

## **ALRC Policy**

*Name of policy:* **Agency Multicultural Plan for 2013–2015**

*Responsibility of:* Executive Director

*Approved by:* President                      *Pages:* 9

*Date of approval:* 5 June 2013

### **Our Vision:**

As a law reform body, the ALRC has the opportunity to contribute to social justice, equity and inclusion in Australia through reform of laws appropriate to the diversity of the Australian community. The ALRC commits to engaging and consulting with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) organisations and communities and when formulating recommendations for law reform to consider the impact on CALD communities.

### **Our Agency:**

The Australian Law Reform Commission is a federal agency within the Attorney-General's portfolio. The ALRC conducts inquiries into areas of law at the request of the Attorney-General of Australia. Based on its research and consultations throughout an inquiry, the ALRC makes recommendations so that government can make informed decisions about the development, reform and harmonisation of Australian laws and related processes. The ALRC is independent of government and is able to undertake legal policy development, based on its own research and analysis, and extensive consultation with the community.

Pursuant to the [Australian Law Reform Commission Act 1996 \(Cth\)](#), (the ALRC Act), the ALRC's objective is to make recommendations for law reform that:

- a) bring the law into line with current conditions and needs;
- b) remove defects in the law;
- c) simplify the law;
- d) adopt new or more effective methods for administering the law and dispensing justice; and
- e) provide improved access to justice.

In accordance with s24 of the ALRC Act, when conducting an inquiry, the ALRC also monitors overseas legal systems to ensure Australia compares favourably with international best practice. The ALRC aims to ensure that the recommendations it makes do not trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties of citizens, or make those rights and liberties unduly dependent on administrative, rather than judicial, decisions and, as far as practicable, are consistent with Australia's international legal obligations. The ALRC must also have regard to any effect that its recommendations may have on the costs of access to, and dispensing of, justice.

**Our Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP):**

There are two key ways in which the work of the ALRC may have an impact on Australia's CALD communities. First, through consultation—all Australians should have a say in reforming laws that affect them and the ALRC endeavours to make the law reform process as open and consultative as possible. Secondly, through the impact of laws on CALD communities—it is important that Australia's laws are responsive to the needs and experiences of all its citizens, including those from CALD communities, and the ALRC's recommendations for law reform need to reflect this. The ALRC's AMP will:

- a) assist the ALRC to involve CALD communities in the process of law reform and to ensure that the needs and opinions of these communities are considered in our processes; and
- b) ensure that ALRC recommendations for law reform have regard to the interests of and impact on Australia's CALD communities.

The ALRC's AMP was developed by the ALRC's Diversity Working Group.

The ALRC's President (Chief Executive Officer) has approved this AMP and has delegated to the Executive Director and the Diversity Working Group operational responsibility for ensuring that the ALRC's AMP actively engages and informs ALRC activities.

The ALRC AMP sets out the ALRC's commitment to multicultural access and equity. The AMP will ensure that the ALRC inquiry processes and its recommendations are responsive to the needs of Australians from CALD backgrounds. Our AMP will assist the ALRC to target our efforts and increase our responsiveness in a planned and coordinated way.

**Focus area: Engagement**

In this AMP cycle, the ALRC will concentrate on the area of engagement, ensuring that CALD communities are able to engage actively in our consultation processes.

## 1. Leadership

The ALRC recognises that leadership is pivotal in promoting an understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity and the benefits that this diversity brings. Through strong leadership and commitment in the implementation of our AMP, the ALRC will ensure CALD communities are actively involved in the ALRC's inquiry processes and that its recommendations for law reform take into consideration the experiences and the input of CALD communities.

Minimum Obligations:

**1.1 Executive Accountability** – Agency to assign a Senior Executive Officer to be responsible for implementation of Multicultural Access and Equity obligations in the agency.

**1.2 Agency commitment** – Agency leadership to ensure that staff understand and are committed to Multicultural Access and Equity implementation.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
1.1.	<p><b>Executive Accountability</b></p> <p>The ALRC President has committed to this AMP and has appointed the Executive Director to be responsible for its implementation.</p>	Executive Director	1 July 2013	Executive Director has responsibility for the implementation of the ALRC's AMP
1.2	<p><b>Agency Commitment</b></p> <p>The ALRC will establish a Diversity Working Group with responsibility for developing, monitoring and implementing the ALRC's AMP.</p>	Diversity Working Group	1 May 2013 established. Quarterly meetings, in August, November and February	Diversity Working Group established and meeting quarterly

## 2. Engagement

**Stakeholder Engagement Strategy:** The ALRC has developed consultation strategy templates that can be used to identify and guide consultation with CALD communities throughout each inquiry. This will ensure that the experiences and opinions of people from CALD communities are considered in our inquiry processes. These consultation strategies assist the ALRC to: identify relevant stakeholders to consult; conduct a preliminary literature review for each inquiry to identify issues of direct relevance to CALD communities in the particular area under review; and engage appropriately with CALD communities. *(Note, due to the specialised nature of the ALRC’s work, the ALRC focuses consultation on representative organisations rather than individuals).*

**Language and Communication:** The ALRC will develop a language and communication plan that will guide the ALRC’s communications in the coming years. The ALRC commits to pursuing effective and plain English communication in all its documents. It also commits to a number of specific actions in this area.

