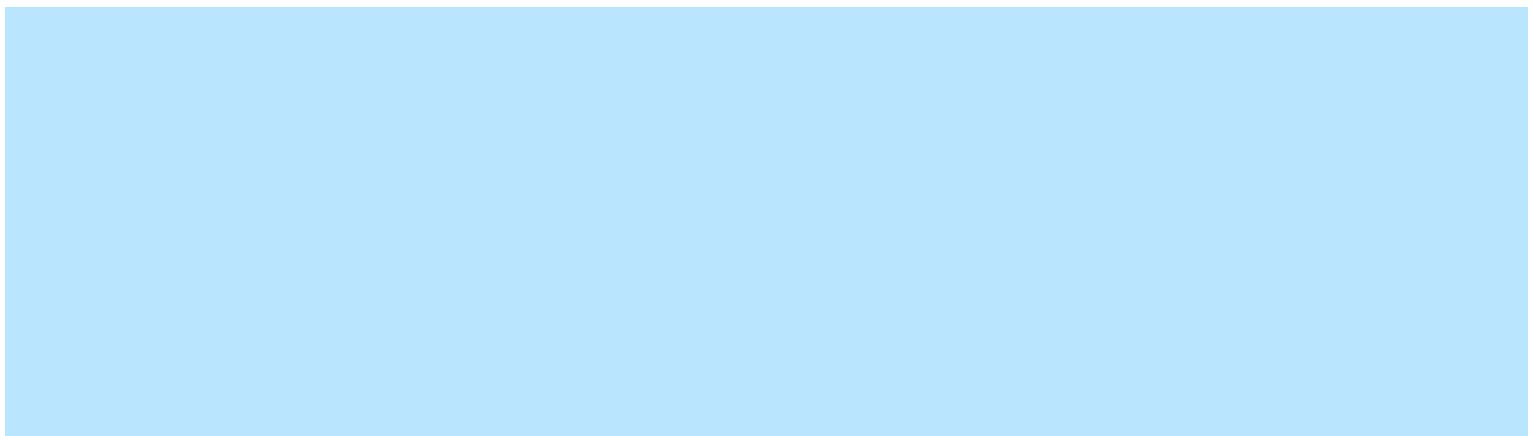




Cultural Diversity in Policy

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What will this resource cover?

This tool aims to guide the consideration of cultural diversity in organisational policy development. Embedding diversity considerations across your organisation's policy demonstrates support for cultural diversity and promotes inclusivity and acceptance of all people. It also a fundamental part of your organisation's commitment to address discrimination, and promote tolerance and acceptance.

Essential Information

Your organisation will already operate under the following legislations, which makes discrimination unlawful:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth);
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth);
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth);
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth);
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth);
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld);
- Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 (extended powers to the Anti-Discrimination Act) (Qld); and,
- Various QLD industrial, civil and administrative legislation.

It is important to develop organisational policy with a cultural diversity lens applied to ensure you consistently engage with CALD communities across the levels of your organisation, its policies, programs and services.

Policy that considers cultural diversity creates a framework and a roadmap of strategies to build internal capabilities and a culture of inclusion. Policy development needs to be a whole of organisation approach, starting at leadership and spreading through all levels of your organisation supported by systemic, organisational and individual commitment and capacity.

Policy is important for any organisation to continually adapt to the changing needs of the community it serves and improve service delivery. Your organisational policies publicly demonstrate the commitments and expectations of the organisation, and assists in creating a program or service that people will be attracted to and use by designing and adjusting service delivery approaches. Diversity considerations in policy development are required by organisations to effectively meet both client and staff needs.

What you need to do

When considering cultural diversity in organisational policy development, it is important to ask the following questions:¹

- Does your organisation have specific policies in place that address cultural competency concerns (including culture, language, religion, dietary needs) of both clients and staff?
- Does the policy review process identify how well the policy reflects cultural competency principles?
- Does your organisation have a policy of outreach to diverse communities?
- Do your clients and their communities have input into your policy development processes?
- Does your organisation have an anti-discrimination policy in place that covers clients, carers and volunteers as well as internal staff?

After considering these questions and rating your organisation against them, it is important to consider what assumptions your organisation is making about cultural diversity, what next steps need to be taken next and who needs to be involved in the policy development and/or the implementation throughout your organisation. A good starting point is to compare current policies against your workforce and client demographics. It is also important to address key diversity issues in the development of new policies or modification of existing ones. This might include

¹ Robertson HL, Katrivesis M, Travaglia J. (2015) *Building cultural competence in your organisation: An assessment tool for the disability services sector*. Georigraphy and Associates, Sydney Australia

bilingual workers, interpreters, cultural competency, discrimination, and religious or spiritual considerations.

Once baseline cultural diversity considerations are integrated into workplace policies, your organisation needs to develop ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to continually meet the changing needs of your clients and workforce. Looking at how diversity issues are integrated across workplace planning and practices is key.

Recognition of cultural diversity within your workforce and existing and potential client groups, provides the framework for achieving and assessing the best possible outcomes for everyone. It assists with planning and can increase client and staff satisfaction and retention.