



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Multicultural Plan 2026-2029



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which our students live and are educated throughout Western Australia.

We acknowledge and understand that Elders, parents, families and communities are the first educators of their children and we recognise and value the cultures and strengths that Aboriginal children bring to the classroom. Aboriginal people have a long tradition of teaching and learning through sharing their connections with country, community, language and culture, and through their oral histories, stories and lived experiences that are passed from generation to generation.

We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.

The word Aboriginal is taken to mean Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Indigenous. When referring to individuals, use the term Aboriginal person.

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Department of Education
151 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004
9264 4111
education.wa.edu.au

This material is available on request in appropriate alternative formats.

Director General's foreword

Western Australia's rich cultural and linguistic diversity is proudly reflected in our school communities and workplaces. This diversity is a strength of our system of public schools, and the Department of Education will continue to support our students and staff – regardless of background – to work, study, learn and thrive.

The Department's Multicultural Plan 2026–2029 has been developed in line with the State Government's Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework priorities of:

- harmonious and inclusive communities
- culturally responsive policies, programs and services
- economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation.

The plan outlines our ongoing commitment to creating environments that are fair, equitable, and welcoming for all students, staff, and school communities. It also reinforces the Department's strong stance against all forms of racism, as well as racial and religious vilification, ensuring that every member of our education system is treated with dignity and respect.

The Department will continue to build on the progress made through our current policies and programs by taking further action to strengthen support for students who speak English as an Additional Language and/or Dialect (EALD) and by celebrating the richness of our diverse communities across our schools.

We are also dedicated to supporting our staff from every background, as their perspectives and experiences are key to our success as a public education system. By embracing the diversity of our workforce, we strengthen our capacity to deliver inclusive, culturally responsive education.

I look forward to working alongside everyone in our system to foster an environment where everyone is respected, supported and encouraged to reach their potential.



Jay Peckitt
Director General



Our diverse community

Western Australia has a diverse community which has greatly contributed culturally and economically to our state. The proportion of Western Australians born overseas is larger (32.2%) than the national average (27.6%).

The Multicultural Framework informs the definition of culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) as generally applying to groups and individuals who differ according to religion, language and ethnicity, and whose ancestry is other than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Anglo Saxon or Anglo Celtic.

Our plan will also refer to EALD students who come from diverse multilingual backgrounds and whose first language or dialect is other than standard Australian English, and who need additional support to develop proficiency in English.

Due to data collection methods, our reporting for EALD students may also include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Our staff

The Department's work environments are increasingly multicultural. As at 31 March 2025, 12.6% (6,822) of employees who shared their diversity identified as CaLD. This has increased since June 2020, when 9.4% of employees who shared their diversity identified as CaLD. Diversity disclosure in the Department is not mandatory.



Employees identifying as CaLD

12.6%

The top five countries of birth of CaLD employees are:

- India**
- Philippines**
- Malaysia**
- Singapore**
- Thailand**

The top five languages spoken by CaLD employees are:

- Hindi**
- Mandarin**
- Tagalog**
- Filipino**
- Thai**

Our students

As at Semester 1, 2025 schools identified 15.9% of EALD students need additional support. In total, 28% of students come from a language background other than English.

The top four languages (other than English or Aboriginal English) spoken by students are:

- Mandarin**
- Punjabi**
- Arabic**
- Tagalog**

Purpose

In alignment with the Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework, all public sector organisations are required to develop and implement a Multicultural Plan. The Department of Education has developed its second Multicultural Plan, reaffirming our commitment to fostering a culturally responsive education system that recognises and values the diversity of its students, staff, and communities.

The plan acknowledges the rapidly changing world and increasing complexity that our students and staff are facing. It reflects the Department's understanding that it is a shared responsibility to address the broader societal issues that influence student engagement, wellbeing, and achievement. The Department will continue to provide schools with the appropriate guidance and support to navigate complex social and cultural issues with confidence and competence. The commitment to cultural responsiveness and anti-racism must be embedded at the system level to ensure consistency, equity, and long-term impact across the public education sector.

The purpose of the Multicultural Plan is to outline the key actions that will be undertaken by the Department to support schools in promoting intercultural understanding and developing culturally responsive practices.

We recognise the important role schools play in supporting students from diverse cultural backgrounds to thrive in their learning and development, while also acknowledging the significance of engaging with CaLD families and communities in meaningful and respectful ways.

We also acknowledge shared experiences of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and CaLD communities. While maintaining a specific focus on CaLD populations, the Plan aligns with existing efforts across the Department to address these overlapping issues in a coordinated and culturally sensitive manner.

