New multicultural policy for Australia

A new national multicultural policy which aims to maintain Australia as a socially cohesive and harmonious society was launched by the Australian Government last month.

The People of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy was published by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and outlines the principles and initiatives which will ensure government services and programs are responsive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The policy embraces four principles – celebrating and valuing diversity, maintaining social cohesion, communicating the benefits of Australia’s diversity, and responding to intolerance and discrimination.

One of the key initiatives of the policy is a commitment to strengthening the access and equity framework to ensure that government programs are responsive to Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD).

Queensland Health Multicultural Services Director Ellen Hawes said one of the key components of this initiative was the strategy of working with state and territory governments under the Council of Australian Governments to improve the collection of data on client services.

“By ensuring collected data can be disaggregated by markers of cultural diversity, such as ethnicity, languages spoken at home, and level of English proficiency, we will be better able to identify the specific health needs of CALD communities,” Ellen said.

“This initiative will have a positive impact on the health of CALD communities because it will allow Queensland Health to develop more effective, and better targeted strategies to overcome underlying health issues.”

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Bienvenido\(^1\)

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Queensland Health Multicultural Services newsletter.

First of all, I would like to pass on the condolences of the entire Queensland Health Multicultural Services team to all Queenslanders who were affected by the recent flooding and cyclone activity. It is extremely sad to see so many lives lost and people’s livelihoods affected.

I would particularly like to thank the Queensland Health Multicultural Services staff who, through their hard work, preparation and dedication, were able to ensure that the Queensland Health Interpreter Service was able to continue to function statewide during both the flooding and cyclone disasters.

I would also like to thank our contracted interpreter agency, ONCALL Interpreters and Translators, for providing emergency telephone interpreting services at no cost for people displaced during emergency operations.

One of the most encouraging things to see during the recent crises was the prominent place given to AUSLAN interpreters at the media conferences during the emergency.

This initiative was also well supported by the Bureau of Meteorology including the following message on each of its weather warning messages:

*Please ensure that neighbours have heard and understood this message, particularly new arrivals or those who may not fully understand English.*

It is great to see that the communication difficulties experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse communities were not forgotten during this time.

On a brighter note, a new national multicultural policy was launched by the Federal Government last month, aiming to ensure Australia remains a socially cohesive and harmonious society.

*The People of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy* reaffirms the nation’s commitment to multiculturalism and has some direct benefits for multicultural health in Queensland.

It is a step in the right direction for multicultural health in Queensland and I look forward to seeing the effect of the strategies outlined in the policy.

I hope you enjoy the latest issue of our newsletter.

Ellen Hawes
Director
Queensland Health Multicultural Services

\(^1\) Bienvenido is the Spanish word for welcome.
Effective emergency planning and the hard work of staff and interpreter service providers allowed the Queensland Health Interpreter Service to continue uninterrupted during the recent flood and cyclone emergencies.

The interpreter service experienced no major outages in services despite staff in many locations being unable to access their workplace during the floods and Cairns staff being evacuated in preparation for Cyclone Yasi.

Queensland Health Multicultural Services Principal Interpreter Quality Officer Angie Norris said preparations for coping with emergency weather events commenced in late 2010.

“With the advice that there was a significant likelihood of a Brisbane flood during summer, the Queensland Health Interpreter Service (QHIS) team developed an emergency plan to make sure that the service was not interrupted,” Angie said.

“The plan was coordinated with our interpreter service supplier, ONCALL Interpreters and Translators, and ensured that if district interpreter service coordinators were unable to access their workplaces, interpreter bookings would still be monitored and coordinated for their area.

“When major flooding affected almost half of the state, including the QHIS main office in Brisbane, we were able to call on staff from non-affected areas, such as Cairns, to cover and coordinate interpreter bookings.”

Angie said many of those who were affected in Brisbane and other regions were able to provide cover when staff in North Queensland were evacuated in preparation for Cyclone Yasi.

“Overall, it was a great team effort which involved the cooperation of Queensland Health staff from all around the state,” she said.

