

Reporting analysis

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

Community feedback has suggested that while government agencies are generally seen as being fair, accessible and provide good quality services to many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, barriers remain for some. Community contacts around the country have identified the following issues as needing attention:

- Greater efforts need to be made by agencies to provide more access to meaningful employment for people who currently face barriers of race, gender and disability.
- Processes for recognition of overseas qualifications need to be streamlined.
- There is a need for more information about the culturally appropriate aged care services that are available.
- There is an ongoing need for more accessible translators and interpreters, especially for people from new and emerging communities.
- New arrivals need access to English classes which meet workplace and employment needs.
- New arrivals need affordable and culturally-appropriate childcare services, and assistance needs to be provided for women to overcome isolation and be able to access appropriate health, education and employment services.

Strategy (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.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) conducted three roundtable discussions in 2005-06, focusing on criminal justice responses to sexual assault in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. A community survey, conducted

by the AIC on behalf of VicHealth, selected 800 people from Chinese, Vietnamese, Italian and Greek backgrounds to participate. In addition to speaking with survivors of crime, the AIC consulted with service agencies and criminal justice agencies to establish culturally appropriate training and other initiatives.

In areas with high Indigenous populations, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) provided six specialist Job Network officers at 28 sites offering services exclusively to Indigenous job seekers. During 2005-06, more than 44 500 job placements and more than 12 800 long-term (13-week) jobs were recorded for Indigenous job seekers. These results represented increases of 14 per cent and 22 per cent respectively on 2004-05 and were new annual records. In 2005-06, 47.5 per cent of all Indigenous job seekers were off benefits three months after placement in a job and therefore could be considered to be economically independent.

The Australian Childhood Foundation published the *Every Child is Important* parenting booklet in hard copy and as a talking book on CD-ROM in 16 languages (Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Khmer, Macedonian, Somali, Spanish, Dari, Dinka, English, Farsi, Swahili, Tigrinya, Turkish and Vietnamese). The booklet, which is available online at www.kidscount.com.au, provides parenting education and easily accessible resources to strengthen parent-child relationships and enhance the ability of parents to raise happy and confident children.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's FarmBis Programme provides financial assistance to primary producers and rural land managers to undertake business and natural resource management training and education activities. A Western Australian FarmBis Networker focuses solely on Indigenous participants in FarmBis-supported training activities and training providers deliver culturally sensitive training activities using interpreters where required.

The Australian Taxation office (ATO) provides information tailored to the needs of multicultural communities where ethnicity or culture is identified as a relevant feature of the clientele. It advertised information about its 30 per cent child care rebate campaign through multicultural media outlets, including SBS, which distributed radio and printed information products in hard copy and electronically via www.ato.gov.au.

A portion of the ATO's superannuation co-contribution campaign budget was directed towards people from a non-English background and all superannuation core communication products are translated into other languages as required. A tax time flyer called *It's Tax Time*, was user-tested with Migrant Resource Centre staff. The ATO also published a *Working Holiday Makers* brochure developed with the needs of non-English speaking audiences and with a strong graphic approach designed to complement the text and meet the needs of the intended audience.

Strategy (ii) – Drawing on cultural diversity to improve effectiveness of agency programmes by:

- **auditing and raising the profile of staff cultural skills**
- **providing appropriate staff training**
- **taking steps to recruit culturally-diverse employees, volunteers, grantees and contractors and**
- **supporting Australia's competitive business advantage arising from the diverse backgrounds, skills and networks of its workforce and population.**

The Australian Industrial Registry (AIR) is one of many agencies which maintain a voluntary register of bilingual staff to provide informal interpreting assistance to clients at the counter or over the telephone. Staff members are encouraged to gain accreditation as interpreters, if they wish, and become eligible for an interpreter allowance if used by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. An AIR staff intranet provides a quick reference point for information on interpreter services including bilingual staff, the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) and the national relay service.

The Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) draws on cultural diversity to assist to improve the responsiveness of its programs. For example, Aboriginal Health Care workforce development continues to be a priority for the department in responding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs. The Improving the Capacity of Workers in Indigenous Communities initiative provides for the training of 840 Aboriginal Health Workers, counsellors and clinic staff to recognise and treat mental

illness, including drug and alcohol problems. In addition, it provides training in mental health first aid for 350 transport and administration staff located in Aboriginal Health Services who manage clients on presentation to services.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) employed people with a range of linguistic and cultural skills as census collectors and supervisors. In the Newcastle/Hunter region, for example, members of the Sudanese community were employed to visit the residences of new arrivals and provide assistance for the 2006 Census.

Centrelink set up an African Liaison Unit in March 2006 consisting of four staff from African countries, to consult African community groups and community workers in order to ascertain the particular needs of the groups, and to identify particular barriers to their full participation in Australian society. Research into strategies to recruit staff from African countries was conducted and documents were produced and circulated widely within Centrelink to provide guidelines and assistance. A pilot traineeship programme targeting recruits from the Horn of Africa was implemented in Victoria.

