shire of Broome, respectively.

A total of 54 people attended the consultations: 26 in Karratha, 20 in South Hedland and eight in Broome. Additional individual discussions were conducted with three community members in Broome.

Key Issues

Issues common to all three towns were as follows.

- i **Service Delivery** - Issues included lack of awareness of available services by people from CaLD backgrounds; lack of planning for the delivery of services to people from CaLD backgrounds specifically, frequent turnover of staff which impacted on the quality and continuity of services; transport difficulties due to limited public transport services and difficulties identifying and reaching representative CaLD organisations and members of CaLD communities.
- ii **English Language** - included difficulties accessing available English language classes for those working long shifts, lack of English language support, including for children at primary and secondary school level and in the workplace and lack of access to translated material and interpreting and translating services. Lack of proficiency in the English language impacted on understanding of rights and laws, occupational health and safety risks, the effectiveness of emergency management, access to available support services and programs and social isolation.
- iii **Community Integration** - Participants highlighted the need for more marketing and promotion regarding the benefits of cultural diversity and more opportunities for members of CaLD communities to mix with the wider community. Incidents of racism and discrimination were reported by participants in Karratha and South Hedland. Employers, local government and the media were all identified as having potential roles in contributing to the development of greater cultural awareness and promoting the benefits of diversity.
- iv **Accommodation** - Lack of available and affordable housing was a key issue. People from CaLD backgrounds could face particular difficulties accessing housing due to English language difficulties, lack of local networks and support services and discrimination in the housing market.
- v **Limitations of Local Resources** - All three towns reported the challenge faced by their local governments in meeting the needs of the community, including the specific needs of people from CaLD backgrounds, through existing resources. All three towns must carry the burden of demands on local resources coming from either a non-resident workforce or the influx of tourists from within relatively small rate-payer bases.

Evaluation

Following each consultation, participants were asked to provide feedback on the presentations, quality of discussion and overall organisation. A total of 42 participants (78%) completed the questionnaire. Overall responses from the evaluation indicated strong support for OMI's consultation program and expressed an appreciation for visiting the Pilbara and Kimberley regions. Participants were keen for dialogue with OMI to continue and for a return visit at which to discuss progress in relation to the ideas and suggestions that were discussed. It was noted that future visits should be more widely advertised through a variety of avenues to attract a larger and more diverse group. Comments included:

This was an excellent forum for discussion and the content was relevant and interesting.

More consultations like this please.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) held the third of four consultations scheduled this year between 1 and 3 September 2010. The consultation was undertaken in response to the OMI Strategic Plan 2009-2013, as part of a state-wide community engagement strategy.

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate the engagement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in government decision making processes, policies and programs and provide information, skills and opportunities to support settlement integration and citizenship.

While the first two consultations focused on specific topics (Employment and Transport) and were held in the Perth metropolitan area, the third consultation focused on the north-west region of the State. Consultations were conducted in Karratha, South Hedland and Broome and were organised in partnership with the Shire of Roebourne, Town of Port Hedland and Shire of Broome, respectively.

A total of five consultation sessions were held: an afternoon (1.00pm-3.00pm) and evening (7.00pm-9.00pm) at the Shire of Roebourne offices in Karratha on Wednesday 1 September 2010; an afternoon (1.00pm-3.30pm) and evening (7.00pm-9.00pm) at Lotterywest House in South Hedland on Thursday 2 September 2010 and one afternoon session (2.00pm-4.00pm) at the Broome Recreation and Aquatic Centre on Friday 3 September 2010. Discussions at an individual level were conducted with an additional three community members in Broome.

The consultations were launched by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, the Hon. John Castrilli MLA, on 1 September 2010 in Karratha.

1.1 Background

OMI selected the Pilbara and Kimberley regions for the first regional consultations due to the rapid industrial and population growth including an increase in the numbers of people from CaLD backgrounds. Due to the mining boom, the regions have experienced:

- pressure on local infrastructure and government and community services;
- expansion of 'Fly-In/Fly-Out' workforces; and
- increased recruitment of professionals and trades staff including temporary overseas workers through the 457 visa sub-class and skilled workers through Australia's Skilled Migration program.

The consultations aimed to identify:

1. the issues faced by people from CaLD backgrounds, including permanent and temporary migrants;
2. whether services to people from CaLD backgrounds meet identified needs;
3. how issues and service gaps might be addressed; and
4. how each community promotes and celebrates cultural diversity.

OMI invited ethnic community members, service providers and government agencies to participate.

An invitation to participate in the consultation together with a brief discussion paper was sent to approximately 50 CaLD community members and representatives from non-government organisations (NGOs) and government agencies.

A discussion paper was posted on the OMI website three weeks before the consultation. Helen Maddocks, OMI's Principal Policy Officer, facilitated the consultations with the assistance of Walter Gomes, Acting Manager, Community Strengthening.

1.2 Participants

A total of 54 people attended the consultations. Of these, 26 were in Karratha, 20 in South Hedland and eight in Broome. Attendees included community members, representatives of service provider organisations and the private sector.

The following communities and organisations were represented:

Community groups:

Karratha: Pilbara Multicultural Association

South Hedland: Islamic Association North Western Australia; Iraqi Community.

NGOs, peak bodies and representatives from private industry:

Karratha: ITEC Employment Job Services Australia provider; Pearlers Rest; Juluwarlu Aboriginal Corporation; Ngarluma Yudjibarndi Foundation Limited; Frontier Services; The Salvation Army Women's Refuge.

South Hedland: Frontier Services.

Broome: Broome Circle; Association of Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors; Kimberley Interpreting Service.

Government:

Karratha: Shire of Roebourne; Department of Corrective Services; Pilbara TAFE; Department of Health.

South Hedland: Department of Family, Health, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – Indigenous Coordination Centre; Department of Immigration and Citizenship; Town of Port Hedland; Hedland Senior High School.

Broome: Shire of Broome; Department for Communities.

Private sector:

Karratha: Woodside

1.3 Consultation Process

The consultations comprised facilitated discussion in small groups in which OMI sought input on:

- the issues faced by people from CaLD backgrounds, including permanent and temporary migrants;
- gaps in services;
- how issues and service gaps might be addressed; and
- how each community promotes and celebrates cultural diversity.

