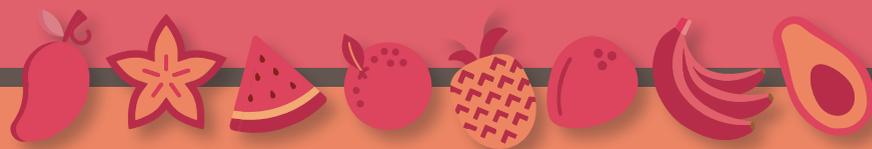




Office of the Public Advocate

Cultural Diversity Plan 2019-2022





Diversity statement

The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) is a human rights organisation that promotes the diversity and inclusion of all people. This is reflected in its mission for a just and inclusive society that respects and promotes the dignity and human rights of all people. To enable that vision to be actioned, our staff and volunteers support people with disability and mental illness and promote and protect their rights. Our values of respect and compassion, integrity, rights and independence reflect and underpin our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

We respect the diverse range of life experiences, skills, abilities, cultural backgrounds and knowledge that staff, volunteers and clients bring to their interactions with us and understand that one size does not fit all. A diverse environment supports flexibility and adaptability.

We are absolutely committed to being inclusive and ensuring that everyone we interact with feels valued, respected and heard. We strive to empower all people to contribute and participate.

OPA's *Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2019-2022* sets out how, over the next four years, we will demonstrate our commitment to supporting our staff, volunteers and clients in an inclusive way.

The framework consists of five plans that seek to address the barriers that prevent some people who may face multiple disadvantages from accessing our services, or contributing to the organisation as staff or volunteers.

These plans are:

- Cultural Diversity Plan
- Disability Action Plan
- Koori Inclusion Action Plan
- LGBTIQ Inclusion Plan
- Gender Equity Plan

Each plan will contain four key strategies to facilitate a common focus and direction.

These strategies are:

- systemic inclusion
- data and service improvement
- employment and economic participation
- community engagement and partnerships.

We strive to be a 'best practice' organisation by creating a welcoming and inclusive culture. The strategies, goals and actions outlined in this framework ensure that OPA's work and culture is inclusive of all members of the Victorian community that it serves, in line with its human rights vision.



About the cover image

Celebrating Culture,
Ink and watercolour
Artist, Meghan Stewart-Snood

"By focussing on what people carry on their heads, it represents what may be going on in their minds."

This painting was purchased by OPA from State Trustees' annual CONNECTED exhibition 2018.

Message from the Public Advocate



I am proud to champion OPA's *Cultural Diversity Plan 2019-2022* and report on some of the achievements of our second plan (2016-2018). Through the Cultural Diversity Planning Committee, OPA has:

- identified and responded to barriers facing culturally diverse communities including an internal report 'Barriers for CALD communities in understanding enduring powers of attorney'
- built strong relationships with ethno-specific organisations, organisations providing services to CALD communities, and the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria through a project funded by the Victoria Law Foundation
- consulted with CALD communities to inform how we deliver community education sessions that are sensitive to cultural nuances
- sought community representatives and organisations that work with CALD communities to equip them with information that can be shared with their communities as, in many CALD communities, people learn by word of mouth
- provided community education sessions with interpreters to inform CALD communities
- consulted with CALD communities on the appropriateness, usefulness and quality of OPA's translated resources
- consulted with a focus group that led to an improved pathway for members of the public to access OPA's Advice Service using a telephone interpreter.

This *Cultural Diversity Plan 2019-2022* is more ambitious and I look forward to reporting back on our achievements at the conclusion of this plan.

Colleen Pearce

Colleen Pearce
Public Advocate

Legislation

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005 seeks to ensure the rich diversity of culture and strengthen creation, production and access to cultural activities, goods and services worldwide. Australia has been a party to the convention since 2009.

The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* encourages the identification and elimination of discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation and their causes, and to promote and facilitate equality.

The *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* prohibits racial and religious vilification. In Victoria, it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their race.

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* enshrines civil and political rights, and some cultural rights into Victorian law.

The *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* establishes reporting requirements for government departments in relation to multicultural affairs.

Systemic inclusion

What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Time line
Hold at least one multicultural celebration annually as part of OPA's organisational life.	OPA celebrates at least one of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Diversity Week in the second last week of March • the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Harmony Day on 21 March • Refugee Week in June. 	Cultural Diversity Planning Committee	Annual celebratory event
The Cultural Diversity Planning Committee will undertake a second Cultural Competence Organisational Review, which will include a staff and volunteer survey and community consultation.	Improvements in OPA's cultural competency and further areas for improvement are captured to inform the next Cultural Diversity Plan. OPA has a baseline understanding of the cultural diversity of staff and volunteers.	Cultural Diversity Planning Committee	By December 2021
The committee is connected with community and/or government multicultural networks.	A representative of the committee attends appropriate network meetings coordinated by an organisation such as the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and the VPS Diversity and Inclusion Community of Practice meetings.	Cultural Diversity Planning Committee Education and Engagement Officer	By end of June 2019
Information about cultural events is available to staff and volunteers.	The inclusion and diversity page of OPAnet includes links to useful information about events, initiatives and research.	Communications Unit Cultural Diversity Planning Committee	By end of 2019

