

# WACOSS

## *Building Networks*



wacoss

Western Australian  
Council of Social Service Inc

*Ways to make  
a difference*

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## **Introduction**

This report identifies the importance of and opportunities for involvement of WACOSS with culturally and linguistically diverse <sup>1</sup>(CALD) communities and their related non-government community services in Western Australia.

The report provides a context for future engagement, collaboration and the development of social policy problem solving partnerships and will further assist WACOSS to refine services that are appropriate and accessible to all members of the community. In particular the report will contribute to the collaborative process between the Government and the community services sector to develop the State Government Industry Plan and proposed Industry Council.

While the focus of this report has been on State and Commonwealth Government policies, it is vital that further work be undertaken to extend this connection of people and representative agencies to the private sector. In a (mixed) market economy, the linking of marginalised people to economic opportunities must be one of the key objectives of agencies across the community services sectors.

The report includes a brief overview of CALD community service organisations, current research on CALD barriers and issues, models of good practice and a set of recommendations based on the outcomes of the WACOSS 2005 - 2008 Corporate Plan.

### **Project aim**

The project aims to explore strategies for WACOSS to build networks with culturally and linguistically diverse communities across Western Australia.

### **Project methodology**

- To conduct a diversity audit of relevant WACOSS documentation and publications (strategic plan, policy processes, organisation and development services, projects, evaluation tools, and membership services)
- To undertake interviews with the President, Executive Director, and the Team Leaders of Social Policy and Member and Sector Development
- To undertake a face to face stakeholder consultation with relevant representatives of the CALD communities (to be held at the forthcoming WA Centrelink Multicultural Consultative Forum)
- To prepare a final report with recommendations for adapting policies and introducing strategies to address any identified gaps

## Overview of WACOSS' Work

### Vision

WACOSS and our members share a vision of a socially just and sustainable West Australian society where people care for each other and have access to the resources and opportunities necessary for their wellbeing.

### Mission

- To achieve our vision of a just and sustainable society WACOSS seeks
- To be an effective influence on policies that promotes the wellbeing of West Australians
- To contribute to the existence of an effective and vibrant community services sector
- To contribute to an informed public opinion on social issues

As the peak body of the non-government community services sector, WACOSS plays a crucial role in reflecting the needs of the sector and their clients to government, business, media and the community. Since 1956 WACOSS has been working to improve the quality of life of people disadvantaged by the inequities of our society.

Our members are at the forefront of the community services sector serving the social needs of Western Australians, with WACOSS providing a central advocacy, training and support link to ensure a strong, united and informed voice for the sector.

WACOSS is able to achieve its mission and vision through three key areas of service delivery: - Social Policy, Member Services and Organisation Development Services. The Social Policy Unit undertakes advocacy, research and policy work. Member Services ensures that our members, regardless of size, have input into social policy and access to services that can assist their organisations to operate more efficiently. Organisation Development Services provides a range of training and consultancy services to build strong well-managed, lively organisations.

WACOSS has a role to work in partnership to ensure the voice of the CALD communities in the sector is heard and that their diverse service and support needs addressed. WACOSS' work with CALD communities falls into the following categories:

- Initiating and responding to social policy solutions to address inequities of opportunity for CALD people
- Supporting capacity building activities with the diverse NGO sector to ensure there is on-going viability and sustainability, of services to their communities

- Supporting networks for collaborative work in the sector, especially in relation to social planning, sector development and advocacy

In recent years WACOSS has endeavoured to consciously incorporate CALD issues and concerns in a broad range of policies and programs, including the regional networks project, emergency relief sector support project, Creative Volunteering, and the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission, pre-election campaign, policy development, and advocacy, stakeholders and peaks communications.

WACOSS provides support and access to training and development activities through customised consultancy services and by providing information and showcasing current and emerging issues at the bi-annual conference. In addition special projects have further enabled WACOSS to deliver the broadest range of training workshops, seminars and forums to those involved in supporting the CALD communities across WA.

### **Policy Context**

The aim of this project is to build stronger networks with the CALD communities and it is therefore important to understand both the national and state policy drivers.

The Western Australian Government has a number of relevant laws and policy statements including:

- The state and federal legislative framework including the *Racial Discrimination Act (1975)*, the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act (1986)* and the *Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act (1984)* prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent, ethnic, religious conviction or national origin or nationality in employment, education and/or the provision of goods or services.
- *The Western Australian Charter for Multiculturalism* is designed to promote participation in all aspects of society of Western Australians from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, religious and linguistic backgrounds. The Charter rejects the universalistic or 'one size fits all' approach, proposing instead that policy, planning and delivery of services must be framed to cater for difference.
- *The Policy Framework for Substantive Equity* was established in 2005 to ensure that public sector policies, practices and services are responsive to the needs of Western Australians and the removal of systemic racism.
- The Department for Community Development, *Cultural Diversity Policy and Strategic Framework 2006-2009*, *Partnership in Social Policy*. The framework requires a commitment for DCD funded agencies to enhance its relationship and strategic partnerships with CALD communities.