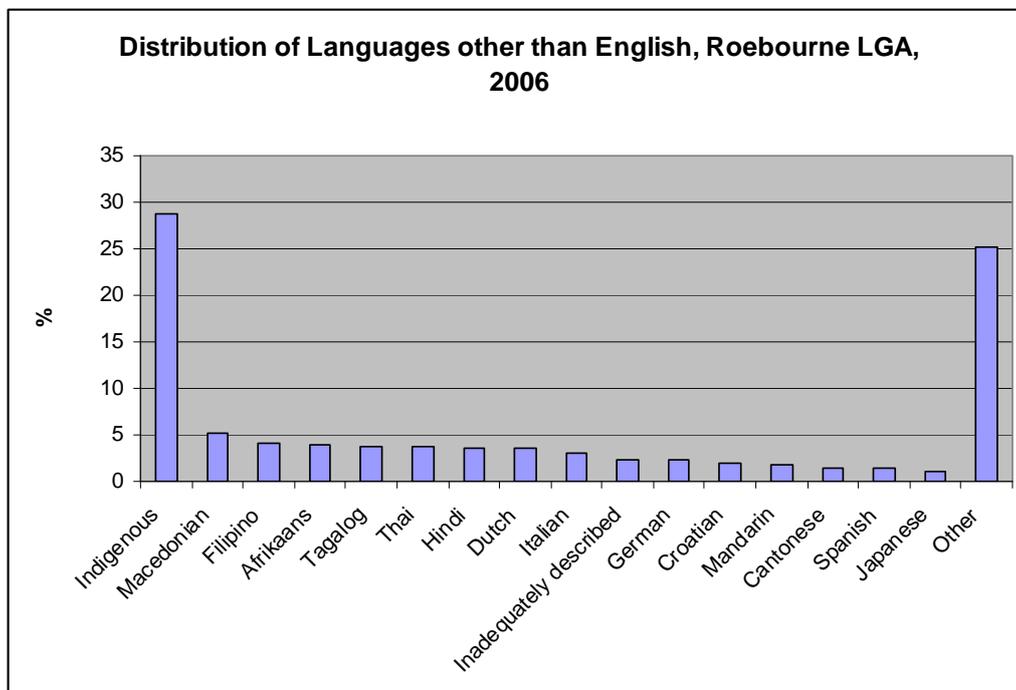
2. KARRATHA

2.1 Introduction

Karratha is a major town in the Shire of Roebourne. As the main town in the Pilbara region, Karratha provides a service, housing and governance centre for the rapidly expanding resource sector. The main industries in the shire are iron ore mining, salt production, petroleum and gas, pastoral, fishing, tourism and service industries.

In 2006 the population of the Shire of Roebourne was 16,420 of which 794 (4.8%) were born overseas in non-main English speaking countries. This was significantly lower than for Western Australia in total (15.2%). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (11.1%), however, was significantly higher than for the State (3%).

People from non-main English speaking background countries¹ predominantly came from the Philippines, India, Thailand, Netherlands, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Germany and Malaysia. Approximately 7% of the population (1,167 people) spoke a language other than English at home, of which 28.8% were Indigenous languages.



Major religious affiliations were with the Christian faiths (46.2% of the population), Buddhism (0.7%), Hindu (0.5%), Islam (0.2%) and Ratana Maori (0.2%).

Services to people from CaLD backgrounds are predominantly provided by Frontier Services, Pilbara Community Migrant Service. Key multicultural groups include the Pilbara Multicultural Association, Karratha Islamic Centre, Islamic Association, Muslim Women's Association, Pilbara Indonesian Association and Australian Filipino Friendly Association.

¹ All overseas countries except the United Kingdom and Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America and South Africa.

2.2 Issues

2.2.1 Service Delivery

Participants raised concerns regarding both access to and availability of appropriate services for people from CaLD backgrounds. These were:

a. Awareness of services

Participants considered that there was a lack of awareness of available services among people from CaLD backgrounds, including those provided by Frontier Services:

People live in their houses and they don't even know where the school is.

Frontier Services is the only service in the town which provides assistance specifically to migrants, operating 25 hours per week. It was suggested that efforts should be made to raise awareness and educate CaLD communities regarding available services, for example by:

- expanding visitors information provided at the Visitor's Centre;
- establishing an information board at a central place, such as the shopping centre, to advertise services; and
- a Welcome Pack for new arrivals listing available services in different languages.

b. Cultural awareness of service providers

Participants remarked on the reluctance of some people from CaLD backgrounds to access services and suggested that increased cultural awareness among service providers would help address this. It was suggested that service providers are not fully aware of the language needs of some people and require training in this regard. Openly advertising the availability of free translating services, and increasing their availability, was suggested as one way to make services more accessible. One participant noted that:

Translating services are not offered by government departments first up – unless you know they offer it – migrants are given forms to fill in and bring back – hello, they don't read or write English most times.

c. Staff retention

Attracting and, in particular, retaining staff in the Pilbara was highlighted as a challenge for service providers. It was noted that attracting staff to employment with non-government organisations (NGOs) is particularly difficult due to the high housing costs and relatively low pay levels for these jobs. While government workers are eligible for free or subsidised housing, this option is not available to employees of NGOs. One participant noted that:

It is difficult to retain staff for a long period of time as the rental expenses are excessive in Karratha. If not provided with housing, people find it difficult to live here.

It was noted that the Karratha Service Workers Accommodation project, part of the Royalties for Regions program, would see the development of 100 units and help alleviate the housing shortfall. The units will house up to 250 people and include a mix of one, two and three bedroom units. Delivered through LandCorp in partnership with the private sector, the project will provide affordable living options with rents expected to range between \$350 and \$450 per week.

To be eligible for a Service Workers Accommodation Tenancy allocation, a person must:

- be in a job designated as providing an essential service to the community which includes:
 - a not-for-profit NGO;
 - a Local, State or Federal Government Department where the services provided are located in the Shire of Roebourne and directly service these communities; and
 - a business enterprise providing services within the Shire of Roebourne.
- due to income constraints, require assistance in finding suitably priced accommodation and still be eligible for Government rental assistance; and

- provide services to the broader community and not directly or largely to Resource Sector clients.²

d. Specific services

Family support

Participants also noted that lack of family support networks among migrants adds to the challenges of the migration experience. It was noted that many migrants come from countries where extended families are a source of physical and emotional support and that the lack of close support in Australia exacerbates the stress and isolation experienced by families.

We come from a close knit family but if you want to bring your family here they can't come in for 12 months – they have to leave after three months so you are isolated.

Additional tensions could arise within the family as a result of conflict between parents and children due to the more rapid acculturation of young people to a new, often more liberal society.

Kids come from other cultures and they become confused – because home [country] is really strict and here it is really liberal.

Participants identified a need for family support and low-cost childcare to help address these issues.

Domestic violence

Participants also identified a need for assistance for women, particularly dependants of 457 visa holders, who are victims of domestic violence. Participants expressed concern that migrant women are generally not aware of their rights and that dependants of 457 visa holders are not eligible for domestic violence assistance. One participant noted that:

Dependants of 457 visa holders [are] falling through the cracks.

Immigration information and advice

Information and advice regarding immigration issues was another identified area of need. Participants commented that:

- the DIAC website is hard to navigate, particularly if a person does not have English as a first language or does not speak it at all; and
- seeking assistance via the telephone is costly and often lengthy if calls are transferred from section to section.

Other services

Participants also identified the need for:

- medical specialists;
- a medical service specifically for women;
- counselling services;
- a drug and alcohol information and counselling service; and
- an aged care facility (it was noted that only Home and Community Care (HACC) services are currently available).

e. Other issues

Other issues raised in relation to service delivery were:

² The definition excludes Local, Regional, State and Federal Government bodies which are otherwise funded to provide employee housing in the region except where the employee does not qualify for housing and any organisation providing the majority of their services directly to the Resources Sector.