The Australian Customs Service (Customs) deployed bilingual staff members to help shore side processing of detained illegal fishers. Customs provides Indonesian language courses for staff involved in illegal foreign fishing initiatives in northern waters and implement recruitment strategies specifically targeting diversity. Applicants with English language barriers were assisted with the recruitment process to ensure they fully understand all requirements and additional points are allocated for applicants with an ability to speak more than one language.

Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) provides a home-like environment for young Indigenous participants of the Indigenous Youth Mobility Program (IYMP). There are 25 houses nationwide that provide accommodation services to young Indigenous people for training and apprenticeship purposes. As part of the programme, IYMP house managers teach participants life skills such as budgeting, cleaning and cooking to prepare them for living independently. Cross-cultural awareness training is provided to employees by supervisors and other Indigenous staff on an ongoing basis. In 2005-06, people with a disability represented 4.1 per cent of AHL employees, and as at 30 June 2006, 82.1 per cent of staff were identified as Indigenous.

DEWR has four specialist culturally- and linguistically-diverse Job Network providers located at each of 24 sites that have particularly diverse communities. In Employment Service Areas where five per cent or more of the client base are Indigenous Australians, Job Network members were required to develop a strategy to deliver services in an appropriate and culturally sensitive manner.

Members of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Indigenous Task Force worked closely with the department's Indigenous Employees' Network on the implementation of the DFAT Indigenous Recruitment and Career Development Strategy, including the identification of specific Indigenous positions in the department.

At the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), there are at least 13 language groups represented among staff, including Arabic, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Italian and Greek. In HREOC's Complaint Handling Section, staff members with other languages communicate with clients of the same cultural and linguistic background where necessary.

In 2005-06, the ATO had 115 staff members able to provide their skills as interpreters and translators in 18 languages. Employees who receive the Community Language Allowance liaise with taxpayers over the telephone, translate correspondence and help taxpayers with the audio and review process. All community relations staff at the ATO are (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) accredited at the language aide level and undertake intensive training covering media skills and tax technical training, which is updated on a monthly basis. Fifteen Goods and Services Tax (GST) staff provide services to the Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese communities - increased from seven staff in the previous year. Staff members attend monthly community tax advice seminars, appear on monthly SBS Radio talkback programmes to answer questions on all aspects of tax, attend annual Chinese and Vietnamese festivals, act as interpreters and conduct field visits to help non-English speaking clients. The ATO also expanded its priority language groups to include Dinka, Dari and Thai.

Austrade is represented in more than 140 overseas locations in over 60 countries. More than 50 per cent of its workforce is locally-engaged employees and

therefore a large number of staff is bilingual or multilingual. Many Australia-based positions in overseas offices are designated as requiring language skills. The international nature of Austrade's operations promotes a culture that is open and accepting to cultural diversity. Austrade staff regularly attend in-house seminars on understanding and doing business in different overseas markets. These Stay in Touch sessions provide an opportunity for staff visiting from overseas to update staff in Australia on developments and issues in overseas markets, including local customs and cultural considerations associated with doing business overseas.

Austrade administers the Export Market Development Grants scheme and provides training to its staff in cross-cultural skills.

Strategy (iii) – Identifying and responding quickly to emerging issues affecting particular population groups or arising from Australia's cultural diversity.

The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) developed the Newly Arrived Youth Support Service Initiative to provide an employment and training service to newly-arrived young people, aged 12 to 21 years, from culturally-diverse backgrounds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Under FaCSIA's Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants (FRSHE) programme, six providers were operating in 2006 in four locations with high humanitarian entrant populations. These services provided information, referral and counselling assistance to migrant families, couples and individuals, as well as delivered relationship education, parenting groups, community development and mediation for migrant families in a culturally appropriate manner.

Centrelink undertook a project on employment barriers for women of Muslim faith. A number of women were interviewed and their situations discussed, and a project report was finalised and circulated to Centrelink's multicultural network. Many of the findings were included in the Welfare to Work training modules and general cultural awareness packages. A targeted strategy was developed to work with Centrelink areas with high concentrations of Muslim women.

DIAC Contact Centres helped clients affected by the evacuation of Australians from Lebanon, and by civil unrest in the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Fiji in 2006. DIAC staff linked clients to interpreters when required, and helped with queries about visas and services. Staff members were commended on their sensitive and professional responses to these events.

The disturbances at Sydney's southern beaches in December 2005 caused a number of agencies to refine their service delivery strategies and increase efforts to understand their client bases. For instance, a two-hour information session on Islam was provided for SBS Radio broadcasters following the incidents in Cronulla to provide them with a clearer understanding of the religion's history and its place in contemporary Australia.

SBS Radio's Arabic language programme took steps to build a new and younger audience in response to racial discord arising from the disturbances. The programme launched Youth Power, a national competition for young Australians to showcase their creative talents by submitting audio pieces which addressed issues of interest to the Arabic community.

The Australia Council delivered several arts projects in partnership with Arts NSW and DIAC following the Cronulla disturbances which focused on cultural development within the Sutherland Shire, inter-cultural dialogue and building cultural infrastructure to provide ongoing activity in southern Sydney.