- The *Industry Plan for the Non-Government Human Services Sector*, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, June 2004.
- *Western Australian Government Language Service Policy* (2000) - presently under review.
- The *Community Sustainability Agenda WA*. The founding organisations, Council of Churches of WA, Ethnic Communities Council of WA, Environmental Alliance, Unions WA, WA Council of Social Service and the WA Sustainable Industry Group and ATSIC have committed to working together to help shape and promote sustainability in Western Australia.
- The Australian Government's policy, *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity* (Commonwealth of Australia 2003) and the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*, (DIMIA 1998)<sup>2</sup>, include, prompting community harmony, increasing the responsiveness to public administration to the needs of the CALD community and optimising the social and economic benefits of cultural diversity.
- The DIMIA *Review of Settlement Services* (2003) also recommends that specific settlement services for migrants be focused on humanitarian and refugee entrants who have been here for less than five years and on family entrants with low English proficiency. All other members of CALD communities, including newly arrived skilled migrants, are expected to access services via mainstream agencies.<sup>3</sup>

## **Community Policy, Services and Organisations**

### **A brief overview of the culturally and linguistically diverse community services sector**

The diverse CALD non-government community services sector is organised and funded by local, state and federal governments. Across the sector there are many funded and unfunded mainstream and ethno-specific organisations responding to the issues and needs of the community with a broad range of identified delivery outcomes. These include small and large community not for profits, ethno-specific community groups, religious groups and peak bodies specialising in advocacy, language services, disability, seniors, women, sports, domestic violence, health, childcare, aged and youth religious issues.

Ethno-specific services tend to be specialist providers of support and advocacy on behalf of the members of a particular ethnic or religious group, for example the Polish Community Council, Chung Wah Association and the Muslim Women's Support Group. Many of these community groups are run largely or entirely by volunteers and are pivotal in providing personal support, connecting their communities and sustaining links to all levels of government.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMI) is responsible for delivering a diverse range of policies, information and services to support settlement of new and emerging humanitarian community groups and newly arrived migrants. These include community settlement agencies, funding of NGO organisations such as the Association of Survivors of Torture and Trauma (ASSeTTs), Communicare, Catholic Migrant Centre and the Migrant Resource Centres. These NGO's typically deliver support services, trauma counselling and multilingual information to a diverse range of refugee and humanitarian entrants, migrant groups and migrants living in regional areas.

CALD communities in Western Australia are not homogenous but are so diverse that it is difficult, if not impossible, to consider the needs of all CALD communities as having a common basis.

The larger more established CALD communities (eg the Italians, Greeks, Vietnamese, etc) have developed significant community infrastructure, including specialist ethno-specific services, cultural organisations, aged care and youth programs as well as ethnic newspapers and radio.

The new and emerging refugee and humanitarian communities (eg Bosnian, Sudanese, Somali and West African) from countries with relatively small numbers of people from a common ethnic group may be particularly disadvantaged, as they have yet to establish infrastructure within their communities. For these groups settlement is much more difficult without the support of a large network of community, family members, financially secure community members and businesses able to offer employment and support.

Many service providers, governments and peak organisations are often not easily able to identify the particular issues facing new and emerging groups - partly due to the small numbers of people involved and newness of the cultural exchange making it more difficult to obtain information about their needs. There is little evidence to show that these smaller CALD community groups are gaining access to broader community and capacity building support that will enable them to build effective governance systems, management structures, financial systems and leadership<sup>4</sup>.

There is a need for access to sustained coordinated personal and community resources to enable a range of capacity building activities to be developed. There is anecdotal evidence that mainstream and some CALD peak organisations do not yet represent or collaborate with the new and emerging humanitarian community groups, especially those from an African background. There are indications that given time and some encouragement this may change.

There is a potential for a more pro-active and direct engagement of the new and emerging communities and a very real and strategic reason for WACOSS to play a partnership and leadership role in this. In particular, WACOSS has the resources, networks and organisational capacity to assist in sector viability through the formation of a coalition of new and emerging humanitarian groups to maximise their effectiveness and input into future community services and government policy agendas.

### **Current CALD Issues**

The literature identifying the complex barriers CALD communities experience in contributing to social policy solutions, accessing services the broader community take for granted and engaging in their new community is prolific.

*Genuine consultation, however, cannot occur unless culturally and linguistically diverse communities have the capacity to participate in such processes. Genuine consultation cannot occur in the face of barriers such as language difficulties, unfamiliarity with the complexity of government policies and processes, and a lack of understanding of how to participate<sup>5</sup>.*

Much existing research has clearly identified the barriers to inclusion and personal/social progress to include:

- Communication barriers, including cross-cultural language barriers, the lack of multi-lingual information, problems with dissemination of information, use of jargon and lack of plain English information as well as lack of access to interpreters
- Institutional barriers, lack of information about the processes, attitudes of services, lack of access and technological barriers

- Mistrust, including fear of authority, perceptions of tokenism, disillusionment based on past experiences and 'feelings of powerlessness that decision-making is beyond their reach'<sup>6</sup>
- Many communities have been consulted continually and the need to constantly make the case for diversity and inclusion is causing frustration, tension, fatigue and burn out
- There are problems with the process of engagement and consultation techniques and many organisations do not fully explain their roles and services
- Lack of resources, many groups struggle to secure on-going funding especially groups in rural and remote communities. Once funding is secured problems with managing the funds and the acquittal process occur
- Overt and covert racism and systemic discrimination
- Cultural issues including understanding cultural diversity norms and values

A number of studies have identified the actions and strategies needed to promote awareness, knowledge and understanding of the needs of the CALD communities.

The Queensland Government has commissioned a report that identified three key changes that will enhance community engagement outcomes for the CALD community, including:

- Relationships - how do people interact with each other based on communication patterns and power issues?
- Mindset - what are the attitudes, open or unspoken norms?
- Organisational - are the structures facilitative or disempowering. What are the forms of communication
- Policies - what values/philosophies are dominant, how diverse are the staff, who are the managers<sup>7</sup>

## **Policy Framework for WACOSS Engagement**

Although the engagement of CALD communities must be considered within the specific context of each unique community, the following strategies will assist both organisational responsiveness and the capacity of communities to be recognised and to increase their representation and participation.