Angie said it was also necessary to recognise the important and generous role played by ONCALL Interpreters and Translators, who provided free emergency telephone interpreting services for people displaced during emergency and relief operations, even while their Brisbane office was directly affected by floods.

“Even though their own Brisbane office was directly affected, ONCALL were able to temporarily transfer operations to their Melbourne office. They even flew the manager of the Brisbane office down to assist Melbourne based staff to organise bookings for unfamiliar areas in Queensland.”

The Queensland Health Interpreter Service is a statewide service which provides more than 50,000 interpreter sessions to Queensland Health facilities each year.

For more information, call 3328 9879 or go to www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural.

Effective communication for CALD communities

The Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS) network has published a list of strategies which were effective in getting information about natural disasters to people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

The following strategies were effective for reaching people who were not exposed to mass media or traditional communications:

- Translation and distribution of materials on emergency preparations
- Using programs or organisations with existing contact with CALD communities as communication channels
- Including a request in official communications for people to assist neighbours who are recent migrants or not proficient in English
- Collaborating with local multicultural organisations

Go to http://tiny.cc/kpk8i for more information.

Disaster relief information in other languages

Disaster relief information has been translated into more than 30 languages.

Information about the Premier’s Disaster Relief Funds – Tropical Cyclone Yasi, a fact sheet about Disaster Relief Financial Assistance, and information about the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal is available from the Multicultural Affairs Queensland website.

Go to www.multicultural.qld.gov.au/community/disaster-assistance for more information.
New Cultural Diversity profiles

New and updated cultural profiles which aim to help health care providers understand the health needs of migrant communities are being developed by Queensland Health Multicultural Services.

The profiles form part of the Cultural Diversity: A Guide for Health Professionals resource, which was developed in 1998 in conjunction with the University of Queensland.

New profiles to be developed:
- Sri Lankan Tamil
- Afghani
- Burmese
- Sudanese
- Iraqi
- Burundian
- Ethiopian
- Indian
- Japanese
- Papua New Guinea
- Maori

Some of the existing profiles will also be updated to reflect the changing health status of each community since the profiles were developed.

Profiles to be updated:
- Australian South Sea Islander
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Hmong
- Filipino
- Samoan
- Vietnamese

The project is expected to be completed by June 2011.

Low awareness puts coronary heart disease patients at risk

Recent research by the Heart Foundation has shown that many patients already diagnosed with coronary heart disease (CHD), do not know the warning signs of heart attack.

Even though they are at greater risk of a heart attack, there is no difference in awareness of the various heart attack warning signs between people with CHD and the general population.

Alarmingly, CHD patients are also likely to delay in calling Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.

Many deaths and much of the illness that result from heart attack could be prevented if people knew the warning signs of heart attack and called Triple Zero (000) without delay.

This is the reason the Heart Foundation has developed a Will you recognise your heart attack? action plan and patient fact sheet to ensure that all patients with CHD and their families and carers:
- recognise the warning signs of heart attack
- know what to do if they recognise the signs
- understand the importance of acting quickly to reduce damage to their heart muscle and increase their chance of survival.

The action plan and fact sheet are available now in the following languages:
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Cantonese
- Greek
- Italian
- Vietnamese

These resources are available free of charge at www.heartattackfacts.org.au or by phoning the Heart Foundation’s Health Information Service on 1300 36 27 87.

Health professionals can access information and resources at www.heartfoundation.org.au/Professional_Information.
CALD sexual health survey

A new online survey which seeks to explore the experiences of organisations working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background has been launched by the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC) and the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ).

The survey, which is an initiative of the QAHC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Multicultural Action Group, will be used to better understand the needs of CALD organisations and services which work with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, and other sexuality, sex and gender diverse clients.

Topics covered in the survey include creating a welcoming environment; responding to clients; staff training; linkages to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community; staff within the service; and clients.

QAHC Executive Director Paul Martin said the mix of culture, religion, sexuality and gender can raise different issues for different people.

“Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background may be reluctant to talk about their sexuality or gender identity, especially if it is a taboo topic in their culture,” Paul said.

“Organisations that work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities may not have the confidence or the tools to support their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender clients. We want to understand what it’s like for those organisations working around these issues so we can better support them.”