DOHA has developed a range of culturally responsive mental health services, including:

- a Programme of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, which aims to promote the physical health and psycho-social recovery of people who have experienced torture and trauma in their countries of origin or while fleeing those countries

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- the Multicultural Mental Health Australia Programme, which focuses on multicultural mental health and suicide prevention issues under the National Mental Health Strategy.

DOHA also focused on increasing awareness in multicultural communities of mental health issues, and developing resources, information and training for mental health professionals.

Medicare Australia provides an incentive payment to general practitioners who provide health assessments to refugees and people who come to Australia under the Humanitarian Programme, many of whom have been exposed to war, famine, repression, torture or extreme poverty. In 2006, the programme provided counselling and referrals to mainstream health and related services. DOHA also funds two programmes aimed at improving access for older people from culturally- and linguistically-diverse backgrounds, the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) Programme and the Community Partners Programme (CPP).

The Rural Women's GP Service, delivered by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, aims to improve access to primary health services for women in rural and remote locations across Australia who currently have little or no access to a female general practitioner (GP), by facilitating the travel of female GPs to these communities. In 2005-06, the programme provided nearly 16 000 consultations in 138 locations in all states and the Northern Territory.

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

Community organisations commented that agencies should make a greater effort to employ counter staff from a wider range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They also recommended all service delivery staff members make a greater effort to understand the backgrounds and experiences of humanitarian entrants in particular, to better understand why they may not access and use specific services.

In 2005-06, a range of government and non-government organisations used a variety of innovative and effective methods to inform all Australians about the services they provide.

Strategy (i) – Providing information in a timely manner, in appropriate media, publications, formats and languages.

DIAC successfully implemented the Shepparton Regional Humanitarian Settlement Pilot Project to settle 10 Congolese refugee families and developed an onshore orientation DVD for newly-arrived African humanitarian entrants to address communication challenges arising from low literacy. The DVD was developed in consultation with other agencies and covers a number of topics, relating to initial settlement for African humanitarian arrivals.

To improve client access to the legal system, the Family Court participated in a Living in Harmony programme partnership which piloted community-driven education strategies around the rule of law, the Australian legal system and family law, focusing on communities from Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia.

The Office of Hearing Services' products are available to consumers in 33 different languages. In addition, TIS and the National Relay Service are used by the office to ensure that their services are accessible to all Australians.

FaCSIA's National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) publishes information for families about choosing quality child care in 23 community languages. HREOC also provides a brochure in 14 languages which provides an overview of its role, function and legislation, plus publications and contact details.

During 2005-06, DEWR produced a range of publications in 13 community languages for job seekers from culturally- and linguistically-diverse backgrounds. The department produces a range of settlement planning information products. These include the *Beginning a Life in Australia* booklets, which are produced in English and 24 community languages to help new migrants and humanitarian entrants with their settlement process.

The Financial Literacy Foundation conducted an Understanding Money media campaign in 2006 via its website and a handbook. It provided accessible, easy-to-understand information about personal finances in seven community languages – Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) ensures that educational material about how to enrol and vote correctly is distributed in several community languages. A number of translated resources and publications have been developed, including two education videos on enrolment and voting for Mandarin-speaking and Cantonese-speaking citizens. The instructions page on the New South Wales electoral enrolment form was translated into 18 of the most common community languages. The translations are provided to AEC staff members to distribute directly to electors and to use in face-to-face inquiries.

As at 30 June 2006, Centrelink had 105 multilingual publications available on its website in 64 community languages. Centrelink also produces a fortnightly schedule of broadcasts on the SBS Radio network in 22 community languages on average, which are distributed to multicultural community radio stations across Australia, with a potential reach of 130 stations covering upwards of 400 programmes. Centrelink also operates its own in-house language services operation, which provides free onsite and telephone interpreters and translation services, including a national register of around 2300 interpreters who are skilled in 188 languages.

DOHA, the Federal Court of Australia, the Commonwealth Ombudsman, SBS and many other agencies have also produced information brochures in a range of community languages for their clients.

On 28 October 2005, HREOC launched the fourth edition of its publication titled *Face the Facts*. The booklet provides facts to counter common misconceptions and provides answers to some of the most common questions about Indigenous people, migrants and refugees in Australia. It is aimed at educating media representatives, school students and the general community. More than 30 000 copies of the booklet have been distributed nationally to schools, media outlets, community organisations and government agencies. *Face the Facts* was launched in conjunction with the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB). NSWFB has used *Face the Facts* in a practical and successful way through its programme to provide cultural awareness training for local fire station staff.

The ABC's *Voice of Greece* programme is broadcast by 1062 ABC Riverland in Renmark, South Australia. This radio station also broadcasts community service

announcements and information on community issues, such as health, in six languages – English, Greek, Turkish, Punjabi, Vietnamese and Italian – to one of the most multicultural regions in Australia. In November 2005, the 774 ABC *Melbourne Morning* programme was broadcast live from the King Khalid Islamic College of Victoria. The programme explored the diversity of the Islamic community and looked at the divisions and rivalries within the community and the problems they have in common.

