

Minority rights of ethnic communities

NGO Coalition Fact Sheet 15 (LOIPRs 9 and 21)

Multicultural policy (page 71)

In March 2017, the Australian Government launched the updated Multicultural Policy Statement “United, Strong, Successful”.

This policy emphasises the rights and responsibilities of migrants, however it also emphasises security measures and counter terrorism which needlessly draws a connection between multicultural Australians and acts of terrorism.

Australia should remove references to terrorism from the Multicultural Policy Statement as it draws negative connections between multicultural Australians and terrorism, and provides unintentional support for racist stereotypes and discrimination.

Representation in leadership roles (page 71)

Currently, ethnic minorities are not adequately represented in leadership roles in business or politics in Australia.

For example, despite 32 per cent of Australians being culturally diverse, in 2015, only 1 per cent of Australian Securities Exchange companies leadership roles were held by culturally diverse women, and 27.8 per cent were held by culturally diverse men.

While 23 per cent of Australians are from a non-english speaking background, only 6 per cent of House of Representatives members are from a non-english speaking background.

Australia should implement measures to improve CALD representation in leadership roles, in politics, business, and public service.

Access to services (pages 71)

Australia’s multicultural access policy, *Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting Diversity, Improving Responsiveness* provides that Australian government departments and agencies are obliged to provide equitable access to government services to all Australians, regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

This is a positive step, but there is further work to be done in ensuring that Australians from migrant or culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have equal and equitable access to services and service outcomes. For example, the Government’s migration to online services impacts on CALD clients due to English skills, technological and institutional literacy.

Language service professionals are also lacking in aged care, disability, health and legal services, resulting in a lack of informed consent for both medical and legal procedures.

Australia should:

- **ensure that all public services are fully accessible to all Australians regardless of their level of English language proficiency via the appropriate resourcing for provision of accredited interpreters, translated print and online materials, bilingual and bicultural support workers.**
- **ensure all government departments and agencies implement the recommendations in the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy to provide access to services for CALD persons, and that all staff members are competent in interacting with, and meeting the needs of a diverse clientele.**