1. Understanding the CALD communities and their needs by having both accurate, up to date demographic information on the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community<sup>8</sup> and the diverse communities of interests.
2. Developing a communication plan to ensure the provision of culturally and linguistically relevant and accessible information. Much research has identified the most effective marketing and information dissemination process is with direct personal contacts with the community and the ethnic media is a good means through which to distribute information, as they are often the first point of reference for many CALD communities. The communication plan to incorporate use of plain English, avoid jargon and identify the availability of interpreters<sup>9</sup>, bilingual workers, use of ethnic radio, ethnic and community newspapers and translated material to advise the community/members about services.
3. Developing genuine culturally and linguistically appropriate community engagement processes that will ensure the early involvement in policy development cycle and decision-making; and assist with building trust, respect and breaking down barriers.
4. Developing policies and procedures to reduce inequality by recognising the rights of people. Central to this is developing an awareness of how systemic discrimination impacts on members/clients/consumers.
5. Developing an inclusive recruitment and retention strategy to ensure a diverse culturally sensitive workforce. Also consider the employment of bi-lingual/ bi-cultural staff that bring a wealth of skills and knowledge as well as language skills and cultural competency to an organisation.
6. Developing a diversity policy, grievance procedures and on-going cross-cultural training (understanding culture as it relates to self and others) as part of induction programs for staff and boards along with on-going education and awareness for everyone.
7. Appointing a diverse leadership team and/or board.
8. Developing an awareness of personal and organisational biases by continually monitoring the visible and invisible culture and work environment.
9. Developing good practice in collecting and analysing client data to identify under-representation and participation of CALD clients<sup>10</sup>.
10. Encouraging participation by developing strategic partnerships and consultation mechanisms, both formal and informal with CALD peaks, ethno – specific services<sup>11</sup>, community elders and community groups.

Such partnerships and collaborations offer both ethno-specific and mainstream organisations immense positive benefits for their staff and their clients/members.

11. Promoting the benefits of multiculturalism within the organisation and the wider community through activities and events, such as Harmony Day, UN Days, and National Days etc.
12. Developing multi-agency collaboration and co-ordination in policy and program development, service delivery, provision of information, resources and funding.
13. Monitoring policies and practices to ensure they meet the needs of CALD communities by undertaking regular diversity audits.

## **Focus Groups – Methodology**

A focus group questionnaire was undertaken with members of the Centrelink Multicultural Forum and included the following questions:

- Where/or how could WACOSS add value to NGO's supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities without duplicating other existing advocacy arrangements?
- What are the priorities in organisational development for NGO's supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities that WACOSS might be able to respond to?
- Within WACOSS's existing resource base and core functions, if three outcomes could be achieved from their work with NGO's that support culturally and linguistically diverse communities, what would they be?
- Any other comments?

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and used as a basis for interviews with the Executive Director, Managers, and President. A number of face to face and informal telephone interviews were conducted with other relevant stakeholders, such as ECCWA, DCD, academics, and CALD community representatives.

Questions were structured around the following issues and discussion points:

- Identifying potential barriers in accessing services and information for CALD communities
- Exploring WACOSS' approach to developing inclusive policy positions, services, information and projects
- The level of awareness and understanding of the CALD NGO sector and their issues amongst WACOSS staff, Policy Advisory Council's and Board
- Exploring potential strategies for improving services, information, policy statements, etc. targeting the CALD communities
- The potential development needs of WACOSS staff
- EEO policy commitment and leadership

## **Focus Groups - discussion and summary of interviews**

This section highlights comments about the ways WACOSS could further support, resource, collaborate and contribute to strengthening the skills and abilities of CALD individuals and communities.

Overwhelmingly respondents identified that responsive culturally sensitive capacity building initiatives will enable the CALD sector to take a more active part in the process of decision-making, advocacy, inter-agency collaboration, networking and leadership in the development of their own communities.

### **Across the sector WACOSS was identified as:**

- Having a leadership role in linking CALD communities to formal decision-making processes by giving voice to their concerns and enabling their voice to be heard
- Having responsibility for bridging and linking the diverse CALD NGO's, especially DCD funded groups, to enable engagement on emerging issues and concerns impacting on their communities
- Having a role in fostering a joined up approach to developing culturally sensitive social policy solutions in partnership with CALD peaks, NGO's and communities
- Working with member organisations, 'mainstream' peak bodies, service providers, communities and individuals to ensure their services and programs are culturally sensitive, more accessible and responsive for CALD communities
- Fostering stronger links between CALD communities and the Government by incorporating their present and future needs into peaks forum planning processes and sector reform processes, particularly in the areas of sector viability, welfare to work reforms, poverty, housing, homelessness, ageing and issues facing families in rural WA
- Delivering quality training, professional development, policy and research

### **Other issues**

Respondents highlighted the leadership role the non-government community services sector played in countering social exclusion, denouncing racial intolerance and inequality on the basis of race, religion and culture and wanted to see more pro-active collaborative coverage of these issues.

There was uncertainty about the extent to which 'culturally and linguistically sensitive approaches' had penetrated mainstream NGO's and community organisations. The importance for the 'mainstream' community services sector (especially the peaks and DCD funded agencies) to be more responsive to the needs of CALD communities was identified a number of times. There is a role for the key players in the sector to model 'good practice'

by developing diversity standards (for example diversifying boards and planning for changing population groups) in responding to the CALD communities.

The lack of 'visible' and collective community action and advocacy around issues and concerns impacting on CALD communities was identified.

The general lack of trust by CALD communities was identified as a barrier. Issues of disillusionment, frustration, feeling powerless and distance from the process of government decision-making and policy making were all identified. Much social policy development is viewed as being developed in a vacuum often with little regard for the insight, knowledge or perspectives of the CALD leaders and communities. Issues of timing, power, the need for two way communication, sustainability of outcomes were all raised.

Within the community services sector there is a 'perceived' lack of advice, information and support given to CALD NGO's, especially smaller community and representative groups. The lack of information and support prevents communities advocating effectively on behalf of their communities and contributing to social policy solutions that directly impact on their communities.

