



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Agency Multi-Cultural Plan

2013-15



Message from Brian Pink

Australian Statistician

I am pleased to present the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Agency Multicultural Plan 2013-2015*.

Australia is a culturally and linguistically diverse country. The 2011 Census of Population and Housing revealed that of Australia's 21.5 million people, over 25 per cent were born overseas, with a further 20 per cent of residents having at least one overseas born parent. In 2011, 81 per cent of Australians aged 5 years and over spoke only English at home, while 2 per cent did not speak English at all.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' mission is to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service. Our ability to deliver a high quality statistical service relies on ensuring that access to our programs, services and products is equitable, regardless of cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

Our vision for multicultural access and equity is one where Australians of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are actively engaged with the ABS and where governments and communities can make informed decisions about culturally and linguistically diverse communities. I am confident that by delivering on our commitments within this Agency Multicultural Plan we will continue to deliver on our vision.

Finally, I invite members of the Australian community to provide feedback on our access and equity performance and our Agency Multicultural Plan.

Brian Pink
Australian Statistician



Respecting Diversity. Improving Responsiveness.



Our vision for Multicultural Access and Equity:

The Australian Bureau of Statistics vision for Multicultural Access and Equity is one where Australians of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are actively engaged with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and where governments and communities can make informed decisions about culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Our Agency:

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's national statistical agency. The ABS provides key statistics on a wide range of economic, environmental and social issues. The ABS also plays an important leadership and coordination role in relation to the statistical activities of other official bodies, both within Australia and internationally.

The ABS mission is to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

ABS data is utilised by governments and the community to make informed decisions which can impact policies, programs and service delivery relating to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Support of the ABS from Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities is important for ensuring that ABS' statistics remain relevant and are representative of the culturally and linguistically diverse population. Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population can be engaged in one or more of the various aspects of ABS operations, including stakeholder consultation during the development of a collection process, providing data for ABS surveys or using ABS data to make or support informed decisions. In achieving this, the ABS will seek to leverage the skills and insights of its culturally and linguistically diverse staff base.

The ABS plays a key statistical leadership and coordination role in providing and supporting the information needs for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. In particular:

- the ABS undertakes the Census of Population and Housing (Census) every five years, which is a comprehensive and valuable source of information about each culturally and linguistically diverse group, and the Australian population as a whole;
- the ABS maintains a number of statistical classifications and standards relevant to informing culturally and linguistically diverse statistics;
- a range of ABS statistical products are identified in the Australian Government's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Toolkit, to support other government agencies develop and measure their Agency Multicultural Plans;
- ABS household surveys collect and make available information on culturally and linguistically diverse groups; and
- the ABS partners with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to fund the work program of the National Migrant Statistics Unit. The National Migrant Statistics Unit leads the development of migrant statistics in Australia to better support policy makers and planners to meet emerging challenges related to migrants and migration.

Our Agency Multicultural Plan:

The *ABS Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP) 2013-15* was developed by the AMP Working Group. This Group is chaired by ABS' Chief Operating Officer who is also the ABS Senior Multicultural Access and Equity Champion. The AMP Working Group members include representatives from all ABS business areas. Representatives are at the Assistant Statistician or Director level, to help ensure commitment to Multicultural Access and Equity across the organisation.

Through this AMP the ABS has identified significant access and equity activities that are already undertaken within the ABS, as well as committing to actions that will further improve access and equity for Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population. Actions within the AMP align with the ABS Values, which are Access for all, Trust of Providers, Integrity, Service, Professionalism and Relevance. These actions also seek to progress the ABS mission of assisting and encouraging informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.



1. Leadership

Leadership is important to the ABS in our role as Australia's national statistical agency, as governments and the community rely on our statistics to make informed decisions about Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Effective leadership in Multicultural Access and Equity will enable the ABS to maintain the integrity and relevance of our statistics, provide appropriate services and access for all, and maintain the trust of our providers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

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.

	Action	Accountability	Timeline	Target
1.1.	1.1.1 The ABS Senior Multicultural Access and Equity Champion sponsors Multicultural Access and Equity implementation requirements within the ABS.	Senior Multicultural Access and Equity Champion	From July 2013	AMP targets are met.
	1.1.2 The ABS AMP Working Group guides and monitors the implementation of the AMP.	Senior Multicultural Access and Equity Champion	By June 2015	AMP targets are met.
1.2	1.2.1 ABS staff are made aware of and are committed to the ABS AMP through: a. ABS wide communications; and b. Local level engagement with staff about relevant AMP actions.	a. Secretariat, AMP Working Group b. Resource Centre Heads	From July 2013	Staff understand the purpose of the AMP and how it relates to the ABS and their business.
	1.2.2 An annual ABS AMP report outlining activity and performance will be produced for ABS staff.	Secretariat, AMP Working Group	Annually (July)	ABS AMP report is tabled and discussed at appropriate staff forums.