- the limitations placed on the sole migrant resource centre, Frontier Services, to service only those who have arrived in the last five years in accordance with the funding requirements of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) Settlement Grants Program (SGP);
- lack of coordination between service providers in the delivery of services to people from CaLD backgrounds;
- the need for increased cultural diversity training for staff employed in service delivery agencies
- the challenges of providing services to a mining community in which long (12 hour) shifts are the norm; and
- high rental costs which place financial pressure on NGOs in relation to office space and facilities.

Participants also expressed the view that Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data did not seem to accurately reflect the true extent of the cultural diversity in the region – that there is a disparity between demographic data and the diversity seen on the street and in shopping centres. Participants did not explore the reasons for this apparent disparity but noted that this impacts on the success with which NGOs are able to provide evidence of need in funding applications.

Suggestions

Participants explored the potential development of a one-stop-shop to address many of the issues raised. Described by one participant as an 'International Family Centre', it would provide a welcoming environment and be a hub of information and service delivery at minimal cost to clients. The centre would provide a meeting place for community groups which would contribute to the town's social infrastructure. Services available at the centre could include:

- interpreting and translating services;
- a health support worker;
- counselling services, including for victims of domestic violence;
- accommodation assistance;
- child care;
- adult education classes;
- settlement services;
- social activities such as morning teas and other events to promote and encourage people to become involved in the community;
- coffee shop; and
- a bus service available for particular occasions.

It was suggested that the centre need not be wholly staffed by paid employees but could also be staffed by volunteers including the wives of expatriates. It was suggested that the centre could be funded through a partnership of the different levels of government (for example through an allocation of land and/or building by the Shire and/or Land Corp) and mining companies. It was suggested that such an initiative could be part of a company's Social Impact Management Plan.

2.2.2 Housing

As noted above (2.2.1), housing availability and affordability were key concerns for participants. Participants spoke of people living in their cars and in sea containers and 'hot bedding' with friends and relatives. While the housing shortage affected most people, it was noted that Aboriginal people and people from CaLD backgrounds are at risk of further disadvantage in a competitive rental environment.

It was suggested that there is discrimination against Aboriginal people and some people from CaLD backgrounds in both the public and private rental markets. One participant cited an example of:

One woman [who] was allowed a room but her husband, who was a black South African, would not be accepted.

Another participant highlighted how residents' responses to the housing pressures could exacerbate racial tensions in the town, noting that:

Aboriginal people who have lived for a while [in Karratha] and are good families are taking in family members who are homeless and [there is] overcrowding and [it is] causing lots of problems.

No solution, other than government investment in more, and more affordable, housing was suggested.

2.2.3 English Language Support

Participants highlighted a lack of English language classes for all ages. Particular issues raised were:

- lack of night classes for adults;
- difficulty accessing available classes due to transport difficulties; and
- lack of English as a Second Language (ESL) specialists in schools.

Suggestions to address the shortfall in English language provision included:

- volunteer tutors;
- mentoring; and
- small programs for specific issues such as reading and writing.

It was also suggested that it would be helpful if a bus could be secured to transport people to and from classes.

2.2.4 Transport

As noted above (2.2.3), concerns were raised regarding the limited availability of public transport. The Shire of Roebourne, in partnership with the Public Transport Authority and Rio Tinto, operates a community bus three days per week. However, this was regarded as insufficient for community needs in general, and the needs of people from CaLD backgrounds in particular. Of particular concern were the wives and partners of 457 visa holders whom participants believed are socially isolated. Lack of transport was identified as a factor contributing to this isolation; for example, discouraging attendance at English language classes, as cited above, and in other social events and activities. It was noted that there is a shortage of taxis at peak hours, that the cost and waiting times discourage their use and that the hot climate of the region means that most people are reluctant to walk very far.

Difficulties faced by some people from CaLD backgrounds in obtaining their driver's licence were also noted.

While options for funding for a community bus were discussed, it was generally felt that responsibility for the provision of public transport largely lies with the State Government.

2.2.5 Community Integration

Community integration was identified as a significant issue. It was noted that the community currently celebrates cultural diversity through the Pilbara Multicultural Association's Bollywood Night held in October each year, NAIDOC Week and Harmony Week activities. However, participants noted that, because most employees work long hours, attracting people to these events is difficult:

People are just focused on work.

If the Pilbara Multicultural Association gets 70 people it is a success. People are working.

Participants also highlighted the importance of an initial welcome for newcomers into the community and the provision of early assistance to become part of that community. It was noted that those new to the country particularly require assistance learning about the Australian education and health systems as well as Australia's history and culture.

Participants also expressed concerns regarding a level of racism and discrimination towards migrants in the town. It was felt that this is usually subtle and revealed in people's language and verbal communication. For example, participants described how conversations with and about migrants reflected:

- assumptions that a person only learned English on arrival in Australia, when English may in fact be the dominant language in that person's country of origin;

- views that “everyone is a refugee”; and
- perceptions that migrants are “stealing jobs” from Australians – and not that migrants are filling a domestic skills shortage.

Participants also referred to an “arrogance” in the way in which some people interact with migrants.

There is this mentality that everyone that comes here is a refugee so you are treated as such.

... it makes me angry – it doesn't mean I didn't go to school where I came from.

People are naive. If you say you are from Africa or if you speak with an accent... So sometimes I get blunt and say “You know you don't speak the Queen's English either”.

It was acknowledged that this behaviour is often unconscious, that it was sometimes cloaked in “superficial political correctness” and that it reveals a gap between diversity policy and local implementation.

It's not being mean. It's the person not realizing that it's not intentional.

If you ask people they will say there is no racism but that's because they don't experience it and they don't know they are doing it.

Suggestions

Participants identified a need for more opportunities for members of CaLD communities to mix with the wider community:

Encourage people to meet because in Karratha you find people just keep to themselves.

People learning about other cultures will build understanding – talks, dance, and music.

Participants also suggested a need for:

- promotion of the benefits of cultural diversity;
- community meeting places where social events and information sessions can be held;
- places for worship for diverse religious groups with small numbers of local members; and
- cultural awareness activities for both Australians and new migrants including school talks, media coverage of different cultures, for example through a regular feature in the local newspaper and cultural events.

Participants felt that employers could do more to assist staff from CaLD backgrounds to integrate into the community:

Employers should do more to combat the isolation that people are feeling.

Employers also should take responsibility for that because they are bringing people in.

The possibility of employers establishing a ‘buddy system’ matching migrant workers to long-standing members of the community would also be a way of helping new arrivals adjust to life in Australia in general and Karratha in particular. It was suggested that employers could do more to invest in employee programs and that a mentoring program could be one of these.

2.2.6 Employment

Issues raised by participants in relation to employment included:

- concerns that holders of visa subclasses 457 and 485 are being exploited by being underpaid, overworked, unsupported and lacking language assistance;
- lack of understanding among migrant workers of Australian workplace laws and occupational health and safety laws;
- discriminatory attitudes of some employers when hiring staff – there was a perception that employers preferred to employ local residents and are reluctant to employ migrants:

People miss out on jobs – you feel like you are talking to not talking with – it's not racism, its lack of awareness.