ECCQ Executive Manager Ian Muil said sexual health is an area of particular importance, but sadly, one most often ignored or overlooked.

“As a result of our strong partnerships with stakeholders such as QAHC, we are delighted to support this initiative,” Ian said.

“We encourage all those agencies which work with CALD communities to complete this survey, as it will lead to improved information and improved services for people from a CALD background who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.”

CALD organisation staff, volunteers and management committee members are encouraged to complete the survey online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/CALDLGBT by 31 March 2011. Results will be made available by June on www.qahc.org.au/culture.

BRiTA Futures expands

The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre’s BRiTA Futures program has now been expanded to include a program specifically for adults and parents from a migrant background.

A pilot program began at the end of 2010, and will continue until April 2011.

The BRiTA Futures program aims to build the resiliency (inner strength) of migrants to help them to better cope with the stressful situations that come with the process of migration and resettlement.

The adults and parents program covers eight topics:
- Health and wellbeing
- The migratory process
- Cultural strengths
- Resiliency
- Social connections
- Communication skills
- Evolving roles
- Intergenerational relationships

Data collected from the pilot program will be analysed using the Adult Acculturation and Resilience Scale evaluation tool developed by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) School of Psychology and Counselling, and other validated evaluation tools.

The findings of the pilot program will be published and will form the foundation for a larger research proposal also being prepared in conjunction with QUT.

To register or for more information about session dates, please contact BRiTA Futures for Adults and Parents Project Officer Gilles Forget (Wed) or BRiTA Futures Program Coordinator Farah Suleman (Mon-Wed) on 3167 8333, email Gilles_Forget@health.qld.gov.au or Farah_Suleman@health.qld.gov.au or go to www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/qtmc/projects.asp#1.
Lifestyle program for CALD communities

The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) recently launched a new initiative which aims to support health care professionals to break down cultural barriers and to educate clients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds about chronic disease prevention and self-management practices.

The Living Well Multicultural lifestyle modification program uses ECCQ's trained Multicultural Health Workers to deliver group-based, culturally specific community engagement sessions for CALD populations on three key topics: chronic disease education, healthy eating and physical activity.

The initiative also aims to improve awareness of multicultural health among health care professionals, to provide greater opportunities for engaging CALD populations in chronic disease education, and to build partnerships with health care professionals to effectively target and deliver culturally appropriate health services to people from a CALD background.

ECCQ chronic disease program project officer Carolina Chirinos said health professionals using the service had found the assistance of the multicultural health workers to be beneficial.

“The multicultural health workers are able to act as a link between health professionals and CALD communities,” Carolina said.

“Health services have also reported that patients referred to the program have demonstrated a better understanding of their chronic conditions and the lifestyle changes which need to be made to improve their health.”

Living Well Multicultural is a Queensland statewide program that currently targets seven CALD populations:
- Arabic speaking
- Bosnian
- Indian
- Samoan
- Spanish speaking
- Sudanese
- Vietnamese

The program was developed by ECCQ in partnership with Queensland Health, Brisbane South Division, GP Partners and Moreton Bay General Practice Network.

For more information about this service or if you would like to refer clients to the program, please contact: Carolina Chirinos or Neila Helac on 3255 1540, email carolinac@eccq-cd.com.au or neilah@eccq-cd.com.au or go to http://www.eccq-cd.com.au.
Interpreter training at the PA

Interpreters at the Princess Alexandra (PA) Hospital have been receiving training in operating theatre procedures to help them to assist patients from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background who are undergoing surgery.

PA Hospital Operating Theatres Clinical Nurse Consultant Catherine Steel explained the various procedures to more than 30 staff and contract interpreters, providing them with important information which will allow them to provide more accurate interpreting services in surgery situations.

Brief interventions training for multicultural health workers

Nine Multicultural Health Workers from the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland received training recently to help them to assist clients from a culturally and linguistically diverse background to address harmful behaviours which affect health.