The development of the Plan was guided by a cross-divisional Working Group within the Department of Education, ensuring that it reflects diverse perspectives and expertise from across the organisation.

We also provide staff, facilities and resources to the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) and the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA). The services and programs of these agencies form part of the Department's Plan.

Although the actions outlined in the Plan are system-level initiatives, they are designed to support schools in their core mission of delivering high-quality teaching and learning. Through this Plan, the Department aims to uphold its commitment to equity and inclusion in all aspects of education, including to support our people.

Strategic landscape

The Multicultural Plan 2026–2029 supports the Department’s current policies, programs and initiatives that focus on our culturally diverse schools and their communities.

The actions outlined in our Multicultural Plan 2026–2029, together with a range of Department strategies, collectively contribute to wellbeing, social inclusion and community harmony in our schools and their school communities.

Monitoring and reporting

The Plan will be monitored and reported on annually to the Office of Multicultural Interests. Reporting on progress against the Plan will form part of the Department’s annual reporting obligations.

Many actions align with initiatives currently underway in education. Individual actions will be monitored by the Department’s business areas and reported to Corporate Executive as required.

Definitions

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD)

- Applied to groups and individuals who differ according to religion, language and ethnicity, and whose ancestry is other than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic.
- For reporting in this plan, People Services defines CaLD as people who are born in identified countries that are not mainly English-speaking.

English as an Additional Language and/or Dialect (EALD)

- Students whose first language is a language or dialect other than standard Australian English, and who need additional support to develop proficiency in English.
- These students come from diverse multilingual backgrounds.

Policy priorities

Policy priority 1 – Harmonious and inclusive communities

Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework strategies:

- Promote the benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity and celebrate the achievements of people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Address racism and discrimination at both an individual and institutional/systemic level, including implementing the Policy Framework for Substantive Equality.
- Develop workplace cultures that are welcoming and inclusive of all Western Australians.
- Initiate and support events and projects that build mutual understanding and respect between cultures.

Action	Responsibility	Deliverables/Measures	Timeframe
Teaching and Learning			
Provide all students with access to curriculum and assessment that is appropriate to their needs, recognising individual students may need adjustments to allow them to demonstrate their learning.	School Curriculum and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 11 and Year 12 ATAR, General and Foundation English as an Additional Language or Dialect courses. • Pre-primary to Year 12 Languages curriculum in 12 locally developed subjects and courses. • Equitable adjustments for EALD students and those with disability from CaLD backgrounds. • Languages services in accordance with the Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020, that include interpreting and translating services to support schools, parents, students and the community to access information, services and School Curriculum and Standards Authority application forms. • Pre-Primary to Year 10 Languages being adopted and adapted from the Australian Curriculum version 9. • Syllabus review of Years 11 and 12 ATAR Languages. 	Ongoing Review and implement curriculum by December 2027.
Schools are supported with practical guidance and resources to successfully engage with EALD students and CaLD parents and communities.	Statewide Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and guidance have been developed and published for use in schools. 	Ongoing
Access and Representation			
Provide formal acknowledgement of outstanding achievement in senior secondary school through the provision of exhibitions and awards.	School Curriculum and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibitions and awards are granted by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority to senior secondary students including students with CaLD background studying Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) courses and Vocational Education and Training (VET) to recognise individual excellence. 	Annually

Action	Responsibility	Deliverables/Measures	Timeframe
Demonstrate commitment to cultural diversity and inclusion by recognising and promoting key multicultural observances, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, • UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, and • International Migrants Day. 	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media content is accessible, inclusive, and representative of diverse communities. • Promotional materials are relevant, culturally appropriate, and available in accessible formats. • Communication strategies are designed to engage a broad and diverse audience. • Campaigns reflect the diversity of the population and ensure equitable access to information. 	Annually
Address the needs of students by considering factors of social, cultural equity, and diversity in managing complaints and correspondence.	Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence with community members and parents should consider the needs of students, taking into account factors such as social equity, cultural diversity, and ensuring compliance with Department values, legislation, policies, and procedures in line with the framework. • Directors of Education and Coordinators Regional Operations are up to date with OPL 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness course', 'Accountable and Ethical Decision Making', and Diverse WA Cultural Competency training. 	Annually
	Professional Standards and Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible, culturally inclusive, information resources for parents and carers explaining identified topics of common complaints and concerns related to student education, including disability, developed in partnership with internal and external Department stakeholders. • Existing resources for parents and carers, and communication templates for principals (eg Connect & Respect resources) reviewed for cultural sensitivity and suitability in schools. 	Ongoing, reported annually
Staff training and support			
Provide resources and support via professional learning to enhance leaders' capability to foster positive workplace cultures that are equitable, inclusive and culturally safe.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and professional learning to build leadership capability to foster culturally safe, equitable and inclusive workplace cultures are delivered to leaders. • Review agency marketing, promotional and branding material to reflect greater workforce and community diversity. 	Ongoing
Provide opportunities for cultural competency training for staff to increase understanding of cultural diversity in schools.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to increase understanding of cultural diversity in schools is made available for all staff including promotion of Diverse WA training. 	Ongoing