Data and service improvement

What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Time line
Cultural awareness training/information sessions are offered to staff and volunteers.	<p>Staff are invited to attend cultural competence training at OPA by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC), Foundation House, or similar organisations. Volunteers are invited to attend training events alongside staff.</p> <p>Training and information sessions may include foundations of culturally competent practice, working with interpreters, cultural awareness, issues for people of refugee background and other topics relevant to the work of staff and volunteers.</p>	<p>Education and Training Committee</p> <p>Cultural Diversity Planning Committee</p>	At least one session offered annually
Improve the collection of data that can inform initiatives to improve service delivery at OPA.	<p>OPA completes a short report that collates relevant 2016 Census data to inform future service improvement initiatives.</p> <p>OPA has accurate data on the use of interpreters, including language, and about education sessions for CALD groups, including ethnic groups.</p>	<p>Cultural Diversity Planning Committee</p> <p>Data Analyst</p> <p>Legal Education Project Officer</p>	Data report by end of June 2019
Promote the Practice Guideline on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity, and other relevant documents.	<p>The Practice Guideline is promoted in the OPA Orientation program.</p> <p>Relevant documents are promoted through all-staff emails and relevant communications with volunteers.</p>	<p>Manager Quality and Audit</p> <p>Communications Unit</p>	Ongoing
Best practice approaches are recognised through a Cultural Diversity award.	Once a year, at a multicultural celebration at OPA, at least one staff member receives an award recognising the implementation of a best practice approach which furthers the aims of OPA's Cultural Diversity Plan.	<p>All managers</p> <p>Cultural Diversity Planning Committee</p>	First award by end of 2019
Promote the Cultural Diversity Planning Committee to OPA staff.	There is a cultural diversity page on OPAnet that includes information about the plan, useful resources, and a contact person for staff wanting to find out more about the committee. The committee holds a meeting (possibly during a lunchtime) about its work. The plan is part of the OPA Orientation Program.	<p>Cultural Diversity Planning Committee</p> <p>Communications Unit</p>	By end of June 2019

Employment and economic participation

What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Time line
<p>Encourage applications from people with diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> through the wording of OPA's staff and volunteer job advertisements and position descriptions by drawing on relevant learnings from the Victorian Government Recruit Smarter initiative and learnings shared at the Victorian Public Sector Diversity and Inclusion Community of Practice meetings. 	<p>Applications from people with diverse cultural, religious and linguistic needs are regularly received for advertised positions.</p>	<p>Manager, Corporate Services</p> <p>Manager, Safeguarding, Inclusion and Volunteer Programs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>The committee will promote an inclusive work environment that respects and promotes diversity and meets the diverse cultural, religious and linguistic needs of employees and volunteers.</p>	<p>OPA's staff and volunteers value cultural diversity and report positive attitudes in the cultural competence staff survey.</p>	<p>Public Advocate and Leadership Team</p> <p>Cultural Diversity Planning Committee</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>OPA promotes awareness of the VPS Language Allowance.</p>	<p>OPA staff are aware of the VPS Language Allowance and a link to more information about the guidelines is available on OPAnet.</p> <p>A process is in place for identifying staff eligible to access the VPS Language Allowance, and assisting them with the relevant steps.</p>	<p>Cultural Diversity Planning Committee</p> <p>Leadership Team</p>	<p>By end of June 2019</p>
<p>OPA promotes use of relevant social enterprises.</p>	<p>For appropriate events, catering is ordered through the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Sorghum Sisters or similar organisations.</p> <p>OPA seeks to identify other relevant social enterprises.</p>	<p>Cultural Diversity Planning Committee</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Community engagement and partnerships

What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Time line
Develop and maintain working relationships with peak bodies and ethno-specific organisations through OPA's Community Education and Engagement program.	OPA has working relationships with peak bodies, key service providers and ethno-specific organisations. OPA identifies opportunities for joint initiatives and projects.	Education and Engagement Officer Advice and Education team	Ongoing
An 'Engagement and Translation' project is undertaken.	OPA has developed updated translated content about planning for the future in targeted languages. OPA has engaged with ethno-specific organisations to ensure the appropriateness and quality of the translated materials.	Education and Engagement Officer Legal Education Project Officer Communications Unit	2019-2020
OPA follows best practice when developing translated resources.	An OPA 'Best practice translation guideline' is developed to guide the process of developing translated resources at OPA.	Communications Unit Education and Engagement Officer Legal Education Project Officer	By June 2020
OPA draws on appropriate aspects of the Victorian Government's Multicultural Communication Policy and learnings from the OPA 'Engagement and Translation' project to guide Communications Unit activities for CALD communities.	The OPA Communications Unit's Standard Operating Procedures documents the approach.	Communications Unit	By June 2019
OPA delivers community education sessions to CALD communities in response to requests and through engagement with ethno-specific organisations.	OPA delivers regular community education sessions to CALD communities.	Advice and Education team Education and Engagement Officer	Ongoing
OPA records its engagement and partnership activities.	Engagement and partnership activities are recorded and reported on annually.	Education and Engagement Officer	By end of July annually



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