- pressure placed on migrants to “prove themselves” by taking on extra work to demonstrate their skills and capabilities:

I had to prove myself - There is doubt because “she is not Australian – what can she do for me?” So I have to do a job three times better.

- lack of opportunities for migrants to open small businesses, as an alternative employment option, due to the prohibitive cost of rental properties.

It was noted that increasing migrants' job readiness, for example by providing assistance in preparing their resume and addressing their oral communication skills, could improve their job search outcomes and that there is a need for employers to increase their cultural awareness and adapt their practices.

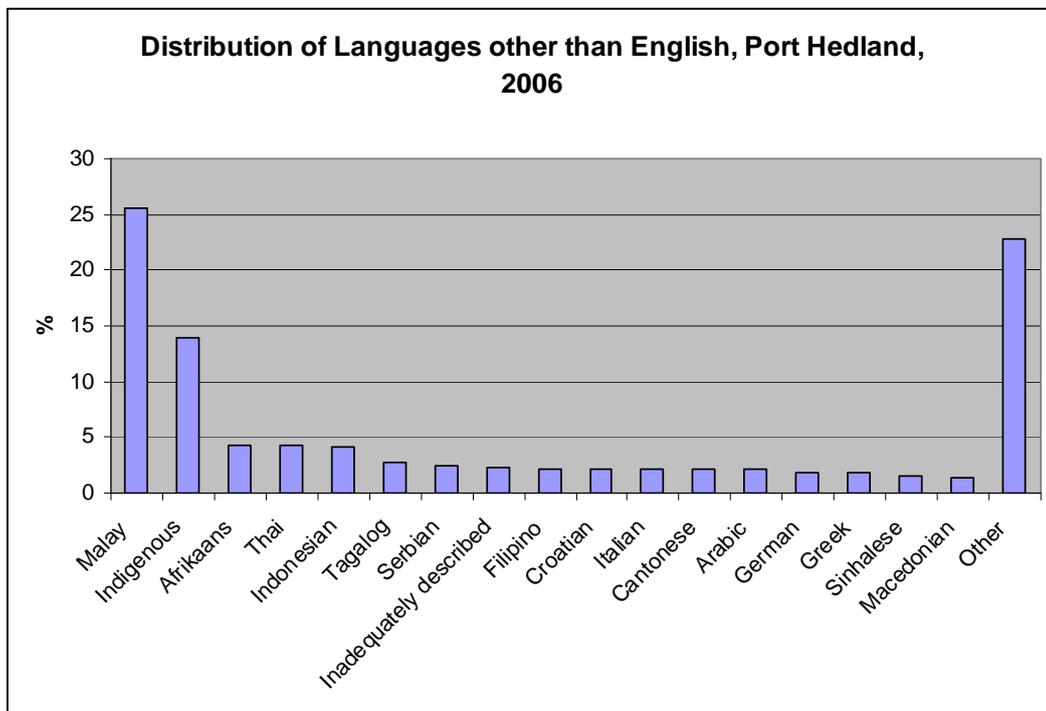
3. SOUTH HEDLAND

3.1 Introduction

The two main residential centres of the Town of Port Hedland are Port Hedland and South Hedland, with the remaining population living on pastoral stations or in Indigenous communities such as Yandeyarra. The main industries in the region are iron ore processing and export, salt production, shipping of manganese and other minerals and livestock production (mainly cattle). The port is one of the world's largest in tonnage terms, with over 100 million tonne of product worth more than \$3 billion shipped each year. Major expansions anticipated in the near future include a new multi-user Panamax berth at Utah Point.

In 2006 the population was 12,993 with 749 (6.3%) born overseas in non-main English speaking countries. Approximately 15% of the population were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. People from non-main English speaking background countries came from a variety of countries including the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Germany, the Former Republic of Macedonia, Netherlands and Papua New Guinea.

Nearly 10% of the population (1,174 people) spoke a language other than English at home. Of these, the main languages spoken were Malay (25.6%) and Indigenous languages (14%).



Major religious affiliations were with the Christian faiths (39%), Islam (3.4%), Australian Aboriginal Traditional Religions (0.9%), Buddhism (0.8%) and Hinduism (0.4%).

Services to people from CaLD backgrounds are predominantly provided by Frontier Services, Pilbara Migrant Service. Key multicultural groups include the Australian Filipino Friendship Association, Muslim Women's Association and the Pilbara Indonesian Friendship Group.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Service Delivery

Participants raised concerns regarding both access to and availability of appropriate services for people from CaLD backgrounds. These were:

a. Awareness of services

Participants considered that there was a lack of awareness of available services among people from CaLD backgrounds. It was suggested that the Town of Port Hedland needs to promote the range of services and programs available, for example by:

1. developing and distributing a directory of services – a “new to town pack” listing services, volunteer groups and contact people;
2. providing an outreach and information service to new residents using a variety of formats/mediums;
3. promoting the local library as a source of information;
4. negotiating with industry to run information sessions about particular topics; and
5. liaising with the local radio station to broadcast information in different languages.

b. Workforce challenges

Participants highlighted the difficulty providers face delivering services and connecting with families whose lives revolve around shift work and long working hours (12hour shifts).

Participants also noted the difficulties in delivering consistent services in agencies in which there is high staff turn-over due to the isolation of the area. At the same time, concerns were expressed regarding under-employment and lack of employment opportunities for some migrants, often due to difficulties obtaining recognition of qualifications gained overseas.

c. Specific services

Availability of ‘ethnic’ food

Participants commented on the limited availability of ‘ethnic’ food, such as Halal and Indian food, to meet the needs of a highly culturally diverse community. It was noted that, where these commodities are stocked by supermarkets, they are generally expensive as they are regarded as ‘gourmet’ food; however, they are a part of the staple diet for many members of the community.

Suggestions to address the issue included:

- forming a lobby group to advocate for supermarkets to stock a more diverse range of food;
- forming a buying group to purchase food in bulk;
- using local markets as a source for buying and selling ethnic foods and condiments;
- establishing a community garden to grow specific foods and herbs such as cooking bananas, snake beans and curry leaves;
- lobbying for the new shopping centre to include businesses that cater to basic necessities such as a Halal butcher; and
- lobbying Coles and Woolworths to carry broader range of goods.

Health care

While the cost of most services was considered high, access to affordable health care was raised as a particular concern. It was noted that the geographic isolation of the region could result in feelings of depression and other mental health issues. Migrants could experience the isolation even more acutely due to their separation from their family, friends and familiar culture.

It was also noted that the geographic isolation of the region, and lack of available health care, could result in delays in treatment and a regular or minor infection or illness becoming more acute.

Immigration information and advice

Participants identified a need for a service providing information and advice for both migrants and employers regarding immigration, visas and citizenship:

There is still not an understanding of the visas themselves and what one is eligible for and not eligible for, what the criteria are for citizenship under these visas.

[There is a] lack of understanding among employers employing people on visas - sponsored, temporary visa, permanent residency.

[There is a] lack of understanding about employing people on these visas and what services are available to them.

