

Legal Aid Queensland – Multicultural Action Plan

Legal Aid Queensland's multicultural action plan

The Queensland Government endorsed the Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference policy in December 2004. Government departments have been asked to develop multicultural action plans to implement the policy in their respective areas.

Legal Aid Queensland is committed to providing quality legal services in a culturally diverse state. At the time of the 2001 Census 33 percent of the state's population was born overseas or had one parent born overseas, 17 percent of the population was born overseas and about 9 percent came from a non-English-speaking country. Migration to Queensland has happened over different periods of time with ethnic groups arriving under business, skill, family reunion and humanitarian immigration programs.

Our role at Legal Aid Queensland is to provide legal assistance to financially and socially disadvantaged Queenslanders. To perform this role properly, it is vital to ensure we:

- develop and support a culturally diverse workplace to reflect our clients' diversity
- consult with non-English-speaking background communities and raise awareness of our services
- provide easily accessible and culturally appropriate services
- effectively advocate against racism, including systematic racism, and participate in law reform and other initiatives to help achieve social justice for people from diverse backgrounds.

Our multicultural action plan sets out the strategies and actions that will help us achieve these outcomes and implement the Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference policy.

We all have a part to play to achieve these outcomes. We have responsibility in our day-to-day work to treat clients and colleagues with respect and dignity regardless of cultural, ethnic or religious background. We have responsibility to ensure the services provided are appropriate to individual needs, such as the use of interpreters.

We will monitor, review and report on the multicultural action plan's implementation, including monitoring the implementation at senior management level and reporting our achievements in our annual report, which is circulated to stakeholders.

We look forward to working through our plan and, in doing this, increasing access to justice for Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Jenny Hardy
Chief Executive Officer
Legal Aid Queensland

1. Queensland Government Multicultural Policy 2004 – Productive diversity economic strategy

LAQ Strategic Aim – People – Sustain a high performing and skilled workforce through effective recruitment and retention strategies, and staff development

Outcome – Legal Aid Queensland will increase the cultural diversity of its workforce

Strategy	Action	Lead responsibility	Performance measures	Timeframe
1.1 Legal Aid Queensland will increase the number of NABS people employed (currently around 13.5%) by 3%	1.1.1 Targeted recruitment to attract applicants from NABS (as per EEO Action plan 2005-08)	Human Resources Manager Legal Practice Coordinator	Percentage increase of LAQ employees from NABS	June 2008
1.2 Conduct annual audit of non-English speaking background employee base as per outcome 1 of EEO census	1.2.1 Check non responses to census and follow up(as per EEO Action plan 2005-08)	Human Resources Equity Officer	Mohr response rate	Annually
	1.2.2 Develop a register of language skills of LAQ staff and place on LA Web	Human Resources Equity Officer	Staff survey completed Register developed	June 2007
1.3 Legal Aid Queensland will increase its staffs' knowledge on the implementation of the Multicultural policy & action plan	1.3.1 Develop a strategy for training staff/ communication strategy	Human Resources Manager Training and Development Coordinator Communication & Information Team	Strategy developed and implemented Number of staff attending sessions both centrally and regionally	June 2007

2. Queensland Government Multicultural Policy 2004 – Supporting Communities

LAQ Strategic Aim – Leadership and Change & Access and Equity

Outcome – Improved capacity by LAQ to engage with communities from non-English speaking background and to work in collaboration with services that support people from non-English speaking background

Strategy	Action	Lead responsibility	Performance measures	Timeframe
2.1 Legal Aid Queensland will raise community awareness about our services and programs both centrally and regionally	2.1.1 Initiate/continue specific strategies in collaboration with local services eg CLUs, regarding people from non-English speaking background	Senior Solicitors – Regional	Quarterly report to Legal Practice Manager Increased number of clients from non-English speaking background	ongoing
	2.1.2 Deliver community education sessions to people from non-English speaking background, including sessions to African young people and Pacific Islander communities	Senior Legal Consultants Access Strategy Coordinators	1 session per quarter Quarterly report to Legal Practice Manager Increased number of clients from non-English speaking background	June 2007
	2.1.3 Deliver community education sessions to services that work specifically with people from non-English speaking background		1 session per quarter Quarterly report to Legal Practice Manager Increased number of clients from non-English speaking background	June 2007
2.2 Legal Aid Queensland will consult/involve specific non-English speaking background people (and or services) to better respond to local needs	2.2.1 Inform the community of LAQ's action plan	Anti-Discrimination Legal Officer Communication & Information Team	Communication plan developed and implemented	September 2007
	2.2.2 Include services and communities from non-English speaking backgrounds in Regional offices'	Senior Solicitors - Regional Regional and Rural Access	Increased number of people from non-English speaking background accessing LAQ	Annually