The specific issues faced by refugee and humanitarian entrants was identified, especially the provision of support and capacity building for newly established community groups who require information about the settlement process, their rights and the law in relation to lodging complaints of racism and discrimination.

The CALD community sector is very diverse with different ethnicities, cultures, religions, experiences, journeys and patterns of settlement. The small unfunded NGO's representing refugee and humanitarian entrants, especially those that provide informal support and services to their respective communities (West African Women's' Group, Sudanese Community Association, etc.), were identified as most in need of capacity building support. Many of these groups feel marginalised within the sector and have no formal support structure, yet provide some of the most valuable 'informal' community services. Many of the participants identified the need for mentoring with community consultations, strategic planning, governance training, developing conflict resolution skills, insurance cover information, training for community workers and support for newly established organisations. Participants were keen to explore the possibility of establishing a coalition of emerging groups representing the needs of new and emerging refugee and humanitarian communities.

The recognition that many unfunded small CALD representative community groups provide a 'service' while also providing 'informal services' and as such could be supported as part of the broad brush of community services. Also identified was the need to reduce isolation and duplication by having opportunities to network and collaborate.

There seems to be little opportunity for community partnerships and networking, and little opportunity for volunteers and workers to meet to build relationships, share knowledge, reflect on practice and exchange ideas from across the sector.

Advocacy and volunteering across the sector needs to be culturally appropriate, different CALD groups have diverse advocacy and volunteering<sup>12</sup> styles/ approaches. Future research is required along with the development of protocols.

The Emergency Relief Services (ERS) to include CALD, ECCWA, Centrelink and Multicultural Services Centres and explore increased funding to meet the needs of CALD communities with the Lotterywest. The current ERS information could also be translated and volunteers trained to meet the needs of the CALD communities.

General concerns about CALD consumers issues especially disputes and the lack of advocacy on their behalf was raised by a number of participants, as was the need for understanding CALD consumer needs, especially for those who speak a language other than English. The current 'perceived' fragmented nature of service provision and protection was inadequate to meet the needs of many new and emerging communities.

Addressing governance issues is critical to organisational effectiveness, ensuring accountability to members and stakeholders. However, it is clear from this project and other research that the needs of small CALD community groups, especially voluntary organisations, are not currently being appropriately met. Opportunities to build the capacity of small, new and emerging community organisations through governance training, assistance with planning, understanding funding sources was raised by a number of participants.

There were positive comments by mainstream and ethno-specific agencies about the potential benefits of the WA Collaboration project to 'provide a space for community engagement'<sup>13</sup> and to progress sustainable policy making in partnership with CALD communities.

Establishing links with philanthropic donors to support and sustain CALD communities was raised, as was the role of the WA Community Foundation in fostering such linkages.

Finally acknowledging the assets and strengths in the CALD communities will ensure a move away from a deficit model of viewing these communities.

### **Agency Capacity Building**

A range of comments highlighted the ways WACOSS could further build its internal capacity and operational culture to respond to the CALD communities, its members and other NGO's. A number of participants commented that WACOSS as an organisation is on a journey and it's timely to look at these issues in preparation for the roll out of the Industry Plan. Other issues about duplication and collaboration with relevant 'ethnic' peaks as well as the need to formalise contact was also seen as a priority.

Although lack of resources was identified as a barrier for WACOSS to develop a more inclusive approach, many of the report recommendations provide a framework, a set of steps to remind and assist the organisation move forward. Many of the recommendations are cost neutral and rely more on leadership and commitment in the form of coalition building, ownership, reviewing systems, practices and processes, building relationships and authentic engagement and continuous monitoring.

The capacity to deliver culturally responsive and equitable services has become increasingly important to many organisations. The level of cultural awareness (understanding culture as it relates to self and others) and willingness to engage are critical to developing partnerships and networks with CALD communities. Organisations do not exist in a vacuum and it is the staff who determine the operational culture and their impact on the communities they serve. Many WACOSS staff had brought to their jobs 'cultural capital' gained through study or previous work experience, but this needs continual updating to cover current and emerging information and trends.

A number of participants identified the need to nurture and invest in on-going staff/board awareness and sensitivity to diversity and to undergo induction and training on inclusive policy formulation, program design and service delivery within the context of a culturally and linguistically customer base. This along with general knowledge about the impact of migration, trauma and settlement would assist staff, regional committees, policy councils and the board's level of awareness.

To assist the organisation counter issues of social exclusion staff require access to the up to date information and facts to challenge the myths and stereotyping. Providing staff and member organisations with current factual information that demonstrates the facts about who gets what, where and why, is an important part of the social policy process.

An important part the staff development process was the flexibility to build formal and informal relationships with key community 'gatekeepers and elders'. As was the need for increased opportunities to develop a more proactive networking relationships and opportunities with CALD communities, NGO's and service providers.

A greater understanding of the demographic profile of the diversity of the community, along with a clear rationale as to why the organisation needs to collect the data and how it will be used was also identified. Such information, along with data about who is and who is not accessing WACOSS' services, and what the potential user group is, will identify if services are appropriate targeting CALD communities.

WACOSS' has high media profile which could be leveraged to raise specific issues that impact on CALD communities.<sup>14</sup> There are potential opportunities for reducing media competition by increasing collaboration to research and prepare joint media statements with relevant stakeholders such as ECCWA.

The policy making cycle (eg policy bank, policy statements, formulation and development cycle) to be both cultural sensitivity and produce improved outcomes that address and promote equality and inclusion for CALD groups.

Information technology (IT) plays a key role in engaging CALD communities, especially those in regional WA. The technological capability could be extended to include on-line services, such as access to member's chat rooms, showcasing inspiring examples of service provision and projects, sharing good practice and knowledge especially targeting the CALD community groups.