2. Engagement

Effective engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse communities is important to the ABS for understanding their statistical needs. This helps to encourage active support of ABS collections to maximise response rates in culturally and linguistically diverse groups and ensure culturally and linguistically diverse providers can respond to ABS surveys and information requests. Effective engagement also supports Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population in using ABS products to make informed decisions.

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.

	Action	Accountability	Timeline	Target
2.1.	2.1.1 The ABS continues its ongoing engagement strategies with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing a culturally and linguistically diverse Census engagement and enumeration strategy, to be tested in the 2014 Census pilot. b. The current National Migrant Statistics Unit Data Needs and Priorities Review. 	a. Assistant Statistician, 2016 Population Census Branch b. Director, National Migrant Statistics Unit	a. By June 2014 b. By June 2014	a. Test of engagement and enumeration strategy informs preparations for the 2016 Census. b. Review recommendations are approved by the Executive Leadership Group.
2.2	2.2.1 Develop the ABS Language and Communication Plan, incorporating current practices such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of the Telephone Interpreter Service; • the use of ABS culturally and linguistically diverse staff as appropriate; • the register of ABS staff who speak another language; • the ABS Service Charter produced in other languages; • the use of the Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies. 	Director, Policy and Planning Section	By June 2015	The Language and Communication Plan is implemented.
2.3	2.3.1 Continue ABS' role in international engagement to provide liaison between Australia and other countries and international organisations, in relation to statistical matters.	Director, International Relations and Regional Statistical Development Section	From July 2013	ABS statistical expertise and contributions are valued by international organisations.



3. Performance

Measuring ABS' access and equity performance enables the ABS to monitor and evaluate success in our business programs and target actions to improve access for all, relevance of our products and services and the trust of providers.

Minimum Obligations:

- 3.1 Performance indicators and reporting** – Agency to develop a set of Key Performance Indicators (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.

	Action	Accountability	Timeline	Target
3.1.	3.1.1 Develop a set of KPIs relating to engagement with, and outcomes of the services we provide to, culturally and linguistically diverse providers, clients and data users.	Chief Operating Officer	By June 2014	KPIs are included and reported on in the 2013-14 ABS annual report.
	3.1.2 Continue to effectively implement strategies, through the ABS Workplace Diversity Action Plan 2013-17, to ensure the ABS workforce reflects the diversity of the Australian community.	Chief Operating Officer	From July 2013	The ABS workforce is representative of the Australian community.
3.2	3.2.1 Review current ABS feedback and complaint mechanisms to ensure accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse groups. <i>NB: Current feedback and complaint mechanisms are:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback forms on the ABS website • The National Information Referral Service • Survey Charter complaints resolution 	Assistant Statistician, ABS2017 Customer Services Branch	By June 2014	Appropriate changes to feedback and complaint mechanisms are identified and implemented.
	3.2.2 Consider and act on appropriate feedback from the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and other appropriate advisory bodies.	Resource Centre Heads	From July 2013	Feedback provided through FECCA and other advisory bodies is incorporated into ABS work programs as appropriate.



4. Capability

It is important for ABS staff to have the right cultural competency skills to enable them to effectively engage with Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population. This will ensure the ABS upholds its values of maintaining the trust of providers and access for all.

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.

	Action	Accountability	Timeline	Target
4.1	4.1.1 Undertake a training needs analysis on cultural competency skills and address any gaps.	Director, Workforce Strategies Section	By October 2014	Recommendations of analysis are implemented or scheduled for implementation.
	4.1.2 Staff are expected to undertake the APS-wide cultural competency eLearning course (once available). Staff in the following areas undertake training within three months of release: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Information and Referral Service Provider Contact Unit Office of the Statistician and External Engagement Population Survey Operations National Migrant Statistics Unit Senior Executive Service New staff undertake training within six months of release. All other staff undertake training within 12 months of release.	Resource Centre Heads	By June 2015	95% of ABS staff complete the eLearning module within expected timeframes.
	4.1.4 Continue to develop an <i>asset-based</i> approach (e.g. cross cultural training, register of staff who speak another language and secondments to other statistical organisations) to enable staff development and support for Asia and the Pacific Region, as part of the ABS International Relations Strategy.	Director, International Relations and Regional Statistical Development Section	By June 2015	ABS has capable staff to support Asia and the Pacific Region in relation to statistical matters.
4.2	4.2.1 Continue to collect and disseminate ethnicity data on culturally and linguistically diverse groups through Census and Household survey outputs.	Australian Statistician	From July 2013	Planned statistical releases occur on schedule, as per ABS policies.
	4.2.2 Continue to improve cultural and linguistic survey and administrative data through actions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing the partnership with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on data development, standards and dissemination; Working closely with DIAC in dissemination and/or updating of the ABS's <i>Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity</i>; and Investigating the integration of relevant culturally and linguistically diverse datasets to expand the range of data about culturally and linguistically diverse communities. 	Director, National Migrant Statistics Unit	June 2015	Appropriate data products are expanded and accessible to, and shared with, other agencies. <i>Note: This is in accordance with Recommendation 7 of the Access and Equity Inquiry and the government's response.</i>