ABC Radio National's social history programmes such as *Street Stories* often feature a range of groups in Australian society. For instance, in September 2005 the programme *Banana Masala: Fusing Indian and Australian Culture* featured the voices of young Sikhs from northern New South Wales, and in March 2006 it covered the stories of three Melbourne cab drivers from Somalia. Many children's programmes on ABC-TV display cultural diversity through cast members, presenters and programme content.

Strategy (ii) – Recruiting and training staff who have appropriate linguistic and cultural skills or using interpreting services, to ensure effective communication with clients, as necessary.

CRS Australia has employed an Aboriginal Rehabilitation Liaison Officer in Sydney to provide direct assistance to jobseekers from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island backgrounds, to provide advice to CRS Australia staff about cultural issues, and to promote CRS Australia services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.

Centrelink created a network of approximately 70 Multicultural Service Officers (MSOs) across Australia, strategically placed where there are high populations of migrants and refugees. Centrelink also added more than 350 new people to its national register of interpreters, of which nearly half were engaged to cover an African language. Some of the newer languages were Krio, Madi, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Lingala, Mandingo, Bari, Kissi, Fullah, Liberian English, Krahn, Kuku, Swahili, Luo, Akan and Mende.

In 2005-06, DIAC's network of community liaison officers at state and territory offices maintained contact with more than 6500 community organisations,

individuals and government and non-government agencies with an emphasis on Middle Eastern, Muslim and new and emerging African communities.

Trades Recognition Australia assesses the trade skills of potential migrants to Australia. It bears the cost of interpreters and translators as part of its information dissemination and assessment provider role and maintains a register of bilingual staff to provide on-site assistance.

Strategy (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.

In Tasmania, the Family Court of Australia used playback theatre as a means of communicating information about family law to the Eritrean and South Sudanese communities as storytelling is widely used within those cultures. This is a good example of an innovative way to help reduce barriers that are often created by language and varying levels of literacy.

A project by HREOC, Engaging Muslim Communities and Police, aimed to facilitate dialogue between Muslim communities and police to help police respond to incidents of racial or religious hatred and abuse. The project culminated in August 2006 with forums in Victoria and New South Wales.

In 2005 the National Health and Medical Research Council developed a comprehensive resource *Cultural Competency in Health: a guide for policy, partnerships and participation*, to help health providers in developing cultural competency when working with Australians from culturally- and linguistically-diverse backgrounds.

The Violence Against Women, Australia Says NO campaign raises community awareness on the criminal aspects of domestic violence and sexual assault within intimate partner relationships. It is comprised of:

- awareness raising through television, radio, cinema, magazine and convenience advertising
- immediate practical support through a national, 24-hour seven day a week confidential helpline on 1800 200 526

FaCSIA Symposiums

FaCSIA developed a number of symposiums under the Bringing Communities Together strategy in line with the recommendations of the former Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG). The symposiums were designed to bring Australian communities together by promoting awareness and understanding of the culture and values of Australian Muslims and sharing achievements and success stories on their social integration in the wider Australian community. The symposiums commenced in early 2007.

DIAC is an active partner in the symposiums and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has offered its support for the production of a publication on Australian Muslims. The symposiums have also earned considerable support from the business community through the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnerships (PMCBP), the Council for Australian-Arab Relations (CAAR), the Muslim Community Co-operative (Australia) Ltd (MCCA), IBM, ActewAGL, and some state and local businesses.

The symposiums were complemented by community service expos to provide the wider Australian community with information on programmes and services available from all levels of government, not-for-profit, community and business sectors. A number of government agencies extended their assistance by holding information booths. These included the Attorney-General's Department, the Australian Sports Commission, the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Human Services, the Child Support Agency, Centrelink, the Department of Transport and Regional Services, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and FaCSIA.

In addition to promoting agency programmes and services, the expos provided an opportunity for agencies to gather community feedback on their services, and enhance partnerships and collaboration among all sectors in the community, including government, business, not-for-profit sectors and the Australian Muslim community.

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- a website (www.australiasaysno.gov.au) which provides information on ways to help, which complements the helpline
 - a curriculum resource targeted at year 11 and 12 students
 - specific Indigenous and non-English speaking advertising in ethnic and Indigenous media.

The campaign published print advertisements in 14 languages in more than 40 ethnic newspapers. The campaign's 24-page booklet is also available in the 14 languages. The Indigenous-specific communication includes an ambassadors' programme with a range of campaign materials, such as a brochure and poster featuring the ambassador's image and message, and ambassador advertisements in popular Indigenous press and radio.

Accountability – Effective and transparent reporting and review mechanisms.

Community feedback has indicated that some agencies do not offer effective monitoring and accountability processes, and some still seem to offer 'one size fits all' service delivery models. It was suggested that there needs to be a stronger focus on accountability measures and effective monitoring of services. Improved data collection, in order to better understand client groups, was recognised as a key priority to ensure effective service delivery.

The following section of the report gives examples of a variety of service delivery agencies provide accessible accountability mechanisms to their clients.

Strategy (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).