Having effective publications about WACOSS' role and services is very important as well as ensuring the information is presented in plain English and in a user friendly manner. Some of the titles for the organisational services, although catchy were not understood by some participants who spoke a language other than English. The provision of some printed multilingual information, TIS branding, the inclusion of key multilingual words on the front cover could also be explored. Having effective publications and organisational information is only part of the answer, marketing the information was also recognised as a challenge. Participants identified a variety ways that could be explored, such as coverage with ethnic radio programs 6EBA, SBS and ethnic newspapers.

The human capital of any organisation is its greatest strength and within the wider community services sector the issues of poor staff remuneration were identified as a barrier to recruiting CALD background staff. Past recruitment and retention strategies could be reviewed to identify barriers to recruiting and retaining CALD staff.

A number of comments were made about the need for WACOSS staff, board, and Policy Advisory Councils to reflect the diversity of the community it serves and avoid tokenism.

There is work to be done to ensure the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission process has a realistic consultation lead time with CALD organisations as many organisations and groups are un-resourced to carry out this task.

Access to adequate funding and resources are always a challenge and for WACOSS to meet the needs of the CALD communities secure on-going funding sources need to be tapped into as well as having the autonomy to direct its funding. The potential opportunities for developing multi agency funding partnerships to respond to complex nature of issues for CALD communities could be explored with DCD, OMI, DIMI, other government departments, peaks and relevant NGO's.

There was recognition that developing a more inclusive approach is a long-term process, which must be consistently reviewed. It is not a one-off effort which is quickly completed and comfortably incorporated. 'Cultural sensitivity' must become a part of the way WACOSS does everything, a continual dialogue and not a separate issue.

### **Conclusion**

The responses from the focus groups and interviews were positive and supportive of the WACOSS role and mission. The project consultation process has itself further raised the WACOSS profile and demonstrated its commitment to working with CALD communities.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are based on information from the focus groups, interviews, the diversity audit of WACOSS' policies, procedures documentation and publications and research. The recommendations build on WACOSS' achievements and provide a strong basis to move forward and to further contribute to good practice across the sector.

### OUTCOME 1:

**WACOSS leads the community services sector and influences government to develop policies that promote the wellbeing of Western Australians.**

- 1.1 Review the Policy Advisory Councils in consultation with policy council members, WACOSS staff, Executive Director, Board members, peak CALD NGO's. The review to assess effectiveness and capacity of the Council's to develop culturally appropriate policy positions and to identify a range of strategies to respond to representation, recognition, consultation, education and raising awareness.
- 1.2 The Policy Advisory Council members to undertake training in substantive equality, the WA Multicultural Charter and current research on CALD community issues and concerns.
- 1.3 Undertake a review of the WACOSS policy cycle by reviewing the existing policy bank to ensure all data is disaggregated by ethnicity<sup>15</sup>(race) and gender to enable more effective planning and service delivery improving the cultural appropriateness of policy by:
  - Ensuring issues and concerns of CALD communities are considered in planning and service delivery
  - Developing a human rights and substantive equality policy approach
  - Training staff in developing 'race-neutral' policy
  - Training relevant NGO's in policy development and advocacy
- 1.4 Review WACOSS' external links and sector committee representation to include one CALD peak.

- 1.5 Review formal and informal sector committee membership and relationships with key decision-makers to ensure they are inclusive of CALD issues (eg DIMI, Centre Link Multicultural Committee).
- 1.6 Conduct one policy conference, forum or seminar in partnership with CALD peak on an emerging social policy issue (eg welfare to work reforms, ethnic youth at risk; crime and safety issues).
- 1.7 Ensure key policy positions of children, poverty and sector viability reflect the views of stakeholders and members and are developed in partnership with CALD peaks and members.
- 1.8 Explore the potential of one social policy a year developed in partnership on a key issue for the CALD community.
- 1.9 Review the lead up to the development of the pre-budget submission to ensure relevant and current issues that impact on CALD communities is included. The review to include: revising the peaks/stakeholder letter to include issues of diversity and inclusivity; guidance to peaks about the importance of including CALD stakeholders as part of consultative and feedback mechanisms, and the importance of source of data that is inclusive of CALD issues.
- 1.10 Ensure the pre-budget submission uses plain English and is community friendly.
- 1.11 Develop a diversity policy checklist and set of standard for distribution at peaks forum, and the forum to have a standing agenda item on CALD issues and concerns.

#### **Performance Indicators**

- Policy Council outputs more inclusive of CALD social policy issues
- The knowledge and evidence informing social policy is inclusive of a diversity of issues and concerns
- Key policy areas of poverty, children and sector viability inclusive of CALD issues
- Improved quality of advocacy and lobbying on behalf of CALD communities
- The pre-budget submission delivered to government is inclusive of CALD community needs beyond issues of language