Some participants thought more education of employers is needed to break down employer resistance to employing temporary visa holders. Participants suggested that employers regard holders of certain visa as “complicated” and believe people on temporary visas would lack commitment.

Assistance is required in terms of:

- clarifying visa arrangements and obligations with employers; and
- assisting migrants with advice regarding costs, processes, time-constraints, English language testing, and completing the necessary paper work.

It was noted that staff at Frontier Services are not able to assist in these matters due to eligibility restrictions on client services and it was suggested that either DIAC should provide this assistance or that Frontier Services should be funded for a broader, full-time service.

d. Coordination of services

Participants highlighted the lack of coordination of services to people from CaLD backgrounds and the need for an overarching body to coordinate service delivery and liaise with the various cultural groups in the area.

It was noted that Frontier Services is the only agency in the town available to assist migrants and that its capacity to address the needs of CaLD communities was limited by its funding constraints. Frontier Services is funded for a part-time service by DIAC through its Settlement Grants Program (SGP). The SGP target group comprises permanent residents who have arrived in Australia during the last five years as:

- humanitarian entrants;
- family stream migrants with low levels of English proficiency; or
- dependants of skilled migrants with low English proficiency who have settled in rural or regional areas.

Select temporary residents (Prospective Marriage, Provisional Partner, Provisional Spouse and Provisional Interdependency visa holders) in rural and regional areas who have arrived in Australia during the last five years and who have low English proficiency also fall within the target group.³

Participants felt that service delivery to CaLD communities could be improved by establishing a communication link between local industry (such as mining companies BHP, FMG, Rio Tinto and ER), businesses (such as banks, real estate agents and food outlets), and government (in particular, the Town of Port Hedland and the State Government):

...there needs to be more synergy between employers and employees and service providers.

e. Other issues

Other issues raised in relation to service delivery were:

³ See: <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-grants/what-sgp-providers.htm>

- concerns at the lack of education options available in the town – for example, there is only one high school which limits choice of education services; and
- concerns regarding security in the town and the need for additional crime prevention measures. Participants expressed concerns regarding incidents of stabbings and fare evasion experienced by taxi drivers and attacks by stray dogs.

As was the case in Karratha, participants felt that there is a disparity between demographic data available for the region and the diversity seen on the street and in shopping centres and noted that this impacted on the success with which NGOs are able to justify requests for funding for support services.

3.2.2 Housing

Participants highlighted the lack of available and affordable housing in the area, commenting on the high rental costs and lack of availability of rental homes. This was of particular concern for people who were not working in the resources industry and were not receiving high incomes.

...[there are] huge issues of overcrowding and the social impact of that – for example, if you are not working in the mines and on an average wage and paying x amount of dollars for rent there is a cost associated with that. Rents are for example \$500 per week and can be as high as \$2500 per week. The cost of living is high and average wage is inadequate to meet these costs unless you are working in the mines.

Participants felt that this needs to be addressed through the provision of more affordable housing, release of additional land and thoughtful town planning.

3.2.3 English Language Support

Participants commented on the limited availability of English language classes for adults and the impact that lack of English language proficiency has on the isolation of some CaLD women. Participants identified a need for:

- English language classes to be tailored to individual needs;
- introductory English classes to develop basic conversational English:

...the things they need to articulate when out and about in public and having to speak English.

Low level English for basic stuff e.g. how to ask for taxi, get around shops - basic stuff they are interested in

- English for both social and employment purposes;
- opportunities for people to improve their English in order to score well in an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test;
- transport for women to get to and from classes;
- ongoing support to practise and improve English language proficiency; and
- provision of childcare by providers:

Mothers or partners or parents are unable to attend these classes because they do not provide childcare and if they take the children with them their ability to learn or concentrate on the new language is diminished.

It was noted that language barriers make it difficult for some people to fill out paper work and forms.

Participants believe that more support should be available from employers to assist workers and their families to learn English.

Issues relating to the provision of English language assistance in schools included:

- the lack of comparable English as a Second Language (ESL) support for Indigenous students similar to that provided for children from CaLD backgrounds; and
- the need for ESL programs in schools to be tailored to individual needs:

In general, because of limited funding the program is not tailored to a person's needs. For example, if they have learning difficulties on top of that or if they don't have formative education they find it difficult to continue with lessons. The program is not well structured for such children.

3.2.4 Transport

Concerns were raised regarding the limited availability of public transport. Participants commented on the impact this has on the social isolation of women from CaLD backgrounds, in particular, Muslim women.

...the ladies are isolated within their own home and quite often there will be someone they know who is going into town but they only find out much later when its too late. When they depend on friends for transport they do not clearly communicate to them the times when they are to be at some place so end up arriving late.

Participants commented on the impact lack of transport could have on employment prospects.

Participants felt that public transport is too infrequent and unreliable which leads to a dependency on cars. The need for an expansion of the available service and an updating of routes and the introduction of additional 'stops' was identified.

...it is non-existent. There is a very limited bus service. It makes it very difficult to get around.

The bus system is not reliable so you cannot use it for work. It is a private company that owns it and so it's difficult to direct them to do things differently. Would be good if it was community/ government owned so we can make recommendations.

It was noted that the taxi service is limited and expensive, the cost of private transport is high, and walking is not an option due to excessive heat in summer and large distances between services and other venues:

Geographically South Hedland is very remote and there are extreme temperatures so walking is not an option.

The way Hedland is located geographically it isolates itself as we cannot walk from South Hedland to Port Hedland. We depend on private cars only. Taxi costs about sixty to seventy dollars to get to the other side [and that's] only one way.

Participants also commented on the challenges faced by some migrants in obtaining a local driver's licence:

If you were coming from another country on a visa and had already got your licence in another country, if you come to Australia there was difficulty if there were language barriers and you had to re-sit the driving test and the cost associated with that.

...also logistics coz you may not have a vehicle to practice or may not be able to get to testing centre.

Possible solutions to the issue included:

- community action to establish a more regular transport system;
- a car yard selling second hand cars;
- approaching bus companies to expand their services; and
- establishing a network of support for transport among friends and family.

3.2.5 Community Integration

A common theme in discussions was the lack of formal recognition of the diversity within the CaLD community:

In Hedland we have about 57 different nationalities who tend to socialise within their own groups and in the past this has not been celebrated in town and this is something we want to change so as to make it more visible.

It was suggested that more needs to be done to improve integration of people from CaLD backgrounds into the local community:

This will take a long time as we have to first be socially inclusive of the groups themselves before succeeding in doing that. It is still a two way street because people get invited; for example, for welcome to Hedland and its sausage sizzle but that is not the way to welcome the groups so the organisers need to work on the menu perhaps and invite other groups to prepare something. People need to be open to everyone else as well. The culture is changing in Hedland. It used to be just a mining community but that is slowly starting to change and people are now being more open to the different cultures and this should continue.

Participants also discussed the challenges faced by some members of CaLD communities to become 'Australian' yet maintain links with their culture and traditions, particularly amongst the younger generation. The impact of this could be seen in conflicts both within the family, between parents and children, and at school, between students from CaLD backgrounds and others.