	annual planning processes	Strategy Coordinator Anti-Discrimination Legal Officer	Increased LAQ response to diverse community needs	
	2.2.3 Continue to translate legal information into community languages	Senior Legal Consultants Access Strategy Coordinators	Number of materials translated and disseminated	ongoing
	2.2.4 Consult with the specific community from non-English speaking background when developing/ translating legal information	Senior solicitors - Regional Communication & Information Team	Number of consultations both centrally and regionally	ongoing
	2.2.5 Develop a distribution strategy for translated material	Communication & Information Team in consultation with Access Strategies	Distribution strategy completed	December 2006
2.3 Legal Aid Queensland will respond to issues involving non-English speaking background at a high level	2.3.1 Include a standing item in LAQ's quarterly meeting of Senior Managers	Chief Executive Officer	Implementation of standing agenda item Effective representation and planning to address particular issues Enhanced Whole of Government response	July 2007 then ongoing
	2.3.2 Provide input into policy/ programs involving people from non-English speaking backgrounds and access to justice	Chief Executive Officer Legal Practice Manager Senior Legal Consultants Access Strategy Coordinators	Number of submissions	As required
	2.3.3 LAQ will work together with other agencies and departments doing similar activities to improve service delivery to people from non-English speaking background	Policy Officer	Number of initiatives where LAQ involved	Ongoing

3. Queensland Government Multicultural Policy 2004 – Strengthening multiculturalism in the public sector

LAQ Strategic Aim – Access and Equity

Outcome – Appropriate and accessible services for people from non-English speaking background

Strategy	Action	Lead responsibility	Performance measures	Timeframe
3.1 Legal Aid Queensland will improve access to its legal services for people from non-English speaking background	3.1.1 Develop a language services policy	Policy Officer	Policy developed and approved (for implementation see 3.3.4)	June 2007
	3.1.2 Complete and implement the Plain Language project	Communication & Information Team	Plain language project implemented	Ongoing
	3.1.3 Develop proposal for the introduction of a specific clause code to monitor the use of interpreters to assist budget planning	Grants Manager	Decision made about the introduction of a clause code	December 2007
	3.1.4 Regional offices continue to engage in local community activities of people from non-English speaking background (networks, quarterly meetings, management committees eg Caboolture Senior Solicitor's membership of Multicultural Task Force)	Senior Solicitors - Regional	Quarterly report to Legal Practice Manager	Ongoing
	3.1.5 Expand LAQ's links including multilingual options on the website and links to LAQ from other services' websites	Communication & Information Team	Number of links	Ongoing
	3.1.6 Conduct an audit of LAQ's policies to ensure that relevant issues of cultural diversity are included	HR Manager in consultation with Anti-Discrimination Legal Officer and Women's Legal Aid (social worker)	Audit completed	December 2006

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3.2 LAQ will continue to monitor the access of people from non-English speaking background	3.2.1 Monitor data against benchmarks quarterly	Access Strategy Coordinators Senior legal consultants	Quarterly reports to Senior Managers by Legal Practice Manager	Ongoing
	3.2.2 Collect and analyse ethnicity data to determine trends and identify key strategies	Business analyst		
	3.2.3 Access Strategies develop a communication strategy to Regional Offices and Senior Legal Consultants	Access Strategy Coordinators	Communication strategy developed Quarterly reports provided to Regional Offices and Senior Legal Consultants	September 2006 Ongoing
	3.2.4 Ensure that the client complaints process is easy for people of a non-English speaking background to use, including investigating the possibility of a Multicultural Client Advocate to assist with complaints, document any barriers and assist to improve service delivery	Policy Officer and Senior Managers	Client complaints process reviewed and adapted	January 2007
3.3 LAQ will review and improve its service delivery to people from non-English speaking background	3.3.1 Provide cross cultural training including cultural competencies, cross cultural communication, use of interpreters and specific issues for people from non-English speaking background (including information about Australian South Sea Islanders) to staff on induction and ongoing basis	Training and Development Coordinator	Institutionalised training Number of staff attending both centrally and regionally	June 2007
	3.3.2 Provide annual training to first contact staff about people from non-English speaking background	Training and Development Coordinator	Percentage of first contact staff attending both centrally and regionally	June 2007
	3.3.3 Provide annual training to grants officers about people from non-English speaking background	Grants Training and Staff Development Officer	Percentage of grants officers attending both centrally and regionally	June 2007