## **OUTCOME 2**

### **WACOSS leads the Community Services Sector in maintaining a vibrant, effective and sustainable sector**

- 2.1 Develop a reference group with DCD and DIMI to explore the establishment of a coalition of small new and emerging humanitarian community groups. The reference groups will review the service agreement; explore funding opportunities and ways to strengthen the groups by providing governance training, support, networking, mentoring and basic capacity building.
- 2.2 Explore funding opportunities in partnership with relevant groups for a CALD consumer rights program with the Department of Consumer Affairs.
- 2.3 Explore funding opportunities for a CALD safety awareness program with the Office of Crime Prevention or proceeds of crime grants.
- 2.4 Work in partnership with relevant peaks to ensure CALD members and NGO's are informed of the Industry Plan developments and that the roll out of the Plan is inclusive of their voices.
- 2.3 Explore linkages and inclusion for the CALD NGO's with the WA Community Foundation and other business partnerships.
- 2.4 Develop both informal and formal partnerships with key CALD peaks to discuss sector viability.
- 2.5 Develop opportunities for collaborative partnerships with small CALD NGO's to work in partnership and to support volunteers to be trained, mentored, share good ideas and exchange ideas from across WA.
- 2.6 Develop sector opportunities to showcase 'good practice achievements' by mainstream organisations, especially those who support CALD communities eg Meerilinga or Blue Sky Centre.
- 2.7 Explore the opportunities for on-line resources (some targeted at members) to provide bi-lingual information, chat rooms on key topics eg how to develop culturally inclusive NGO's, good project ideas etc, diversity information, links to relevant sites.
- 2.8 Develop a proposal in partnership with CALD peaks for a 2008 pre-conference workshop for CALD small and large NGO's at the 2008 WACOSS Conference.
- 2.9 Review the marketing of organisational and sector development services, to ensure compliance with plain English standards.
- 2.10 Demonstrate leadership across the sector on CALD issues by developing education, training and awareness for members and other relevant information that engages and increases the sectors awareness of providing inclusive services.

- 2.11 Review regional strategy to ensure linkages with CALD membership and stakeholders.
- 2.12 Implement the WA Multicultural Centrelink Forum recommendations regarding extending the Emergency Relief Program.
- 2.13 Include diversity, cross-cultural communication and CALD issues as part of future reviews of the seminar series.
- 2.14 Explore funding opportunities with the Department of the Environment, the Sustainability Unit and in partnerships with ECCWA to establish an Ethnic Sustainable Living Project.<sup>16</sup>
- 2.15 Develop linkages with the Northern Migrant Resource Centre's Leadership Program and explore opportunities for future collaboration and partnerships.
- 2.16 Review consultancy contracts to include requirement for contractors skilled in cross-cultural awareness and demonstrated knowledge and understanding of, and commitment to, State and Federal equal opportunity legislation.

#### **Performance Indicators**

- Sectors knowledge of CALD issues increased
- A coalition of small new and emerging humanitarian community groups established
- Increased networks with CALD communities and organisations that support their communities
- Future structural reforms inclusive of CALD stakeholders
- Training needs assessment includes CALD issues
- All skills development opportunities inclusive of CALD issues
- Sector guidelines for increasing board diversity developed and distributed
- Business community partnerships include CALD communities
- Regional networks inclusive of CALD stakeholders
- All WACOSS contractors and consultants aware of CALD issues

**OUTCOME 3**  
**WACOSS plays a significant role in informing public opinion on social issues**

- 3.1 Develop a communications strategy that enables a partnership approach to implementing adopted recommendations.
- 3.2 Review media policy and procedures with a view to increasing opportunities for working relationships with ethnic radio and relevant ethnic newspapers in partnership with ECCWA.
- 3.3 Review PowerPoint presentations to model inclusive practices, language and profile the issue and concerns of the CALD communities.
- 3.4 Develop partnerships with members/NGO's to deliver education and awareness on refugee issues, the proposed state human rights bill, racism and other relevant human rights issues.
- 3.5 Profile on e-news, information on interpreter services/TIS cards, diversity stories and successes and other relevant information to increase the sectors knowledge of CALD issues.

**Performance Indicators**

- Communication Plan endorsed by the WACOSS Board
- At least 3 media statements developed in partnerships with ethnic peaks or members
- WACOSS targets, with community partners, promotion and advocacy in ethnic/Indigenous newspapers and on ethnic radio
- WACOSS member's knowledge of CALD issues increased

## **OUTCOME 4**

### **WACOSS is a viable effective organisation**

- 4.1 Undertake a membership recruitment drive with CALD groups and communities.
- 4.2 Assist the staff, board and members build on existing skills, knowledge and ability in responding to CALD communities by:
- Training in cross-cultural awareness-raising (understanding culture as it relates to self and others) substantive equality and understanding the value of multiculturalism, diversity and Indigenous knowledge
  - Understanding the Charter for Multiculturalism (with OMI)
  - Understanding the needs, experiences and expectations of newly arrived migrants and the number, complexity and support of new and emerging NGO's (with DIMI)
  - Initiating a internal series of informal lunch time meetings with community elders and leaders to share their cultural, religious beliefs and community knowledge
  - Training staff on the use of interpreters and other methods of cross-cultural communication
  - Applying OMI standards for recording the cultural and language diversity to the training evaluations processes and other data collection processes
- 4.3 Review past recruitment strategies and develop a revised CALD/Indigenous recruitment and retention policy.
- 4.4 Develop a checklist and information on diversity on the board, for member organisations.
- 4.5 Encourage staff to carry WA interpreter pamphlets/card.
- 4.6 Prepare '*Welcome to WACOSS*' reception signage in major community languages.

#### **Performance Indicators**

- Increased membership of CALD groups
- Well-trained and supported staff and well resourced office
- WACOSS' office environment, seminars etc comfortable and welcoming for CALD members, clients and potential members

## Attachment 1

### Full Text of Focus Group Responses

A questionnaire was developed for the focus group meeting with members of the WA Centrelink Multicultural Consultative Forum.

The questionnaire included the following questions.