The elders in the multicultural groups seem to be trying so hard to hold on to their beliefs making it very difficult for the children to integrate and embrace the new culture as well as stay true to their own culture.

With regards to integration into western society (Hedland society in general) – because the parents or older generations came from their homeland they have a religion and beliefs which may not cross over very well with 'Australian' culture and this affects the children when they are at school as they become isolated e.g. because of religious beliefs.

...when people immigrate the second generation culturally don't understand where the parents are coming from e.g. if parents have experienced war and the children have not it is difficult for them to understand their parents and the second generation will have a sense of belonging to Australia where the parents will have a disconnect still to the new country.

Representatives of CaLD community groups at the consultations highlighted the importance of cultural identity to social integration:

Young kids feel pressure to fit in and play soccer and things but culturally people are working so hard a lot of people aren't teaching them these sorts of things and it's scary that you think 20 years from here the Mosque will be empty. And as the older people get older we need to learn as much as possible about it. You find a lot of parents aren't as strong believers but the culture is flourishing and the kids want to learn - they are like sponges e.g. learning how to play the Malay drums gave the kids a bit of pride – some of them don't want to wake up to it...They don't want to be different...but they'll probably come back to it.

We say know who you are, know where you come from...it's just one of those things – being proud of your culture, that's all.

Having a religion is a boundary for many kids.

It was felt that many people from CaLD backgrounds "keep to themselves" and expressed concerns regarding the potential impact on wellbeing of both cultural and geographical isolation. On the other hand, it was suggested that each CaLD community has its own support network to assist its members:

Thai, Indonesian...each community has a support network. They look after themselves.

Lack of family support due to the small number of members in some CaLD groups could increase the experience of cultural isolation.

Participants also felt that there is a lack of cultural understanding within the general community. This was most starkly demonstrated in an incident in which a group of migrants from Pakistan were racially abused and attacked with stones at a local beach. Incidents of "bullying on a racial basis at school" were also mentioned although accompanied by some tolerance:

There will always be an issue out there – kids fighting, bullying through religion or just being mates.

Some participants suggested that the attitude of some people from CaLD backgrounds made integration difficult.

It was felt that there is currently a communication gap in terms of a mechanism through which to promote groups and establish "cohesive communication" between groups. It was noted that the Town of Port Hedland

does not have enough information on cultural groups to play an active role in addressing this; however, the Town is working on a Cultural Plan and it was anticipated that these issues could be addressed in the Plan:

..[by establishing] a clear set of goals, strategies and different tasks we can try and eliminate some of the issues of isolation and difficulty in integration.

Current activities to celebrate cultural diversity and encourage connections between members of CaLD groups and the wider community included Harmony Week celebrations, a 'multicultural lunch' organised by Frontier Services in May each year and cookery workshops.

It was envisaged that the Plan would become a 'building block' for work with CaLD communities by mapping the various cultural groups living in the area and identifying their various celebrations.

Other ways to improve integration suggested include:

- Imposing a greater obligation on employers "to identify services they can tap into to ensure employees are well settled and what services are needed and available to them";
- establishing a pool of volunteers to engage others in the community;
- cultural awareness activities for all cultures;
- making the most of days of cultural celebration such as Harmony Week, Citizenship ceremonies and other significant multicultural days;
- positive media promotion such as a feature article in the local newspaper focusing on the town's cultural diversity, cultural groups, and available services; and
- encouraging employers to connect more strongly with CaLD communities:

If the companies would recognise their employees and their connections to various ethnic groups so that they know what to expect/do if there is a death or emergency with someone in a particular ethnic group as there are different ways of grieving or preparation. For example, in a death how to prepare the body in the cultural way.

3.2.6 Fly-in/Fly-out

Conversations at the consultation frequently returned to the impact of the unique nature of communities dominated by a fly-in/fly-out workforce which participants believed greatly affects the community's sense of family and place.

It was felt that, although the mining boom had had benefits for the State, little of this had been directed towards the towns in the region. While the town had to cope with the demands of an increased population - the fly-in/fly-out workforce - it did not benefit from any increase in rates to pay for the necessary infrastructure and services.

It was noted that, while a fly-in/fly-out workforce consumed many community resources it does little to contribute to it:

For example, they don't volunteer at football fields, don't help at the fire brigade.

Participants noted that the mining industry placed pressure on housing and the cost of living. Hotels are often used to house workers, leading to a dearth of accommodation for tourists and other visitors to the town.

Participants also felt that the fly-in/fly-out workforce "robs" people of regional representation – although workers spend much of their time in the region, they cannot influence the region politically as their vote only counts in their place of residence. As one participant commented:

Money follows votes.

4. BROOME

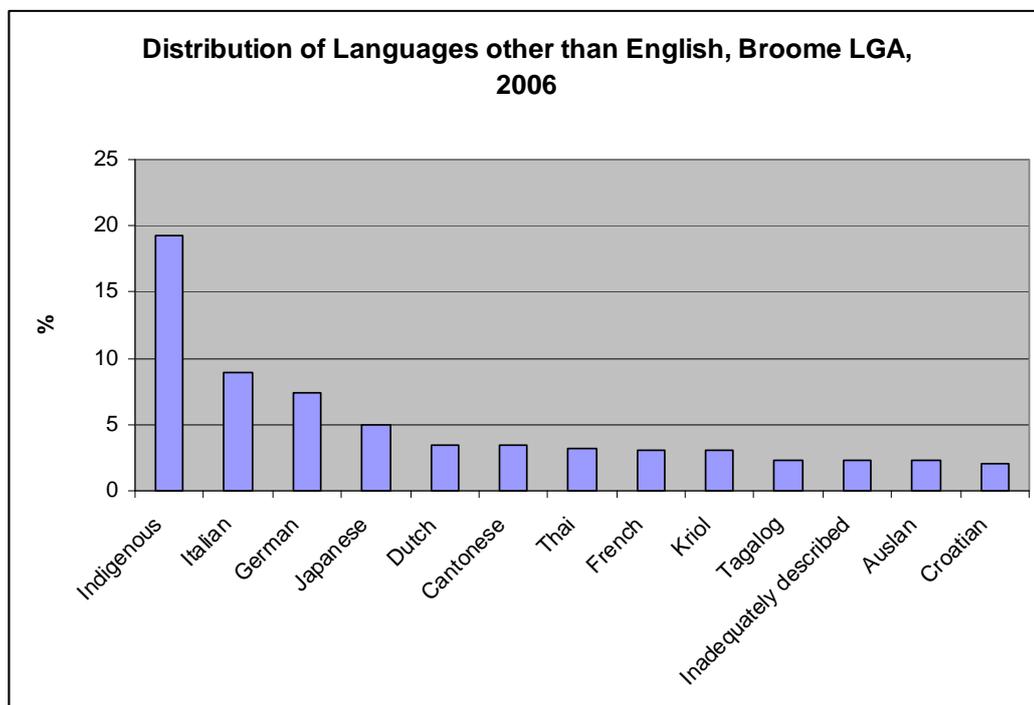
4.1 Introduction

Broome is best known as a tropical beach tourist destination and gateway to the Kimberley region.