DOHA's *Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme* provides a free and accessible system to enable all Australians, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, to lodge a complaint about breaches of the aged care legislation by service providers that affects a person who is, or was, eligible to receive Australian Government funded aged care services.

The TIS complaints feedback processes are in place to enable clients to make complaints about services, and for those complaints to be investigated in a timely manner. TIS also conducts an annual client satisfaction survey and makes regular reports on its performance.

DEWR provides information about the complaints process in 13 community languages. A job seeker or employer who contacts DEWR's Customer Service Line to lodge a complaint can be connected through to TIS. Providers of Australian Government Employment Services (PAGES) use the Job Seeker Account on behalf of their clients to purchase interpreter services to explain complaints lodgement and hearing processes. Trades Recognition Australia also use an interpreting and translation service and, where possible, use their own bilingual staff to deal with complaints from clients.

Record keeping systems for the DEWR Infoline include collection of information about people who may be disadvantaged in the bargaining process or at greater risk of exploitation. A client feedback service is being established to support the WorkChoices Infoline and Independent Contractor Hotline. This service will provide a speedy and user friendly avenue for escalation and management of any service delivery concerns within the department. The Unlawful Termination Assistance Scheme (UTAS) and Alternative Dispute Resolution Assistance Scheme (ADRAS) have established grievance mechanisms to address complaints or appeals against Scheme decision makers. TIS is utilised for these processes.

Centrelink customers can communicate feedback in their preferred language through its Multilingual Call Centre number, or through the Centrelink feedback line. They may also provide feedback in writing using comment cards, which will be translated at no cost to them if they use a language other than English. Comment cards have been translated into 30 community languages. Centrelink also provides the fact sheet *Do you disagree with a Centrelink decision?* on its website, which is translated into 30 community languages.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner has a complaints information page on its website, which is translated into 11 community languages. In 2006, the Federal Court's Appeals Brochure was translated into 13 languages.

The court's website has information in 38 languages on how to find interpreting and translation services.

FaCSIA's *Raising Children Network* parenting website has a feedback section which encourages users to take a poll on the useability of the website and a questionnaire obtaining basic demographic information and more detailed responses to the website. There is also the capacity to provide feedback on each of the page articles. These are used to inform the content development process.

During 2005-06, HREOC's Complaint Handling Section (CHS) revised and updated the *Concise Complaint Guide*, which can be downloaded from the CHS webpage in 14 community languages, at the website www.humanrights.gov.au/languages. During this reporting year, the CHS also developed an information poster in 14 community languages and copies of this poster were distributed to 2500 migrant and community centres around Australia. Complaints are accepted in languages other than English and translation is arranged by HREOC. During 2005-06, the CHS also developed a brochure which provides an easy to read flow chart of the complaints process.

Strategy (ii) – Responding to concerns raised by clients to improve agencies' performance.

DEST consults with the National Liaison Committee for International Students (NLC) on issues affecting international students undertaking courses of study in Australia. Ongoing communications with the NLC, as well as informal meetings at national fora and participation in the NLC Annual Conference, ensure DEST is aware of the issues of greatest concern to international students.

The ATO holds regular consultative meetings with multicultural community leaders and representatives to obtain feedback on services and their views on current and future needs. The ATO held a multicultural community forum in 2005 and published a report on the emerging communities which consolidated internal research and will shape future strategies. As a result of this research, the ATO has expanded priority language groups to include languages such as Dinka, Dari and Thai.

DIAC established the Global Feedback Unit (GFU) in August 2005 in recognition of the need for change in responding effectively to client feedback. The unit assisted in identifying areas for improvement in client liaison and training needs. The GFU collects, analyses and reports on all forms of feedback, including telephone calls, web based feedback and mail. Correspondence received in languages other than English is translated at no cost to the client.

HREOC's Complaint Handling Section asks for feedback on the complaint process from people lodging complaints (complainants) and people responding to complaints (respondents). This feedback is obtained by means of a customer satisfaction survey which is usually conducted by telephone interview. In 2005-06, 56 per cent of those who could be contacted (139 complainants and 150 respondents) agreed to participate in the survey. Survey results for this reporting year are summarised below:

- 90 per cent of complainants and 96 per cent of respondents felt that staff explained things in a way that was easy for them to understand
- 91 per cent of complainants and 96 per cent of respondents felt that forms and correspondence from HREOC were easy to understand
- 88 per cent of complainants and 91 per cent of respondents did not consider staff to be biased.

These results are consistent with results achieved by HREOC in the previous reporting year.

The Office of the Employment Advocate (OEA) has a Client Service Charter which aims to encourage feedback. Clients can register feedback via email through the website, by calling the Workplace Agreements Information Service, or writing to the OEA. Since the introduction of WorkChoices in March 2006, the OEA has answered over 11 100 calls from people in disadvantaged bargaining positions. Over 90 per cent of these calls have been resolved at the first point of contact.

The OEA engages with community agencies and other stakeholders to ensure that people from non-English speaking backgrounds have an awareness of the OEA's responsibilities and services.