### **Where/or how could WACOSS add value to NGO's supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities, without duplicating other existing advocacy arrangements?**

- Advocacy –providing a conduit between NGO's and Government to challenge policy which has negative impact on migrants and refugees. Government employees are silenced through hierarchy and some NGO's are silenced by the threat of withdrawal of funding –consequently policy continues to be unchallenged
- Supporting agency connectedness
- Increase membership –providing details of member to others
- Web-site –include information on all members, with detail of services
- Forums and seminars
- Hold more forums to provide advice of service networks
- Mapping services, ascertaining gaps, collaborating services, looking at priority issues.
- Improve communications between agencies
- Education for interested groups on services available
- Coordinating
- Conducting research on the effectiveness of the services, propose recommendations
- To identify the emerging issues/trends directly impacting on CALD communities which are not addressed by any other NGOs, by research or doing research and networking
- Identify the emerging issues/trends directly impacting on CALD communities which are not addressed by any other NGO's by doing research and networking with CALD groups
- Interact with CALD communities such as settlement services, migrant resource centres, community groups
- Formal structure (eg MOU) to work –effectively with smaller agencies eg similar model to DVAS and ADVIP. WACOSS could provide a blanket/general supervision
- Inter-agency collaboration and networking
- Identifying broad-based issues and developing appropriate mechanisms
- Work closely with all stakeholders to identify issues and develop mechanisms of addressing those issues
- Information provision
- Awareness raising issues
- Continued consultation and representation to Government

- Information provision and awareness raising
- Consultation in a policy sense and feeding information to policy leaders
- WACOSS needs higher profile to promote to NGO communities
- Fee for services, could the NGO's afford through fees or is the fee negotiable

**What are the priorities in organisational development for NGO's supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities that WACOSS might be able to respond to?**

- Capacity building for NGO's-many small NGO's based in new and emerging communities lack management skills and knowledge of corporate governance and responsibilities required by WA legislation. Also skills required for applying for grants and promotion of those grants (i.e. what is available) is also needed –especially for non- refugee groups.
- How to move from dependence to independence
- Sustainability
- Advance knowledge to refugee groups of what to expect in Australia-so they are better prepared
- More education, training encouraging reflection, questioning existing practices
- Motivation and support for NGO staff maintenance and sustainability for services –so NGOs are being heard
- Lobby to raise funds for training and organisation assistance across agencies
- Regular information sessions-at the grass-roots level
- Meet with the community leaders to identify priorities with each community
- Central point of control for access to CALD communities
- Build on strengths
- Making sure CALD communities are aware of equal opportunities law and legislation
- Making sure that CALD communities are aware of EO/Law/legislation
- Provide a structure, formal support and supervision of smaller NGO's to assist in producing MOUs for smaller agencies to increase benefits to communities
- Providing community specific services such as provision of interpreters and culturally appropriate approaches
- Providing assistance in terms of language barriers eg interpreters and translators
- Explore partnerships opportunities
- Support agencies
- Partnering –letters of support –in reaction to finalising of projects

**Within WACOSS's existing resource base and core functions, if three outcomes could be achieved from their work with**

## **NGO's that support culturally and linguistically diverse communities, what would they be?**

- Achieve capacity building to extent that NGO's have the means to become self-supporting/self sustaining –financial management, communication liaison skills, in conflict resolution and promotion of community cohesion and profile
- Providing seminars and workshops on governance and sustainability
- Linking communities into philanthropic groups
- Ask communities themselves their needs –identify more closely with clients-empowerment requires linking to appropriate mentors
- Ensuring links with NGOs are more obvious so NGO's can feel they can access WACOSS's knowledge base and feel supported
- If WACOSS could provide training for NGO's
- How to incorporate or continue on from big forums eg forming sub-committees etc that NGO's can also participate in?
- Greater links with school to find out and act upon needs of children
- Policy
- Assisting in drafting policy
- Advocacy
- Lobby to raise funds to better support community through free talks to smaller NGO's
- Increase both service and the profile of migrant refugee families with children, recognise that children and their families have specific needs, not always met through working with adults
- Educate CALD groups of their rights and responsibilities
- Assist to address discrimination at workplace
- Assist NGO's to understand governance for CALD incorporated organisations
- Educate CALD groups of their rights and responsibilities
- Assist to address discrimination at the workplace
- Assist CALD NGO's to understand governance of CALD incorporated organisations
- Mentoring & support of smaller NGO's
- Advocacy between CALD communities? NGO's and government
- Strengthening of NGO's by knowledge of funding/building relationships with relevant government departments
- Help new and emerging communities integrate into the system
- Life skills training and career development
- Legal orientation
- Integration with other communities
- Training and career development
- Continued input into Government policy
- Any assistance to NGO's in grass-roots policy development
- Continued representation of smaller agencies
- Policy implementation support –policy development
- Representing NGO's to Government

- Better representation of smaller NGO's

### **Any other relevant comments?**

- Encouraging ethnically based NGO's to help their communities to interact more successfully, confidently and happily with the wider Australian community.
- Housing is an increasing problem-rental market is too expensive and undersupplied so ethnically different applicants can easily be excluded. Many refugees long for security of Homeswest rental.
- More realistic assessment on part of migrant and refugees of what to expect in WA
- More information on how WACOSS can help support NGO's
- WACOSS needs to meet grass-roots workers/communities
- Provide free feedback to participants who helped collect the info for WACOSS
- Ensure that migrant & refugee services link into services for children and families
- All in all new and emerging communities need intensive help with basic services
- Easy accessibility to NGO's, affordability, transparency. Update data base of service providers and mailing lists.

## Attachment 2

Representatives of the following agencies contributed ideas and information to the project. Many representatives were part of the Multicultural Centrelink Forum and others were contacted via telephone interviews and some face to face meetings.