Since the start of the pearling industry in the late nineteenth century, the population of Broome has been a culturally diverse community including European, Malay, Japanese and Aboriginal peoples. According to the 2006 Census, the population of the Broome LGA was 14,436. A total of 435 people (3.3%) were born overseas in a non-main English speaking country and 27.3% of the population were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

People from non-main English speaking background countries came from Germany, the Philippines, Netherlands, Italy, Singapore, Thailand, India, Zimbabwe, China, Sri Lanka, Finland and Malaysia.

Nearly 5% of the population (621 people) spoke a language other than English at home. Of these, the main languages spoken were Indigenous languages (19.2%), Italian (8.9%) and German (7.4%).



Major religious affiliations were with the Christian faiths (50.7%), Buddhism (0.9%), Islam (0.3%) and Hinduism (0.1%). Key multicultural groups include the Broome Multicultural Society, Shinju Matsuri and Te Waaka Kiwi Club.

4.2 Issues

Unlike Karratha and South Hedland, the Broome community is not dominated by a fly-in/fly-out workforce or the mining industry, although resource developments are having an increasing impact on the area. Broome also differs from Karratha and South Hedland in having a long-standing multicultural community and history.

However, the consultation in Broome revealed concerns that were common to those in Karratha and South Hedland, including:

- the high cost of housing;
- limited public transport;
- geographical isolation;
- a largely transient workforce; and
- the need for local infrastructure to cope with regular increases in population who are non-ratepayers. (In Karratha and South Hedland, these are the fly-in/fly out workers; in Broome they are tourists).

Other specific issues facing CaLD communities in Broome differed slightly from those of Karratha and South Hedland.

4.2.1 Service Delivery

a. Coordination and resourcing

Participants felt that, while resources are available for Indigenous programs, little is provided to support members of CaLD communities. For example, unlike Karratha and Port Hedland, the town has no specific CaLD service provider. It was noted that Circle House, a neighbourhood centre, took on this role informally in the absence of any other service and because it was often the first place people visited. However, the centre is largely run by volunteers and has limited resources.

Both government and non-government agencies expressed a need for additional resources to cope with demands on services, commenting that agencies are “over-stretched”. This limits their ability to respond fully to the needs of the community. For example, it was noted that, even though a parenting service is available for all residents there are not enough CaLD staff to take into consideration the cultural differences in child rearing or to provide a home visiting service for parents.

It was also noted that agencies lack time to connect with communities, identify needs, and plan for appropriate service delivery. Instead, agencies tend to be reactive, responding to crises. Comments included:

Services are flat out like a lizard drinking trying to get their core business done.

You don't know what the gaps are until someone hits the wall and comes to you.

Participants identified a need for a central service delivery point for CaLD residents and visitors which would provide information, language services and other relevant assistance as well as coordination between relevant service providers.

Concerns were expressed regarding the provision of interpreting and translating services particularly in the context of emergency management; for example, conveying evacuation procedures to people who do not speak English well or at all. It was suggested that, as a first step, Fire and Emergency Services (FESA) publications could be translated into languages other than English.

Participants also commented on the challenge for the Shire of Broome in meeting the needs of the community, including the specific needs of people from CaLD backgrounds, through existing resources. It was noted that the seasonal influx of tourists to the town puts increased pressure on local infrastructure which must be met through an existing, and relatively small, rate-payer base.

Participants identified a need for:

- funding to provide services and resources to CaLD groups, for example, through a “multicultural centre”;
- a way to collect information about tourists, visitors or new residents in terms of their cultural and language needs, for example, through the Shire’s residents survey (last conducted in 2007) or its planned Social Infrastructure Impact Assessment and Forecast;

- additional staff in both government and non-government agencies, in particular, to provide outreach services to and connect with communities;
- multicultural workers and cultural awareness training for staff at the local hospital;
- more English classes;
- increased use of the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) by agencies; and
- collaboration between relevant service delivery agencies.

b. Awareness of available services

Concerns were also expressed regarding the limited information about services and programs available to people from CaLD backgrounds and a central information point to disseminate information to CaLD communities. The local library was also identified as one source of information for CaLD communities. In recognition of the town's cultural diversity, the library holds resources in a variety of languages. Given the relative popularity of the library amongst the CaLD communities, it was suggested that this could be an appropriate location for a "multicultural centre".⁴

Other suggestions were for:

- a "new to town" morning tea at which relevant information could be provided; and
- for agencies to engage members of CaLD communities as volunteers to provide information to different communities.

c. Workforce challenges

Concerns were also expressed regarding the transient nature of the local workforce and the impact this has on the continuity of service delivery.

4.2.2 Community Integration

While Broome is well-recognised as a multicultural community, participants felt that there is a lack of initial engagement with CaLD families new to the town:

...new families relocating have limited opportunity to engage with different agencies and service providers...

There was a perception that communities tend to be isolated and that there is a need for more opportunities for people to connect on an informal basis to encourage a sense of belonging. While cultural diversity is visible, it was noted that there do not seem to be many identifiable CaLD organisations to support their communities or provide opportunities for social activities.

Although the annual Shinju Matsuri Festival was well known as a celebration of Broome's multicultural community and those involved in the early years of the pearling industry, it was felt that more could be done to recognise, support and promote the benefits that cultural diversity and the town's CaLD communities have brought to the town:

The Japanese cemetery is great but is subsidised by the Japanese. What does the Shire do for the others – like the Muslim cemetery which is dreadful.

[Broome] needs a cultural centre to acknowledge what has been here.

Arts and culture are not a priority but it's what makes the town.

Ways to encourage integration suggested include:

- a "Welcome to Broome" morning tea or weekend to connect newcomers and inform them of available services and groups;

⁴ While it was considered that the library is relatively well-used by CaLD residents, concerns were expressed that the local Indigenous community does not access its services, perhaps because Indigenous languages are not written languages. One strategy to address this is for the library to employ an Indigenous staff member.

- “Welcome” signs in different languages posted in relevant agencies;
- ongoing community “get-together” functions to encourage connections between various groups and the wider community; and
- celebration of days of significance for different communities and events such as Harmony Week.

5. THEMES AND LESSONS

5.1 Themes

Issues common to all three towns were as follows.

2.1 Service Delivery

Issues relating to service delivery and access to services were common concerns. Participants reported issues including:

- lack of awareness of available services by people from CaLD backgrounds. This is exacerbated:
 - for those with low levels of English language proficiency; and
 - by the dispersion of services throughout the towns. Participants identified a need for the co-location of services in a “one-stop shop”;
- lack of settlement services, including limited assistance for people seeking information and support regarding visa and migration issues;
- lack of planning for the delivery of services to people from CaLD backgrounds specifically;
- frequent turnover of staff which impacted on the quality and continuity of services;
- transport difficulties due to limited public transport services; and
- difficulties identifying and reaching representative CaLD organisations and members of CaLD communities.

