



Human Services
Housing NSW

Housing NSW

Multicultural Framework 2009–2014

Summary

May 2010

The Housing NSW Multicultural Framework 2009-2014

What is the Housing NSW Multicultural Framework?

Housing NSW is committed to ensuring its programs and services reflect, and are responsive to, the cultural diversity of the NSW population. In order to demonstrate how this will be achieved Housing NSW has developed a Multicultural Framework 2009-2014. The target group of the Framework is those individuals who require some form of housing assistance who face issues in accessing services due to their culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

In particular, the Framework defines how Housing NSW will provide housing assistance to those eligible culturally diverse clients and families who are most in need, including those who are at risk of homelessness, who have other special needs (such as being aged or living with a disability), or who are new arrivals to NSW through the Humanitarian Program¹ or members of new and emerging communities.

The Framework's strategies and intended outcomes are consistent with the NSW Government's Principles of Multiculturalism

Why do we need a Housing NSW Multicultural Framework?

The Framework has been developed taking into account the NSW Multicultural Planning Framework which assists NSW public sector agencies to plan for and demonstrate their achievements with respect to the Principles of Multiculturalism.

At the time of the 2006 Census, 33% of Australia's population and 35% of those born overseas lived in NSW². By June 2007, the NSW population had reached 6.89 million people, an increase of 1.1% on the previous 12 month population figures. NSW has a higher proportion of overseas-born than any other State or Territory in Australia. Data also identifies that over one fifth of Housing NSW tenants are from a non English speaking background.

How does Housing NSW assist people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

Housing NSW is the government agency responsible for providing social housing and other housing assistance in NSW. Its goal is to help build a stronger community by providing housing solutions for people in need.

For eligible culturally diverse clients, housing assistance is available through a range of products and services, including subsidised social housing provided by either Housing NSW (public housing) or through community housing providers across NSW (community housing). There is also assistance available to low-income households to access the private rental market. Advice on home purchase is also available.

Housing NSW is also responsible for a range of temporary accommodation and emergency accommodation programs, and for coordinating the NSW Government's response to homelessness. Housing NSW funds or coordinates a range of tenant participation, community development and social and economic development initiatives across NSW. These initiatives include programs such as the 'Building Stronger Communities' initiative, Tenant Participation Resource Services, the Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee and the Housing Communities Program. Housing NSW also works collaboratively with other agencies to link tenants to support services.

¹ While the Commonwealth Government is responsible for the on arrival accommodation of Refugees under its Humanitarian Program, many individuals and families who migrate under this Program will require some form of housing assistance provided through Housing NSW following their initial settlement phase.

² *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects 2007 Edition*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing)

Specific approaches to ensure services are accessible to the needs of culturally and linguistically Diverse Clients include:

- integration of the Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement now Multicultural Policies and Services Program into core business;
- provision of a broad range of free language services;
- development of a variety of translated publications on housing assistance programs;
- staff training and briefings on cultural diversity awareness; and
- working with organisations who provide support services to for example new arrivals.

What are the Framework’s priorities?

The Framework has five key outcomes and a number of strategies.

Key Outcome	Strategy
<p>1. Access to culturally appropriate housing information and assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain investment in language services, and enable client access to telephone and onsite interpreter services, translated publications, and the effective use of bi-lingual staff ▪ Update the Housing NSW website to include relevant targeted information about housing assistance and language services. ▪ Review the accessibility of Housing NSW written communication, including use of plain English in key forms and correspondence to clients. ▪ Expand types of communication strategies used to assist new arrivals, plus members of new and emerging communities ▪ Conduct targeted information sessions and cultural awareness and competency training to increase staff engagement with culturally diverse clients, at corporate and local levels
<p>2. Housing assistance is fair and responsive to the needs of culturally diverse clients and communities, especially towards those most in need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include cultural considerations and tailored housing assistance for specific client groups including those implemented through Housing NSWs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NSW Homelessness Action Plan ○ New Directions in Social Housing for Older People ○ Disability Action Plan and ○ Hidden Carers Outreach Project ▪ Utilise cultural diversity client profiles and trend information in business and portfolio planning, including in respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the application process ○ the development of housing design guidelines, and ○ housing and tenancy management services. ▪ Explore housing assistance partnerships with integrated settlement service providers to improve access by refugees and special humanitarian entrants, in particular new emerging communities, to social housing and the private rental market. ▪ Promote access to information and home ownership services to culturally diverse communities, including partnerships with other providers. ▪ Ensure that client feedback mechanisms are appropriate and accessible to culturally diverse clients and applicants. ▪ Explore housing assistance partnerships with integrated settlement service providers to improve access by Refugees and Special

	Humanitarian entrants.
3. Culturally diverse clients are socially and culturally included in housing initiatives and able to participate in community life.	▪ Facilitate culturally diverse community engagement and representation across the range of Housing NSW initiatives and consultative processes.
	▪ Support local tenant engagement and community development initiatives that reflect cultural diversity profiles and trends.
	▪ Promote and participate in community engagement and social harmony initiatives in partnership with other agencies.
	▪ Support and encourage staff to consult with members of diverse communities at local levels, including in rural and regional areas.
	▪ Encourage initiatives that support culturally diverse families with children and young people and promote their well being.
4. Culturally diverse clients with complex needs are assisted through partnerships with other providers	▪ Implement homelessness and other housing and support partnerships and initiatives that are responsive to the needs of culturally diverse clients.
	▪ Identify and utilise cultural diversity data in the planning and development of housing and support partnerships.
	▪ Develop effective referrals and linkages with culturally diverse communities and organisations to better assist vulnerable clients.
	▪ Collaborate with agencies at all levels to improve the housing and settlement services available to new arrivals, plus members of new and emerging communities.
	▪ Exchange information with other providers on the needs and profile of culturally diverse Housing clients, and particularly those with complex support needs.
5. Housing NSW capacity as a responsive, evidence-based organisation is strengthened.	▪ Streamline mechanisms to implement the Framework and monitor Housing's multicultural strategies at all levels of the organisation.
	▪ Housing NSW Executive promote and be accountable for the implementation of the Principles of Multiculturalism and the Multicultural Framework.
	▪ Utilise cultural diversity client data and needs analysis in the development and implementation of Housing NSW core business.
	▪ Incorporate cultural diversity issues into contracted services, grants programs, and community and tenant projects, as well as into service evaluation briefs
	▪ Implement inclusive employment practices that value and utilise a cultural diverse workforce across all areas of the agency and in all levels and classifications.
	▪ Strengthen Housing NSW linkages and feedback mechanisms with other government and non-government agencies with an interest in social inclusion and settlement issues.

Planning and Reporting

Multicultural Framework action planning will occur each year to support implementation of the Framework. Housing NSW provides an overview of its progress on the implementation of the Multicultural Framework each year in its Annual Report. It also complies with other reporting and assessment requirements of the Community Relations Commission.