Ljiljana Djordjevic- Business Manager, Multicultural Services, Centrelink  
 Julie Johnston - Business Services Officer, Multicultural Services, Centrelink  
 Terence Geiles, Australian Anglo-Burmese Society Inc  
 Dorothy Day, Jobs Australia (JNM) Midland & Morley  
 Zeljka Prodanovic, Multicultural Services Centre of WA (MSCWA)  
 Nikola Nikolich, Serbo Australian Community  
 Nikola Nikolic, Multicultural Radio & Television Association of WA  
 Donna Daniel, Learning Centre Link  
 David Marshal, FaCSIA  
 Gulnaz Sharif, CMC Centrecare  
 Karima Kakar, CMC Centrecare  
 Rebecca Smyth, Child Support Agency  
 Rita Titley, Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)  
 Zoila Wood, Ethnic Child Care Resource Unit (ECCRU)  
 Anne Norden, South West Migration Service  
 Dorothy O'Reilly, Department of Education & Training (DET)  
 Deng M. Koch, Australian Asian Association (AAA)  
 Abdulla Adam, City of Wanneroo  
 Krys Sprigg, DIMA  
 Veronica Bannon, DIMA  
 Dolly Holzinger, Burmese Association of WA  
 Cathie Plowman, St Vincent de Paul Society Refugee Group  
 Pina Catalano, Italo Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre  
 Peggy Bird, Australian Anglo-Burmese Association  
 Stan Mensik, Czech community  
 Kadi Ngele, Sierra Leone Community  
 Ellen Clair, Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES)  
 Rosemarie Helmerand, DEWR  
 Darryl Alexander, Centrelink Manager, Area WA  
 Ron Fernandez, Centrelink  
 Julie Yusop, Centrelink  
 Ruby Perera-Wagner, Centrelink  
 Giorgina De Freitas, Centrelink  
 Martin Gribbon, Centrelink  
 Leon Russo, Centrelink  
 Camille Le Geois, Centrelink  
 Julie Johnston, Centrelink Emeritus Professor D.L. Jayasuriya, The University of Western Australia (UWA)  
 Ramdas Sankaran, President of the Ethnic Communities Council (ECC)  
 Ruth Simms, West African Women's Group

Leena Baskhi, Department of Community Development  
Derek D'Cruz, Department of Community Development  
Rae Walter, President, WACOSS  
Lisa Baker, Executive Director, WACOSS  
Wendy Lamotte, Team Leader, Member and Sector Development, WACOSS  
Lanie Chopping, Team Leader, Social Policy, WACOSS

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<http://www.hreoc.gov.au>

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/askncvo/index.asp?id=568>

<http://www.immi.gov.au>

**All focus groups and interview comments have been collated and included in the relevant section of the report. No individual responses have been identified in the report and all completed focus group questionnaires are confidentially stored at WACOSS.**

**I would like to thank all those who contributed their time, energy and ideas to this project. Should you wish to discuss any aspects of the report please contact me via WACOSS.**

**Maria Osman**

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report the term **CALD** culturally and linguistically diverse is used. The term 'culturally and linguistically' (CALD) is often used to describe the complex, multilayered and multicultural nature of society. It applies to people who identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry/ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or languages spoken at home; or because of their parents. This term and others such as NESB (non-English speaking background) have limitations, and tend to focus on 'language' to describe people. Non-English speaking background, the definition is inexact, both in terms of those it wrongly includes and those it excludes, for example it often excludes Indigenous Australians and people from non-English speaking environments whose parents are English speakers. Although language may be the biggest barrier in providing sensitive services and information, other cultural and religious factors may also greatly affect access and equity in receiving services. Other important characteristics such as skin colour, religion and cultural values are also very relevant. It's important to stress that CALD communities are not a homogeneous group, and intersectional issues such as race, gender, age, disability, educational background, religion and socio-economic background are also part of identity.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.immi.gov.au/multicultural/\\_inc/publications/charter/charter.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/multicultural/_inc/publications/charter/charter.htm)

<sup>3</sup> DIMIA web-page-for the terms of reference.

<sup>4</sup> The Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre received funding under the Australian Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy to provide leadership training for ethnic communities in Mirrabooka and Cannington. The Leadership Development for New and Emerging Community Groups project will provide 200 people from new and emerging ethnic community groups with leadership training in governance, meeting procedures, effective project management and accountability, project evaluation as well as people's skills management.

<sup>5</sup> The University of the Sunshine Coast (2003). Cultural Diversity and Civic Participation in Queensland. Government of Queensland, pg. 26

<sup>6</sup> Ibid pg. 20

<sup>7</sup> Ibid pg. 23

<sup>8</sup> The Office of Multicultural Interests (2005). WA Community Profiles. Government of Western Australia Perth. [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au) (Accessed April 2006).

<sup>9</sup> The Office of Multicultural Interests (2005). Language Services -Interpreter Cards for staff to provide to clients and members. [http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi\\_publications.asp](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_publications.asp) (Accessed April 2006).

<sup>10</sup> The Office of Multicultural Interests (2003). Standards for Recording Cultural and Language Diversity. Government of Western Australia Perth.

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<sup>11</sup> The Office of Multicultural Interests (2005). Directory of Services for New Arrivals in Western Australia. Government of Western Australia Perth. [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au) (Accessed April 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Volunteering WA has established a CALD Project.

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13 Hodgson, N. Halpin, D. and Buselich, K (2003). *Governing for Sustainability: The Role of the WA Collaboration in Western Australia*. Pg. 3.

14 Participants in the Human Right and Equal Opportunity - Isma consultations felt that biased and inaccurate reporting of issues relating to Arabs and Muslims is commonplace among some sections of the media and is extremely damaging. Consultation participants saw the development and implementation of strategies to challenge stereotyping in the media as essential to achieving the broader goal of eliminating prejudice and discrimination against Arab and Muslim Australians.

15 see OMI's, *Standards for Recording Cultural and Language Diversity*, 2001

<sup>16</sup> To be modeled on the project developed by Ethnic Community Council of NSW's and the Department of Environment and Sustainability. The project which aims to promote awareness, knowledge and understanding among specific ethnic communities about ways to live more sustainably at home, leisure and work; facilitate behaviour change by promoting simple practical ways for people from ethnic communities to live sustainably through running education sessions in community languages; encourage deeper involvement in sustainability issues through promoting community development activities about living sustainably with interested ethnic groups; build the capacity of local councils in both metropolitan and regional centers to develop and deliver environmental education to ethnic communities in their local government <http://www.eccnsw.org.au/> .