	3.3.4 Conduct focus groups of non-English speaking background clients as part of client survey	Policy Officer	Focus groups conducted	April 2006/2007
	3.3.5 Review of policies and procedures for giving legal advice to non-English speaking background clients	Senior Legal Consultant Civil Justice FACT Coordinators	Review completed	June 2007
	3.3.6 Implement the language services policy, including training	Corporate Services Manager Legal Practice Manager Grants Manager Training and Development Coordinator	Level of compliance with policy both centrally and regionally reported to Senior Managers Percentage of staff attending training session about the policy and its implementation	After June 2007
	3.3.7 Place TIS posters and language cards at all LAQ office receptions	Legal Practice Manager	Posters and cards placed	September 2007
	3.3.8 Continue to provide information, legal advice and representation on relevant anti-discrimination matters	Senior Solicitors – Regional Anti-Discrimination Legal Officer Senior Legal Consultant Civil Women’s Legal Aid Youth Advocate	Number of advices and files opened Quarterly report	Ongoing

4. Queensland Government Multicultural Policy 2004 – Community relations and anti-racism

LAQ Strategic Aim –Leadership and Change & Access and Equity

Outcome – Discrimination against target groups eliminated

Strategy	Action	Lead responsibility	Performance measures	Timeframe
4.1 Legal Aid Queensland will enhance community relations with people from non-English speaking background	4.1.1 Provide anti-racism training to LAQ's employees	Training and Development Coordinator Anti-Discrimination Legal Officer	Percentage of staff attending session	June 2007, then annually
	4.1.2 Support key events such as Day of Elimination of Racism	Chief Executive Officer Senior Legal Consultants Legal Practice Manager Communication & Information Team	Number of events supported	As required
	4.1.3 Nominate representatives to participate in relevant local events such as Refugee Week etc	Senior Solicitors - Regional Communication & Information Team	Number of local events attended Quarterly report to Legal Practice Manager	As required Quarterly
	4.1.4 Write articles for ethnic print media and/or provide speaker for ethnic radio both centrally and regionally	Communication & Information Team	Number of articles published/items on radio	3 annually
	4.1.5 Promote relevant events to people from non-English speaking background both centrally and locally	Senior solicitors - Regional Communication & Information Team	Distribution strategy implemented	June 2007 then ongoing

	4.1.6 Continue to participate in relevant research/ advocacy initiatives including the Confronting Racism in Communities Project and ADS Advocates Committee	Senior Legal Consultants Anti-Discrimination Legal Officer Youth Advocate	Number of initiatives participated in Quarterly report to Senior Managers	Ongoing Quarterly
	4.1.7 Continue to participate in relevant government initiatives eg. IDC on multicultural affairs	Chief Executive Officer	Number of initiatives participated in Quarterly report to Senior Managers	Ongoing Quarterly
4.2 Legal Aid Queensland will work towards the elimination of breaches of discrimination legislation against target groups in the organisation (as per EEO Action Plan 2005-2008)	4.2.1 Improve commitment by employees not to unlawfully discriminate or otherwise breach anti-discrimination legislation (see 2.1.1 EEO Action Plan 2005-2008)	Team Coordinators Human Resources Manager Human Resources Equity Officer	Awareness Strategy Implemented	Quarterly
	4.2.2 Letter from CEO regarding anti-discrimination/workplace behaviours	Human Resources Equity Officer	Letter displayed	July 2006