Action	Responsibility	Deliverables/Measures	Timeframe
Develop employee awareness and understanding of workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying related to race. Improve staff knowledge and awareness of the Department's Grievance Framework through promotion of the Grievance Framework online module.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate and provide learning opportunities for employees related to revised Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment and Bullying policies and procedures once they are published. Establish baseline workforce awareness of workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying related to race, and inclusion sentiment. Information and awareness raising programs for the revised Grievance Framework are carried out. Completion rates for the Grievance Framework online module are measured. 	June 2026
	Professional Standards and Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion rates for Accountable and Ethical Decision-Making Training. Statistics for Integrity Education Sessions conducted by Standards and Integrity. 	Ongoing
Promote resolution of workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying related to race at the local level. Upskill and promote the Equal Opportunity Contact Officer network as a support for employees experiencing workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying related to race.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Grievance framework completed. Updated and frequent targeted training for Equal Opportunity Contact Officers (EOCOs) is delivered. Promotion of the EOCO role. 	December 2026

Desired impact

- Creating a school environment that is welcoming and inclusive.
- Public school students and staff have access to a safe, inclusive, supportive, and culturally responsive school environment.
- Promote the benefits of diversity to staff and students.
- Improve staff awareness and understanding of culture as a form of diversity.
- Enhance support for leaders to foster workplaces that are culturally safe, equitable and inclusive.



Policy priority 2 – Culturally responsive policies, programs and services

Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework strategies:

- Enable culturally diverse communities to have meaningful input into policies, programs and systems through co-design and planning, co-delivery and implementation, and evaluation processes.
- Implement recruitment and selection processes that facilitate workforce diversity, and provide opportunities for the development of cultural competencies across the workforce.
- Integrate multicultural policy goals into strategic and corporate planning, procurement and review processes.
- Identify inequities in service access and outcomes for Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and develop strategies to address them.
- Provide language services to ensure language is not a barrier to equitable access to information and services, including complaints processes.
- Collect and analyse cultural and linguistic data to contribute to the identification of client needs, the development of policies and programs, and evaluation of outcomes.

Action	Responsibility	Deliverables/Measures	Timeframe
Research and stakeholder engagement			
Maintain effective communication and working relationships with all stakeholders and partners through measures such as collaboration and consultation.	School Curriculum and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new Languages curriculum in consultation with CaLD communities where the languages are spoken and taught. 	Ongoing
Families whose first language is not English can understand the enrolment process for their child.	Strategy and Policy Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment campaign promotional material is available in a selection of different languages. 	Ongoing
Collaborate with government and non-government agencies, networks and groups in order to provide consistent support and provision of services to EALD students and CaLD communities.	Statewide Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department representation and collaboration with multicultural and humanitarian entrant service providers is maintained. 	Ongoing
Staff training and support			
Continue to promote recruitment and employment practices and policies that are equitable, fair, transparent and culturally responsive.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and employment policies are reviewed and/or developed as required. • Recruitment, selection and appointment support and systems are reviewed for cultural responsiveness, transparency and equity, including the training provided to panel members and the Department's candidate management system. 	Ongoing
Increase understanding of the purpose of diversity disclosure and encourage staff to disclose diversity information to improve accuracy of workforce diversity data.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff disclosing diversity is increased. 	Ongoing