Minimum Obligations:

**2.1 Stakeholder Engagement** – Agency to have an engagement strategy to understand culturally and linguistically diverse communities’ interaction with agency.

**2.2 Language and Communication** – Agency to have a language and communication plan for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including on the use of languages other than English and incorporating the use of interpreters and translators.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
2.1.	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <p>At the beginning of an inquiry, Commissioners and Legal Officers will develop a consultation strategy for CALD communities, relevant to the subject matter of that inquiry.</p>	Commissioners and Legal Officers	At the beginning of each inquiry. (The ALRC is not responsible for choosing the subject matter of its inquiries nor of setting its inquiry timeline, but commonly the ALRC conducts two inquiries at a time)	Each inquiry has a CALD consultation strategy in place
2.2	Invite CALD community members with relevant expertise to participate in Advisory Committees and/or expert panels for ALRC inquiries.	Commissioners	At the beginning of each inquiry	Each Inquiry Advisory Committee and expert panel has diverse representation relevant to the particular inquiry
2.3	Where case studies are used in consultation documents and final reports to reflect the experiences of stakeholders, the ALRC will include CALD-related case studie.	Legal Officers	Throughout each inquiry	Diverse case studies are used in consultation documents and final reports

2.4	<b>Language and Communication</b> Develop a language and communication plan to facilitate and encourage ALRC communications with CALD communities.	Diversity Working Group	September 2013	Language and communication plan produced
	Produce community fact sheets that explain the key concepts and recommendations of relevance to the CALD community, where appropriate.	Legal Officers	At the conclusion of each inquiry	Number of fact sheets produced and available
	Ensure stakeholder contributions can be made in a variety of forms, including orally.	Executive Director	Throughout each inquiry	Number of consultations held and submissions received from CALD community organisations and representatives
	Ensure media releases are available to CALD community press/networks.	Executive Director	At the publication of each final Report	Number of media releases available to CALD community press/networks

### 3. Performance

The ALRC's AMP provides a clear basis for measuring our commitment and performance. This is important as it allows us to tailor our activities to achieve desired outcomes.

Minimum Obligations:

**3.1 Performance indicators and reporting** – Agency to develop a set of KPIs relating to engagement with, or outcomes of services to, culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

**3.2 Feedback** – Agency to have arrangements to ensure affected culturally and linguistically diverse communities are able to provide feedback on agency Multicultural Access and Equity performance.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
3.1.	<p><b>Performance indicators and reporting</b></p> <p>Annual review of consultation strategy templates.</p> <p>Two-yearly review of consultation strategy templates with CALD stakeholders.</p>	<p>Diversity Working Group</p> <p>Diversity Working Group</p>	<p>First review by 1 July 2014, then annually</p> <p>First review by 1 July 2014, then next July 2016</p>	<p>Reviews conducted and consultation strategy updated</p> <p>Reviews conducted</p>
3.2.	<p>Consultation and engagement with CALD community organisations and representatives. <i>(Note, the ALRC does not determine the subject matter of its inquiries. Some ALRC inquiries will be of more relevance to CALD communities than others).</i></p>	<p>Commissioners and Legal Officers</p>	<p>Throughout each inquiry</p>	<p>Number of consultations held and submissions received from CALD community organisations and representatives</p>
3.3	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <p>Review feedback mechanisms and search functions on ALRC website relevant to CALD communities.</p>	<p>Online Communications Manager, Diversity Working Group</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>Initial review completed</p>
3.4	<p>Conduct a stakeholder survey to collect feedback on the ALRC's performance and level of responsiveness to CALD stakeholders.</p>	<p>Executive Director, Diversity Working Group</p>	<p>At the conclusion of each inquiry.</p>	<p>Survey distributed and results compiled at the conclusion of each inquiry</p>
3.5	<p>Provide feedback to CALD communities about the results of consultations and/or inquiries in a number of ways including by using the ALRC's website, through fact sheets, articles in publications and media as well as through conferences and seminars.</p>	<p>Executive Director, Commissioners and Legal Staff</p>	<p>At the conclusion of each inquiry</p>	<p>Number of fact sheets, articles and conference presentations</p>

## 4. Capability

It is important for all ALRC employees to be equipped with cultural awareness and competency skills to ensure appropriate engagement with CALD communities where it arises in the course of the ALRC's work. *(Note, the ALRC does not have a service delivery role and does not often engage directly with CALD individuals beyond its engagement with representative organisations in the course of inquiries).*

Minimum Obligations:

**4.1 Cultural Competency** – Agency to have training and development measures to equip staff with cultural competency skills.