5. Responsiveness

Responding effectively to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse clients and stakeholders enables the ABS to produce relevant statistical products and services to encourage and assist informed decision making for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

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** – Provision for incorporation of Multicultural Access and Equity requirements in funding agreements with states or third-party service deliverers.

	Action	Accountability	Timeline	Target
5.1	5.1.1 Maintain the Australian statistical standards and classifications relevant to cultural and linguistic diversity. Relevant statistical standards and classifications include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups • Australian Standard Classification of Languages • Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups • Standard Australian Classification of Countries • Demographic Variables • Language Variables • Standards for Statistics on Culture and Language Diversity 	Directors, National Migrant Statistics Unit (where appropriate) and Standards and Classifications Section	By June 2015	Standards and classifications referred to are reviewed every 5 years, as per ABS policy. <i>Note: In accordance with Recommendation 7 of the Access and Equity Inquiry, and the government's response, the updated Standards for Statistics on Culture and Language Diversity will be released in 2013.</i>
5.2	5.2.1 Continue to hold and participate in user group meetings, which inform the ABS work program in relation to culturally and linguistically diverse issues.	Program Heads	From July 2013	Culturally and linguistically diverse user issues are considered and incorporated into ABS work programs as appropriate.
	5.2.2 Continue to engage and utilise ABS culturally and linguistically diverse field staff and interviewers, as appropriate, for both the Census and a range of other ABS surveys.	First Assistant Statistician, ABS2017 Program Delivery Division	From July 2013	Language skills of ABS field staff and interviewers are utilised, as available and appropriate, to communicate with providers.
	5.2.3 Ensure representation on key ABS provider and user groups is culturally and linguistically diverse, as appropriate.	First Assistant Statistician, ABS2017 Program Delivery Division	By June 2015	Representation of cultural and linguistic diverse is identified on key ABS provider and user groups.
	5.2.4 Review Census Topics of greatest relevance to culturally and linguistically diverse groups including ancestry, country of birth and country of birth of parents for the Census of Population & Housing in 2016 to maximise the quality of this data.	Director, Census Data Section	By December 2014	Census 2016 Topics and Procedures are confirmed.
5.3	5.3.1 Where relevant, incorporate multicultural access and equity requirements into procurement, property and contracts as well as relevant guidance material and tender documentation.	Director, Procurement Section	From January 2014	New contracts adhere to relevant procurement guidelines and rules.



6. Openness

In accordance with ABS values, it is important for the ABS to be transparent and accountable about its interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse Australians. This supports the ABS mission for assisting and encouraging informed decision making by governments and the community.

Minimum Obligations:

- 6.1 Publishing** – Agency to publish AMP on agency website and performance reports against agency KPIs for culturally and linguistically diverse in agency annual reports.
- 6.2 Data** – Agency to make culturally and linguistically diverse data available to other agencies and the public.

	Action	Accountability	Timeline	Target
6.1	6.1.1 Publish the ABS AMP and key performance information relating to access and equity.	Secretariat, AMP Working Group	a. By 1 July 2013 b. Annually, from July 2014	a. The ABS AMP is accessible to the public on the ABS website. b. The ABS Annual Report includes information on the ABS's performance against its Access and Equity KPIs and related achievements.
6.2	6.2.1 The ABS publishes its content on the ABS website free of charge, enabling equitable access to all Australians. The following access points for culturally and linguistically diverse data will continue to be maintained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant and Ethnicity theme page (via ABS Topics@ a Glance) • Quickstats Country of Birth (via Census portal) 6.2.2 Implement the <i>Australian Government Information Management Office's Web Guide: Better Practice Checklist - Access and Equity issues for Websites</i> for new ABS web content, where appropriate.	Director, National Migrant Statistics Unit and Assistant Statistician, 2016 Population Census Branch	From July 2013	Accessibility to culturally and linguistically diverse and migrant related statistics is maintained or improved.
		Director, Web Publishing Section	By June 2014	Checklist is incorporated into web publishing processes.

We invite members of the Australian public to provide feedback on the *ABS Agency Multicultural Plan 2013-2015* by using the ABS website feedback form or calling the National Information and Referral Service on **1300 135 070**.



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