The OEA has worked with DIAC to ensure new migrants and refugees are aware of their entitlements and obligations in the context of agreement making under WorkChoices.

Strategy (iii) – Reporting to appropriate audiences of community concerns about agency programmes and agency responses to those concerns.

The Australia Council's Community Partnerships Scoping Study Report Creative Communities was presented to the Australia Council in June 2006. The report was the result of extensive consultation with communities, artists, partner organisations and included focus groups with emerging communities and artists from culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The report has reviewed, revitalised and extended the Australia Council's engagement with artists, communities, and partners.

The HREOC Complaint Handling Section (CHS) conducted information session attended by over 150 organisations throughout all states and territories. The sessions were information sessions on the law and the complaint process run by CHS staff. Attendees at the sessions included community legal centres, Aboriginal legal centres, multicultural organisations, universities, disability groups, professional associations and unions. As well, HREOC conciliation officers travel throughout Australia to conduct face-to-face conciliation conferences. Along with conferences in the greater Sydney area, CHS officers held 30 conferences in regional NSW, 56 in Melbourne, 54 in South Australia, 44 in Queensland, 22 in Western Australia, 15 in Canberra, two in Darwin and three in Hobart.

Since April 2006, HREOC has seen an increase in the number of employment related complaints - most notably under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. The Commission is also receiving many more enquiries from employers and employees about their rights and obligations under federal discrimination laws. Employers are encouraged to create a discrimination and harassment free environment through HREOC's 'Good Practice, Good Business' guide. Employees can obtain information about their rights under discrimination law on the 'Work out your rights' section of the website. The complaints handling section is also holding information sessions for employers, employees and their representatives on what constitutes unlawful discrimination and the Commission's complaints process.

The National Capital Authority (NCA) accepts complaints about the use and condition of National Land by email (natcap@natcap.gov.au) or via telephone. The NCA accepts feedback and complaints in the client's preferred language, and conducts consultations and review of regulations, including workshops, with diverse clients. The NCA provides information about TIS on its website and on an information sheet, and bilingual staff members explain regulations to clients. NCA staff and volunteers assist visitors to fill out the feedback forms that are provided, and can assist in languages such as Mandarin, Japanese, Spanish and French.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Community Water Grants programme has a call centre that assists a range of groups with their queries and applications. The call centre has an interpreting service to assist people across a range of cultural backgrounds. Its staff transcribe applications for callers with a range of disabilities, and the department's Envirofund programme circulates pamphlets widely and has a translation service available for people from a range of language groups.

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

Community feedback noted that service providers face a significant challenge in meeting the needs of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly refugee youth. Of particular concern are young refugees from African backgrounds who, because of their different cultural expectations and personal histories, are frequently characterised by traumatic childhood experiences.

Strategy (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.

In 2005-06, there was a significant collaboration within and between agencies to identify and address issues relating to the accessibility of government services. This collaboration included significant cooperation across levels of government – Commonwealth, state, territory and local government.

More agencies are learning to share information and strategies, to work co-operatively with their counterparts in other states or departments.

The Centrelink National Multicultural Reference Group (NMRG) is a key national forum that Centrelink uses to engage peak ethnic community groups. In operation now since 1999, the NMRG is a successful approach to fostering community participation and encouraging feedback and input from the multicultural community sector. NMRG meetings are attended by key policy agencies, including the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils, a state or territory Ethnic Communities' Council, Refugee Council of Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance Inc, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, National Association for Multicultural and Ethnic Children's Services, National Welfare Rights Network and National Council of Migrant Resource and Settlement Agencies. The NMRG met in June 2005 and March 2006.

Multicultural advisory committees (MACs) are integral to Centrelink's consultative arrangements and operate at state/territory and local levels. MACs meet quarterly, providing local communities with a forum to openly discuss and seek solutions in partnership with Centrelink on issues of policy, service and programme delivery that affect the multicultural community sector. MAC meetings are also attended by key policy departments. Centrelink has shared a number of its products with other Department of Human Services agencies including the *Working with Interpreters* video, *A Guide to Ethnic Naming Practices*, as well as data, information and training products.

The ABC engages on a regular basis with programming initiatives with the Australian Film Commission (AFC) that include cultural diversity content. The ABC has an internal cross-divisional Indigenous advisory group called the Bonner Committee. The Bonner Committee coordinated an inaugural forum at Ultimo in April 2006 that showcased Indigenous programmes and employees as a mechanism for raising awareness across the organisation. A first time award mechanism was introduced during 2006, with a Bonner Award to recognise the work of non-Indigenous staff members who promote and support Indigenous employment and content.

The ATO's Special Audiences Unit convened two cross business line forums in Victoria and NSW to share information and intelligence regarding non-English communities and develop cooperative strategies in the delivery of ATO services and key messages for these communities. The ATO collaborated with Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office to develop the most appropriate messages for a culturally diverse audience for the 30 per cent child care tax rebate and family tax benefit communications.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is currently assisting a state department to develop agricultural chemicals education programmes for users from non-English speaking backgrounds.

