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# Appendix A

## Accessible Government Services for All

### A revised framework for access and equity reporting

The contributions of migrants and their descendants have helped make Australia what it is today – a thriving, enterprising and diverse society. Migration will continue to play a crucial role in our nation's future. It is an essential part of the government's response to demographic and economic issues confronting the nation, attracting the people and skills we need from around the world. It also enables families to be reunited and helps Australia to play a part in assisting the world's refugees.

Australia's strength as a migration country is founded on our success in integrating people from many nations and cultures around the world into Australian society, by enhancing mutual respect and providing opportunities for everyone to participate fully in society. But we must continue to build on this success. We need to ensure that new migrants settle quickly, develop a sense of belonging and quickly become contributing members of Australian society.

Australian Government agencies have a key role to play. They support and encourage everyone's efforts to achieve self-reliance and participate in society to the fullest extent possible, through the provision of policies, programmes and services that are fair and responsive to the needs of their clients and Australia as a whole. Fairness and responsiveness by agencies also contributes to the effectiveness of their programmes and enhances social cohesion by raising public confidence in our institutions.

A strategy to improve government service delivery to Australia's diverse population was first established in 1985, and an annual Access and Equity report on agencies' performance has been tabled in both houses of parliament since 1993. Since 1998, government agencies have been guided by the *Charter for Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*. In recent years they have reported against a Performance Management Framework, which was developed to cater for the range of roles that agencies fulfil as part of government.

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*Accessible Government Services for All* is the guiding framework developed in 2006 in consultation with Australian Government agencies, taking into account their ability to contribute both as separate portfolios and to whole-of-government responses to the challenges faced by our culturally diverse nation. Its four principles, and the corresponding performance indicators, address key responsibilities of government:

**Responsiveness** – Extent to which programmes and services are accessible, fair and responsive to the individual needs of clients

**Communication** – Open and effective channels of communication with all stakeholders

**Accountability** – Effective and transparent reporting and review mechanisms

**Leadership** – A whole of government approach to management of issues arising from Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse society.

The framework suggests strategies for the implementation of these principles. It aims to assist agencies to analyse their performance and better share good practice responses to challenges and opportunities.

## Performance indicators and strategies

Principle/ performance indicator	Strategies
<p><b>Responsiveness</b> – Extent to which programmes and services are accessible, fair and responsive to the individual needs of clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Developing and delivering fair programmes and services that are based on a sound knowledge of the needs, circumstances and cultural and other characteristics of clients and assess the direct impact on the lives of people.</li> <li>(ii) Drawing on cultural diversity to improve efficiency and effectiveness of agency programmes and to support innovation and success of Australian enterprises:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- auditing and raising the profile of staff cultural skills</li> <li>- providing appropriate staff training - taking steps to recruit culturally diverse employees, volunteers, grantees and contractors</li> <li>- supporting Australia’s competitive business advantage arising from the diverse backgrounds, skills and networks of its workforce and population.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iii) Identifying and responding quickly to emerging issues affecting particular population groups or arising from Australia’s cultural diversity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication</b> – Open and effective channels of communication with all stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Providing information in a timely manner, in appropriate media, publications, formats and languages.</li> <li>(ii) Recruiting and training staff who have appropriate linguistic and cultural skills or using interpreting services, to ensure effective communication with clients, as necessary.</li> <li>(iii) Consulting appropriately with diverse communities and client groups about the development of policy, legislation and regulations, the implementation of programmes, and the delivery of services.</li> </ul>

Principle/ performance indicator	Strategies
<p><b>Accountability</b> – Effective and transparent reporting and review mechanisms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Establishing mechanisms to encourage feedback from people of all cultural backgrounds and allow them to register complaints and raise concerns about the performance of policy developers, programme implementers and service providers (including outsourced services).</li> <li>(ii) Responding to concerns raised by clients, to improve agencies' performance.</li> <li>(iii) Reporting to appropriate audiences of community concerns about agency programmes and agency responses to those concerns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership</b> – A whole of government approach to management of issues arising from Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Collaborating within and between agencies and with other partners to identify and address issues relating to cultural diversity, through publicising good practices, sharing information, coordinating programmes or collaborating on projects.</li> <li>(ii) Working with state, territory or local governments, non-government and community organisations, and contractors, raising their awareness of their responsibilities and encouraging improvement in their responses to cultural diversity.</li> <li>(iii) Contributing to the broader goals of cultural diversity policy, for example by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strengthening the settlement prospects of migrants</li> <li>- enhancing the ability of all to achieve self-reliance</li> <li>- encouraging social, economic and educational participation for people from diverse backgrounds</li> <li>- including issues relating to social cohesion and participation in research and data development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>