The Brief Interventions Workshop was provided by General Practice Queensland to health workers assisting the Arabic-speaking, Bosnian, Indian, Samoan, Sudanese, Spanish-speaking and Vietnamese communities, and provided workers with the skills and knowledge to conduct brief interventions with clients.

A brief intervention is a time-limited (5-30 minutes) interaction between a health worker and client focused on addressing hazardous and harmful behaviours which can lead to chronic disease or other health problems.

The health workers learned about the available brief intervention tools and resources, discussed the barriers and enablers to the uptake of brief interventions, and identified the referral pathways available for clients.

The training also explained the World Health Organisation Surgical Safety Checklist, which will be adopted in all hospitals Australia-wide by 1 July 2011. The checklist includes a core set of safety checks for use in any operating theatre environment.

The final part of the training provided interpreters with a guided tour of the PA Hospital operating theatre area.

This operating theatre and safety checklist training will soon be incorporated into Queensland Health Multicultural Service’s Interpreting Within a Health Context training.

This will ensure that all interpreters working with Queensland Health are able to receive the necessary training to provide interpreter services to CALD patients undergoing surgery.

Other recent interpreter training at the PA Hospital has included instruction in procedures from the Sleep Disorders Centre and the Speech Pathology unit.

Future training will include multicultural mental health services training from the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre and instruction in the working processes of the Hepatology and Pre-Admission Clinic.

Brief interventions training for multicultural health workers

The workshop provided the health workers with the opportunity to learn about brief intervention tools and resources, to recognise barriers and enablers to brief interventions, and to identify referral pathways to respond to client needs.

The workshop is part of the Brief Interventions Workshop project, which was developed by General Practice Queensland with funding from Queensland Health.

In addition to the face-to-face workshop, a DVD resource is available to organisations or services which are interested in providing brief interventions training in their own workplace.

The Brief Interventions: Do you know enough? Tools and Pathways to Support Patients with Lifestyle Risks DVD is available from General Practice Queensland.

For further information about the Brief Interventions Training Project or the DVD, contact Sabrina Ostowari sostowari@gpqld.com.au or Phillipa Grant pgrant@gpqld.com.au at General Practice Queensland on 3105 8300.
Multicultural health website update

CALD statistics updated
The Health Statistics Centre has updated its Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Population Profiles to reflect the current Health Service Districts.

The profiles contain information drawn from the 2006 census and cover topics such as ancestry, religious affiliation, English proficiency, country of birth and language spoken at home.

To view the profiles, go to www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health_workers/mc_profileHSD.asp.

Quick website facts
- Queensland Health’s Multicultural Health website was accessed by more than 23,600 unique visitors in 2010.
- The most popular resource was Cultural Diversity - A Guide for Health Professionals, which was accessed by more than 7700 unique visitors.
- The second most popular resource was the Health Care Providers’ Handbook on Muslim Patients which registered more than 4400 unique visitors since being published in August 2010.
- The most popular language other than English page was Tamil, which attracted more than 730 unique visitors. Arabic was a close second, with Chinese third.


Staff profile - Simone Nalatu

This July, Queensland Health staff will be excused for putting down the green and gold and cheering on another country as our own Simone Nalatu lines up for Fiji at the World Netball Championships in Singapore.

Simone, who plays as a Wing Attack or Centre on court, works as a Senior Health Promotion Officer (Indigenous Health) in the Division of the Chief Health Officer’s Healthy Living Branch.

“It can be difficult to balance playing at a high level with work and other commitments,” Simone said.

“But Thankfully, Queensland Health has always been very supportive and understanding when it comes to my sporting career.”

When not playing for Fiji, the former Queensland Firebirds player represents the Suncoast Lynx in the state netball league.

“Fiji finished ninth in the last tournament in 2007, so I hope we can do a better this time around,” she said.

“We are currently ranked fifth in the world rankings, so there are a few expectations on us to perform well.

“There is always a bit of healthy competition among the Pacific nations to see who can finish highest. There are a few bragging rights on offer!”

The World Netball Championships 2011 are being held in Singapore from 3-10 July. Australia are the defending champions. Simiona Nalatu in action for Fiji during the Netball World Championships in 2007.