DOHA is engaged in whole-of-government initiatives such as the Ministerial Task Force on Indigenous Affairs to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health priorities. The department works with Indigenous Coordination Centres nationally and other Australian government departments, state and territory governments, private organisations and non-government organisations, to respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals. During 2006, the department worked with state and territory governments to develop a new Home and Community Care (HACC) Agreement taking into account the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous groups. As part of the planning process, jurisdictions conducted targeted consultations with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

In March 2006, DOHA conducted a national roundtable meeting regarding HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) issues among culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The purpose of the meeting was to develop responses to HIV/AIDS and STIs at a national, state and local level, and to enable cross jurisdictional and cross agency collaboration. A key outcome from this meeting was the department funding a national project to support the building of cultural capacity in key national organisations and services.

Strategy (ii) – Working with state, territory or local governments, non-government and community organisations, and contractors, encouraging improvement in their responses to cultural diversity.

DAFF and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) are working together to educate the horticultural community on the requirements of the mandatory Horticulture Code of Conduct, by producing publications in a number of languages and through using a number of channels such as ethnic radio stations.

During 2005-06 the Family Court participated in a number of state-based partnerships with newly-arrived communities, Migrant Resource Centres, Centrelink, and state government agencies, including police forces, to help break down myths and generate trust with communities that previously had felt confused and disempowered by legal processes they did not understand.

During 2005-06, DEWR undertook a major tender process for organisations to deliver a range of employment and related services for the 2006-09 employment services contract period. Successful organisations were required to demonstrate their ability to deliver the services tendered for and agree to comply with the Employment Services Code of Practice. Tenderers for the provision of employment services in regions where people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds comprise 10 per cent or more of the unemployment register, were required to include strategies on how employment outcomes would be achieved by the tendering organisation for this group of job seekers. Successful organisations are monitored to ensure the delivery of the strategies contained in their tenders. Three organisations were established to provide specific Job Network services to people from non-English speaking backgrounds in 25 sites across Australia.

Following the bombings in London in July 2005, the establishment of the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG) and its seven sub-groups was another whole-of government example of identifying a community group vulnerable to marginalisation and providing a means for engaging with them and responding to emerging issues. Representatives of a number of government agencies worked with the MCRG's sub-groups to examine issues relating to youth, education and training of Imams and other religious teachers and leaders, women, schooling, employment, crisis management and family and community.

The Conference of Australian Imams with contributions from Muslim leaders, women and youth in 2006 sought to examine the role of Imams in encouraging social cohesion. The MCRG, youth summits and the Imams conference all provided valuable mechanisms for receiving feedback from Muslim communities concerning programmes and policies, which have been addressed largely through the development and implementation of the *National Action Plan to build on social cohesion, harmony and security* (NAP).

The Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Section of DIAC in NSW (NSW MAS) fostered co-operation within the various African communities and their umbrella group, the Federation of African Communities Council (FACC), through a Leadership forum jointly presented by DIAC and DEWR. NSW MAS mentored various African communities in partnership with local government and the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation to improve African youth access to sport. NSW MAS also worked closely with the NSW Community Relations Commission on the issues of regional humanitarian settlement in NSW, which included extensive community consultations in the Tamworth and Armidale local government areas.

HREOC consults with a range of state and Australian Government departments and agencies and various community organisations, including the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission, the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission, the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commission and the Australian Capital Territory Human Rights Office.

As part of the Women's Leadership and Development Programme, the Sport Leadership Grants for Women programme is a joint initiative of the Office for Women within FaCSIA and the Australian Sports Commission. It provides sports leadership grants for women in sport targeting under-represented groups, including women with a disability, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous women and women in rural and remote communities.

A good example of inter-agency cooperation in 2005-06 was the development of the NAP.

The NAP, which is a whole-of-government response to assist Muslim Australians to access government services and to address community tensions and discrimination, was the result of considerable consultation with state and territories and Australian Government departments including the Attorney General's Department, DIAC, DEWR, DEST and FaCSIA. Different agencies have taken different approaches to implementing the NAP, launching innovative and constructive projects while avoiding duplication with other agencies.

The 'Living Spirit - Muslim Women's Project 2006 - A dialogue on human rights and responsibilities' was a NAP project undertaken by HREOC in September 2006. This Muslim women's forum focussed on human rights and responsibilities. A second project, 'Engaging Muslim Communities and Police', aimed to facilitate dialogue between Muslim communities and police to assist police in responding to incidents of racial or religious hatred and abuse. The HREOC project was conducted in New South Wales and Victoria and involved extensive consultations with community representatives, police and Muslim communities. HREOC will also develop resources to assist police and the Muslim community in dealing with discrimination.

Strategy (iii) – Contributing to the broader goals of cultural diversity policy, for example by:

- **strengthening the settlement prospects of migrants**
- **enhancing the ability of all to achieve self-reliance**
- **encouraging social, economic and educational participation for people from diverse backgrounds**
- **including issues relating to social cohesion and participation in research and data development.**

DIAC's Regional Settlement strategies include close liaison with the three levels of government prior to a new settlement region being established. Progress in relation to establishing new regions is dependent upon securing full endorsement from state and local governments. Under this approach, direct settlement has begun in Shepparton, Victoria with a recent evaluation describing the initiative as a positive experience for both the Congolese entrants and the community at large. Direct humanitarian settlement is also planned for Ballarat, Mount Gambier and Murray Bridge.