**4.2 Research and data** – Agency to collect ethnicity data on the culturally and linguistically diverse groups with which the agency engages and to which it delivers services directly or indirectly.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
4.1	<b>Cultural Competency</b>  Induction materials are updated with appropriate information about cultural diversity and the ALRC's AMP.	Executive Director	By December 2013 and then annually	Induction material is up to date
4.2	All new employees will be made aware of AMP as part of the induction process.	Executive Director	Upon engagement of new employees	New employees have received information about the ALRC's AMP
4.3	Provide two-yearly cross-cultural training to all employees.	Executive Director	June 2014	All employees have attended cross-cultural training
4.4	<b>Research and data</b>  Compile a list of all CALD stakeholders engaged with in the course of inquiries.	Executive Director, Project Coordinator, Legal Officers	At the conclusion of each inquiry	List compiled of all CALD stakeholders engaged with in the course of inquiries
4.5	In preparing consultation strategies, discussion papers, and reports, consider best practice research and data/statistical resources to better understand demographic and socio-economic characteristics of CALD communities, where relevant.	Legal Officers	Throughout each inquiry	CALD statistics and resources used to inform and/or referred to in consultations strategies and inquiry documents
4.6	Update consultation strategy templates to include a reference guide to best practice research and statistical/data information on CALD communities.	Executive Director, Diversity Working Group	Annually	Consultation strategy templates updated by June 2013

## 5. Responsiveness

The ALRC will ensure its policies and practices are inclusive of CALD communities and promote diversity.

Minimum Obligations:

**5.1 Standards** – Any whole-of-government standards and guidelines developed by the agency must address Multicultural Access and Equity considerations.

**5.2 Policy, program and service delivery** – Provision to ensure that policies, programs, community interactions and service delivery (whether in-house or outsourced) are effective for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

**5.3 Outsourced services** – Where relevant, provision for incorporation of Multicultural Access and Equity requirements into contracts, grant agreements and related guidance material of which the agency has carriage.

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
5.1	<p><b>Standards</b></p> <p>The ALRC will adhere to all whole-of-government diversity standards and guidelines that are developed to ensure access and equity is a consideration in all the ALRC's whole-of-government services, frameworks, protocols and procurements.</p>	Executive Director	From July 2013 and ongoing	ALRC has adhered to access and equity guidelines in all its whole-of-government services, frameworks, protocols and procurements
5.2	<p><b>Policy, program and service delivery</b></p> <p>Review all ALRC policies to ensure they use culturally appropriate language and promote diversity.</p>	Diversity Working Group	December 2013	All ALRC internal policies use culturally appropriate language and promote diversity
5.3	<p>Develop and publish an ALRC diversity commitment in line with the <i>Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions</i>.</p>	Diversity Working Group	July 2013	Commitment is published on ALRC website
5.4	<p>Develop and implement CALD feedback and evaluation mechanism to collect information on how effective ALRC inquiry processes are in communicating with CALD communities</p>	Diversity Working Group	December 2013	Evaluation methodology developed and implemented
5.5	<p>Notification of new positions and the existence of the ALRC's temporary employment register in CALD networks.</p>	Executive Director	July 2013, updated when new positions arise	Increased number of applications from CALD communities to new positions and on the Temporary Employment Register

5.6	<b>Outsourced services</b>  The ALRC will incorporate Multicultural Access and Equity requirements into contracts for any outsourced services it engages.	Executive Director	July 2013	Contracts for outsourced services encourage adherence by contractor to access and equity principles
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## 6. Openness

The ALRC is committed to ensuring our interactions with CALD communities are transparent and that we are accountable to the Australian Government and public.

Minimum Obligations:

**6.1 Publishing** – Agency to publish AMP on agency website and performance reports against agency KPIs for culturally and linguistically diverse clients in agency annual reports.

**6.2 Data** – Agency to make culturally and linguistically diverse data available to other agencies and the public

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
6.1	<b>Publishing</b>  The ALRC's AMP will be published on the ALRC website.	Online Communications Manager	July 2013	ALRC's AMP published on the ALRC website
6.2	A performance report in relation to the AMP will be included in ALRC Annual Reports.	Executive Director and Diversity Working Group	August 2013 and then annually	AMP performance report included in ALRC Annual Reports
6.3	ALRC to report to DIAC and Australian Multicultural Council against AMP.	Executive Director	First report July 2015 and then two yearly	Report provided to DIAC and AMC against AMP
6.4	Where relevant, summary documents and/or fact sheets addressing CALD issues raised in an inquiry will be published on the ALRC website to ensure the visibility of the issues and perspectives of CALD communities.	Legal Officers	At the conclusion of each inquiry	Summary documents and fact sheets produced and published.
6.5	<b>Data</b>  A list of all CALD stakeholders engaged with in the course of each inquiry will be listed in the final Report and published on the ALRC website.	Executive Director, Project Coordinator and Online Communications Manager	At the conclusion of each inquiry	CALD stakeholders are included in stakeholder lists in final Reports and on ALRC website