Participants also noted that the high cost of rental property significantly impacted on the capacity for non-government organisations (NGOs) not only to secure adequate and appropriate premises but also on the range and scope of services that could be provided once rental costs had been paid. The relatively low salaries paid within the non-government sector also limited the extent to which NGOs were able to attract and retain staff.

2.1.1 English Language

Lack of English language support was a key concern. Specific issues included:

- difficulties accessing available English language classes for those working long shifts;
- lack of English language support, including for children at primary and secondary school level and in the workplace; and
- lack of access to translated material and interpreting and translating services.

Lack of proficiency in the English language impacted on:

- understanding of rights and laws, for example, in relation to domestic violence;
- occupational health and safety risks;
- the effectiveness of emergency management;
- access to available support services and programs; and
- social isolation.

2.2 Community Integration

Participants at consultations in all three towns highlighted the need for more celebration and awareness raising regarding the benefits of cultural diversity and more opportunities for members of CaLD communities to mix with the wider community. Incidents of racism and discrimination were reported in Karratha and Port Hedland. Participants asserted that such behaviour often appeared to be unintended and highlighted a lack of cultural awareness amongst the local community including employers and service providers.

Employers, local government and the media were all identified as having potential roles in contributing to the development of greater cultural awareness and promoting the benefits of diversity.

2.4 Accommodation

All three towns reported lack of available and affordable housing as a key issue. People from CaLD backgrounds could face particular difficulties accessing housing due to English language difficulties, lack of local networks and support services and discrimination in the housing market.

2.4 Limitations of Local Resources

All three towns reported the challenge faced by their local governments in meeting the needs of the community, including the specific needs of people from CaLD backgrounds, through existing resources. In Karratha and Port Hedland, the existence of a fly-in/fly out workforce carried with it the burden of a demand on local resources and a relatively small rate-payer base, for supportive infrastructure without an associated investment in the community by these workers. Broome experienced the same challenge in dealing with a seasonal influx of tourists to the town.

5.2 Evaluation

Following each consultation, participants were asked to provide feedback on the presentations, quality of discussion and overall organisation. A total of 42 participants (78%) completed the questionnaire.

Forty one respondents (98%) found the discussion relevant. Of the 40 people who responded to the question, 39 respondents felt that their views were heard.

Of the 37 people who responded to the question, 36 respondents (97%) valued the consultation program as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Comments highlighted participants' views of the value of the consultation as well as the opportunity for networking with other members of their community:

This was an excellent forum for discussion and the content was relevant and interesting.

Great variety of views and solutions.

I came to listen to others and the gentle structure of the session facilitated this objective by allowing people to speak freely and build on each other's comments organically.

Excellent forum to explore ideas.

Facilitators were open, friendly and ran to good time.

Great to meet other stakeholders working in this area.

Other comments highlighted the need for the consultation to lead to action to address the issues raised:

Need to move from consultation to strategy policy action.

Issues not discussed - An outline of strategies and budgets available to meet and/or close gaps.

Qualitative feedback indicated that the key area for improvement related to publicity of the consultations. Comments included suggestions regarding ways to attract a greater number and range of participants:

Wider community invitation.

Maybe you should advertise more to get more of a representation.

Publicity in all papers and magazines of Karratha.

Publicize widely and in many different channels – newsletters are good as they are read regularly e.g. school newsletters, small business centre, and social and recreation groups. The more people that attend and meet you the better.

It may be a good idea to market this consultation (advertising method) in different languages. Some CaLD groups may not read and understand English.

Meeting in informal situation i.e. coming up in an evening and coming to a sun downer to meet more migrants. Many migrants are too shy to come to formal events.

Contact major companies and have them send as many representatives as possible to attend. Their people know what needs to be addressed.

Surveys to be held in different areas of town (e.g. visitor centre, shopping centre, school) if these are not being held.

In addition to written format, verbal surveys and community group meetings (e.g. business groups, religious gatherings) may be an ideal way to include general community.

Participants revealed a desire for more consultations of this nature and continued contact with OMI:

More consultations like this please.

More visits and support during our cultural mapping.

Continual communication with OMI.

Maybe start a telephone branch, etc.

What is the region by region strategy from the policy/s for Pilbara, East Kimberly/Lower East Kimberly e.g. Wyndham vs. Broome. The needs are different.

The following topics for future consultations were suggested:

Follow-up, information and pre-implementation presentation.

Giving information on immigration.

457 dependent visa - employment opportunities; fees for further studies.

A separate session for employers and a separate session for employees.

Language in the workplace – understanding all those signs and forms.

Supporting unemployed women from the CaLD community.

Transportation services to be provided for the Pilbara.

More affordable accommodation.

6. KEY ACTIONS

OMI will undertake the following actions to initiate responses to the issues raised.

Service Delivery

- Forward a copy of the report to the Shire of Roebourne, Town of Port Hedland and Shire of Broome suggesting that consideration be given to:
 - developing a 'Welcome Pack' for new arrivals to raise awareness of available services for people from CaLD backgrounds;
 - establishing mechanisms for collecting information regarding CaLD organisations and liaising with representatives regarding the needs of CaLD communities;
 - facilitating networking sessions between service providers and CaLD communities;
 - collecting statistical information based on core and standard sets of cultural and language indicators to identify requirements for programs and services and gauge levels of need; and
 - acknowledging and highlighting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community in planning documents such as corporate and strategic plans.
- Distribute the Directory of Services for New Arrivals to key service providers and promote available services on the OMI website.
- Forward a copy of the report to DIAC, highlighting:
 - the need for increased servicing of the region in relation to immigration information and advice;
 - concerns regarding the accessibility of information on the DIAC website; and
 - concerns raised regarding domestic violence issues faced by spouses of sub-class 457 visa holders.
 - Forward a copy of the report to the Department for Child Protection, highlighting concerns regarding domestic violence issues faced by spouses of sub-class 457 visa holders.
- Write to the Drug and Alcohol Authority regarding issues raised in relation to substance abuse.
- Forward a copy of the report to the Department of Transport, highlighting the transport issues raised.

English Language

- Forward a copy of the report to Karratha TAFE, Pilbara TAFE and Broome TAFE, highlighting concerns regarding the availability of English language classes.

Community Integration

- Encourage relevant local governments to support the integration of people from CaLD backgrounds into the wider community through initiatives such as:
 - 'Welcome Morning Teas' to connect new arrivals to members of the wider community and service providers'
 - 'Welcome' signs in key locations, such as libraries and community centres;
 - promotion of occasions for cultural celebration, such as Harmony Week'; and
 - establishing a pool of volunteers to 'buddy' or 'mentor' new arrivals in the community.

Accommodation

- Forward a copy of the report to the Department of Regional Development and Lands, highlighting the relevance of the Karratha Service Workers Accommodation project, part of the Royalties for Regions program, to the needs of residents in South Hedland.

Limitations of Local Resources

- Encourage relevant ethnic organisations to apply for OMI Community Grants Program, LotteryWest, Healthways and Royalties for Regions funding to meet the specific needs of people from CaLD backgrounds.
- Encourage local governments to auspice funding applications for non-incorporated ethnic organisations to support local projects.