



Building on the Territory's Diversity

A Multicultural Policy for migrant and ethnic Territorians

REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT'S MULTICULTURAL POLICY

*'BUILDING ON THE
TERRITORY'S DIVERSITY'*

Discussion Paper
December 2008





What is Multiculturalism?

“The term Australian multiculturalism summarises the way we address the challenges and opportunities of our cultural diversity. It is a term which recognises and celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity. It accepts and respects the right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage within an overriding commitment to Australia and the basic structures and values of Australian society. These are the Constitution, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, the rule of law, tolerance, and equality, including equality of sexes.”

- *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*
Commonwealth, December 1999





Background

The Northern Territory is home to people from more than 100 different ethnic backgrounds. Such diversity has helped to create a vibrant and active multicultural community

On 3 February 2005, the Northern Territory Government launched the Northern Territory's first Multicultural Policy, *'Building on the Territory's Diversity'*.

This policy was developed following extensive community consultations that included a Discussion Paper, survey forms, public meetings, workshops and meetings with community groups and leaders.

The policy outlines principles which maintain and build on the Territory's multicultural success and to which the Government is committed. The principles are:

- Valuing diversity
- Fair access
- Encouraging participation
- Mutual respect

The Government recognises that Policy Statements need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect the current thinking and community expectations. On its launch, the Government committed to a review of its Multicultural Policy, *'Building on the Territory's Diversity'*, by 2009.

This discussion paper has been prepared to provide background to the review and guidelines for those wishing to make submissions. The Northern Territory Government's Multicultural Policy may be viewed at: http://www.dcm.nt.gov.au/dcm/multicultural/pdf/Multicultural_Policy.pdf.





Process

As a courtesy to interested parties, the Department is advising, briefly, on the process to be followed during the Review.

Following the Minister's approval of the Review, a Discussion Paper will be posted to the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) website and made accessible to all interested parties.

During the Review period, senior officers from OMA will be in direct contact with key stakeholders to discuss the nature of the review and to gather information. As the Review is a review of the Government's existing Multicultural Policy, this process will allow OMA to gather data on procedural matters that fall outside of the scope of the Review.

On completion of the Review, all responses will be assessed by OMA and collated into a report to the Minister. This report will form the basis for the Government's revised Multicultural Policy.

OMA will conduct interviews with stakeholders following the Review to ensure that implementation of actions and activities by the Government to support the Policy are addressed.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), within the Department of the Chief Minister, is responsible for coordinating multicultural policy development and implementation across the Northern Territory Public Sector.

OMA's role is to promote the involvement of the Northern Territory's multicultural community in government decision-making processes and also to raise community awareness of government policies, services and programs.





Objectives of the Northern Territory Government's Multicultural Policy

Diversity is a part of living in the Territory. We all share each others culture in different ways.

The Government's vision, in introducing a Multicultural Policy was for the enhancement of a strong, confident and vibrant society and recognising our cultural and linguistic diversity is a key asset in achieving this vision.

The Multicultural Policy, *Building on the Territory's Diversity*, is about having an inclusive society where all Territorians have an equal opportunity, and responsibility, to contribute to Territory life.

It is important that through the policy and the actions of Government and the broader community, there is a demonstration of the success of multiculturalism within the general community.

The Government's Multicultural Policy seeks to ensure that all Territorians are treated with respect, dignity and without discrimination. It also seeks to give new migrants a basis for the feeling of comfort and security in the Territory and to enable Territorians the same level of comfort and acceptance of new migrants.





Under the Multicultural Policy, the Government is committed to four key principles. These principles will form the core of the review of the policy and the Government is seeking comment on their currency and relevance in today's society.

The four (4) principles upon which the government's Multicultural Policy is based are:

Valuing Diversity

The cultural and linguistic resources and skills of Territorians are valued as social and economic assets, and are recognised for the significant benefits diversity brings to the Territory as a whole.

Fair Access

All Territorians, regardless of their background, have a right to fair and equitable access to government services and programs, while recognising the different needs arising from Territorian's cultural and linguistic diversity.

Encouraging Participation

All Territorians have the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities to fully participate in the Territory's development.

Mutual Respect

The culture, language and religion (or spiritual beliefs) of Territorians are respected, within the overarching framework of Australia and Northern Territory laws and our social, political and legal institutions.

Details of the implementation of the Government's Multicultural policy and the initiatives undertaken are available through the Annual Reports which can be downloaded at www.nt.gov.au/dcm/multicultural/media.html.





Some questions for consideration when preparing a submission.

- Is the Government's Multicultural Policy a satisfactory framework in which to progress and address multicultural advancement?
- Are the four (4) Principles expressed and implemented in the Government's Multicultural Policy, '*Building on the Territory's Diversity*', still relevant?
- Are changes to these Principles required, such as through the addition, alteration or omission of words or phrases to reflect any change in community thinking?
- Does the Policy address the broad needs and concerns regarding our culturally diverse community?
- Does the Policy provide the framework for open and equitable access by all Territorians to government services and programs?

Please send your submissions to:

Multicultural Policy Review, Office of Multicultural Affairs
Department of the Chief Minister
GPO Box 4396, Darwin, NT, 0801
11th Floor NT House, 22 Mitchell Street, Darwin, NT, 0800

Email: omareview.dcm@nt.gov.au

Closing date for submissions is 2 March 2009.

Please note that written submissions are encouraged.

Should you have any enquiries regarding this review, please contact:

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