DIAC shares data gathered through the Settlement Database, with all levels of government to assist with service planning.

DIAC chaired an inter-departmental committee on Humanitarian Settlement which was a significant example of interagency cooperation, in consultation with stakeholders, to identify service needs for newly arrived humanitarian entrants and develop more effective services in response to those needs. It resulted in a significantly greater awareness of client needs and ongoing impetus for whole of government cooperation in providing for the settlement needs of refugees.

The AFC hosted highly regarded Kurdish filmmaker Bahman Ghobadi (Turtles Can Fly) at the Long Black Writers Lab. Mr Ghobadi acted as a creative advisor to filmmakers writing their first features. He had limited English and an Iranian translator was retained to work with him. The calibre of Mr Ghobadi's films, coupled with the similar nature of his work to those of Indigenous filmmakers, provided an inspiring opportunity for participants. In another example of the AFC's commitment to working collaboratively with people from diverse backgrounds, it employed an interpreter to work with a deaf filmmaker while shooting her AFC-funded short film.

The English learning needs of newly arrived migrant students are met through the English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Programme. This DEST programme provides funding to state and territory government and non-government education authorities to assist with the cost of delivery of intensive English language training. The ESL-NA programme aims to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes of newly arrived students from non-English speaking backgrounds by developing their English language competence and facilitating their participation in mainstream education activities.

Ongoing English language learning assistance is also provided to students who are educationally disadvantaged, including those whose first language is not English, through the Australian Government's Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Programme. The LNSLN Programme will provide an estimated \$2.1 billion in assistance from 2005-08.

FaCSIA's Newly Arrived Youth Support Service Initiative (NAYSS) provides a combined Reconnect and Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) service to newly arrived young people aged 12 to 21 years from culturally and linguistically

diverse backgrounds, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The NAYSS initiative arose from the *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants*, which showed that newly arrived young people do not take up the opportunity for assistance through mainstream services at the same rate as other young Australians.

NAYSS providers help these newly arrived young people to improve their level of engagement with family, work, education, training and the community by using a variety of strategies such as counselling, group work, family mediation and practical support in ways that are culturally and contextually appropriate. There are currently 14 NAYSS providers operating nationwide.

In 2006 the Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on Humanitarian Settlement developed a whole-of-government strategy to improve settlement outcomes for recently arrived humanitarian entrants. The IDC was a significant example of interagency cooperation in consultation with stakeholders to identify service needs for newly arrived humanitarian entrants and develop services responsive to those needs. The IDC developed a range of recommendations with a focus on successful integration through learning English, getting a job, committing to Australian values and participating in mainstream activities. It developed proposals to address recommendations in the areas of improving the financial capacity of humanitarian entrants on arrival and improving budgeting and financial literacy.

Centrelink worked with the ATO on the provision of access to Tax File Numbers so that refugee families could access family assistance payments in a timely manner on arrival in Australia. Centrelink has centralised refugee servicing in several areas, as a result of consultations with Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Services (IHSS) providers and local community groups.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR) is collaborating with DEWR, which delivers Job Network for retrenched textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) workers, to ensure that programme information kits are provided in the language relevant to the cultural groups (for example, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cantonese). Regular advertisements are placed in Victorian metropolitan and regional newspapers advising TCF workers of the package. The advertisements are run in English, Chinese and Vietnamese newspapers and translated into the appropriate languages.

FaCSIA promotes the Indigenous Leadership Development Group (ILDG) to strengthen Indigenous leadership, reconciliation and repatriation. There is a process of review and evaluation of the leadership programmes which takes into account the issues and concerns of participants and their communities. The participants in leadership programmes self-evaluate using specially developed evaluation tools. The ILDG provides input into departmental discussions and reviews where the interests of Indigenous people are involved. This input takes into account community concerns learned from the leadership programmes.

In developing its 2006-08 research plan, the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) conducted extensive consultation, especially with the Indigenous community. Fifteen consultations were held nationally, including in Cairns and Darwin, in order to gain representation from a diverse range of stakeholder groups.

DEWR has introduced five community employment coordinators to work in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and West Australia. They are engaging with Muslim communities to make connections between job seekers and employment service providers and to lift cultural awareness among employer groups. DEWR has also established a number of Muslim-focused 'Better Connections' workshops to assist Muslim Australians in finding employment.

The Australia Council Multicultural Advisory Committee (ACMAC) develops and monitors the *Arts in a Multicultural Australia (AMA) Policy*. ACMAC makes recommendations to the Council on any issue that may affect the full expression of cultural diversity in the arts. Of the 48 peers appointed by the Minister for Arts and Sport on the assessment committees, six are from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and eight are from Indigenous backgrounds. Of the 13 Council members, three are from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and one is Indigenous.