Action	Responsibility	Deliverables/Measures	Timeframe
Strengthen collection and monitoring of CaLD staff data to gain more accurate staff diversity information and identify trends/gaps.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) diversity data is monitored and reported quarterly through the Public Sector Commission Diversity Dashboard. Workforce equity and diversity metrics is reported in school workforce profiles. Undertake school case studies (where there are high proportions of CaLD students), for practices and learnings regarding staff diversity and inclusion to inform system-level workforce inclusion improvements. 	Ongoing
Provide professional learning to promote approaches that support better learning outcomes for EALD students and strengthen school partnerships with CaLD communities.	Statewide Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural diversity and responsiveness awareness/training is included in professional learning and support materials. 	Ongoing
Teaching and Learning			
Continue to monitor student enrolments at Intensive English Centres (IECs), to manage appropriate access and capacity.	Strategy and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional capacity to IECs to cater to students who require access to an IEC. Provide access to school bus services for IEC students. 	Ongoing
Make available resources to address racism and promote multiculturalism.	Statewide Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools have access to a suite of resources that have been developed in consultation with the Office of Multicultural Interests. Schools have access to a suite of resources to support the delivery of respectful relationships education. 	Ongoing
Support schools to provide a teaching and learning environment responsive to the diverse needs of EALD students to improve learning outcomes throughout their school journey including Intensive English Centres (IEC) pathway.	Statewide Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have access to support to assist in the implementation of whole-school approach for EALD students. Schools are provided with curriculum resources to inform teaching and learning to support EALD students. Schools are supported with funding in teaching EALD students in IEC and mainstream EALD programs (where applicable) and provide adjustments to access learning programs/certificates where applicable and required. EALD students are supported through Career Education, VET Pathway and Engagement and Transition. 	Ongoing

Action	Responsibility	Deliverables/Measures	Timeframe
Access and representation			
Ensure that available translated versions of key documents and resources are made accessible and easy to find on the Department's website.	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translated documents are clearly presented and easy to locate on the Department's website. 	Ongoing
Facilitate access to professional interpreting services and translated documentation to enable schools and the system to meet the needs of EALD students and CaLD communities through an interpreting and translating budget.	Statewide Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools can access interpreting services to communicate with CaLD families at no cost to schools. Translating services are available to translate Department-endorsed documents into the most common languages spoken by students. 	Ongoing
Ensure all Department communications are written in plain English to support clarity and accessibility.	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department communications guidelines are reviewed and updated in line with best-practice standards, and website and intranet content is regularly assessed to ensure alignment with these guidelines. 	Ongoing

Desired impact

- Culturally responsive practices and services are strengthened for staff, students and school communities from CaLD backgrounds.
- Policies and procedures are reflective of need of CaLD students.
- Those students who require access to an Intensive English Centre can be catered for at an Intensive English Centre. CaLD families are supported through the enrolment process.
- Clearer communication with Department staff and students.
- Improved accessibility and inclusion.
- Policies, procedures and systems are increasingly inclusive for staff.
- Increased trust and engagement.



Policy priority 3 – Economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation

Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework strategies:

- Implement recruitment and career development processes that support employment and progression of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Achievable equitable representation of people from culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds at all levels and in decision-making roles.
- Identify, develop and implement initiatives that encourage social, cultural, civic and political participation by members of Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community.
- Develop and strengthen global connections through partnerships with Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities and businesses.
- Identify, develop and promote initiatives that support the development of businesses and the entrepreneurial potential of Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse community.

Action	Responsibility	Deliverables/Measures	Timeframe
Research and stakeholder engagement			
Engage with and respond to research reflecting changing economic, social and educational landscapes and needs as they emerge and impact on students.	School Curriculum and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Curriculum and Standards Authority oversees the registration of students identifying as coming from CaLD backgrounds, as well as those speaking languages other than English. This includes overseas students from CaLD backgrounds studying in Perth. • New languages subjects are being developed in Western Australia to better reflect the evolving demographics of the state. 	Ongoing
Staff training and support			
Promote and support career development of staff from CaLD backgrounds.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career development opportunities for CaLD staff are identified within and across a range of occupational groups in the Department. 	Ongoing
Identify the equity index for CaLD employees for each occupational group within the Department's workforce to determine if action is required to support those employees.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A process to identify and monitor the equity index for CaLD employees is established. • The equity index of any class of employees where the index is less than 100 is improved. 	31 December 2026
Access and representation			
Continue to promote and encourage people from a CaLD background to work at the Department of Education.	People Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities with the Department are provided to people who are CaLD. • Promote the use of Public Sector Commissioner's Instruction 39. 	Ongoing
Support people from CaLD backgrounds to participate in opportunities to be engaged in school decision making processes.	Statewide Services DDG Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen support for schools to increase CaLD representation on school boards and councils. • School boards and councils are provided with strategies to support CaLD community representation when appropriate in the local context. 	Ongoing
Desired impact			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People from CaLD backgrounds are engaged in school decision making processes. • The representation of staff from CaLD backgrounds is improved within and across occupational groups. 			

Shaping the future

