COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN

Cultural Diversity Working Group Action Plan
1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027

- The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (the Office) aims to deliver accessible, equitable and responsive services to people from all backgrounds, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, to ensure that the entities we oversee in government, Defence, higher education, law enforcement and the private sector act reasonably and treat people fairly.

> **Access** – means **culture** and **language** should not impede the delivery of Australian Government programmes and services to those who are entitled to receive them.
> **Equity** – means that Australian Government programmes and services should deliver outcomes for **culturally and linguistically diverse** Australians on par with those for other Australians.

Purpose

- The **Cultural Diversity Champion** for the Office is Senior Assistant Ombudsman, Joanne Mulder**.**
- The Cultural Diversity Champion is accountable for:
  - Leading the Office's Cultural Diversity Working Group (CDWG)
  - Leading the development of a CDWG Action Plan each year
  - Reporting to the Executive on the delivery of this Action Plan
  - Fostering collaboration within the CDWG and with other relevant staff/teams across the Office to enable the implementation of this Action Plan
  - Ensuring this Action Plan is published on the Office Intranet
  - Ensuring this Action Plan is published on the Office websites.

- The CDWG is a group of Office staff from a range of backgrounds who contribute input, ideas and advice based on lived experiences to assist the Office to:
  - Provide accessible, equitable and responsive services to the public and
  - Provide equitable and inclusive employment to staff from multicultural and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- The CDWG will:

Approved by Joanne Mulder – SAO CALD Champion | 16.09.2026

- Comment on business-as-usual (BAU) and change initiatives across the Office with cultural and linguistic diversity considerations in mind
- Organise celebrations for days of significance such as Harmony Day
- Raise awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity issues
- Foster collaboration, take action and invite interested staff to take actions as outlined in the CDWG Action Plan
- Liaise with relevant areas of the Office to task and delegate specific actions from the Action Plan, where relevant and approved by the SAO CALD Champion
- Seek to learn from and share broader APS-wide activities relating to cultural diversity initiatives, as appropriate.

CDWG Governance			
Action	**Deliverable**	**Timeline**	**Lead**
1. Establish and maintain an effective Working Group to drive cultural and linguistic diversity initiatives including those outlined in the annual CDWG Action Plan.	• Update Terms of Reference for the working group.	As needed	CDWG
	• Actively encourage membership.	Ongoing	CDWG
	• Define resource needs for implementation.	As needed	Champion
	• Engage senior leaders and relevant staff in the delivery of commitments.	Ongoing	Champion
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on CDWG actions.	Ongoing	CDWG

CDWG internal actions			
Action	**Deliverable**	**Timeline**	**Lead**
2. Build relationships, cross cultural understanding and diversity awareness through celebrating culturally significant events.	• CDWG members to organise celebrations for days of significance such as Harmony Day	Ongoing	CDWG

3. Promote cultural diversity inclusion and relevant Office policies for staff across the Office	• Communicate our commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity to all staff.
	  ○ Publish CDWG Action Plan on the intranet
	  ○ CDWG newsletter
	  ○ CDWG intranet Posts
		Ongoing	CDWG, Secretariat and Human Resources (HR).

	○ HR to post intranet posts on cultural leave, Community Language Allowance, etc. ○ HR to publish Community Language Allowance register on the intranet.		
	• Ensure cultural and linguistic diversity is considered when HR/Office policies and procedures are initiated and reviewed. • CDWG members to contribute comments, input and advice based on their lived experiences. • HR to share CALD related data from the APS State of the Service report and Office staff survey reports	Ongoing	CALDWG and HR
4. Promote positive relations across the Office through inclusion strategies.	• Collaborate with other working groups in the office • Identify opportunities for joint events with other Office working groups - highlighting intersectionality of experiences and shared diversity and inclusion initiatives	Ongoing	CALDWG
5. Have a policy or plan in place to increase the recruitment and retention of staff from culturally diverse backgrounds	• HR to develop and publish the Office Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy on the intranet • HR to develop a plan to increase the recruitment, retention and development of staff from culturally diverse backgrounds		HR

Actions related to Office commitments to external parties, stakeholders, clients and the public			
Action	**Deliverable**	**Timeline**	**Lead**
6. Communicate the Office's commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity to the public	• Publish the CDWG Action Plan on the Office websites (OCO, ACT, NSO) • Publish social media posts related to days of significance e.g. Harmony Day celebrations		SAO Cultural Diversity Champion, CDWG
7. Provide input to reporting on the Office's whole-of-government MA&E commitments.	• Provide input to the Office's report to the Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) periodically on the Office's performance against its Multicultural Access & Equity (MA&E) policy commitments •		SAO Cultural Diversity Champion/CDWG/Complaints Branch

8. Ensure the Office delivers accessible, equitable and responsive services to clients from a CALD backgrounds	• Ensure the Office provides staff with clear guidelines about when and how to use translation and interpreter services including through up-to-date policies and procedures
	• Ensure the Office provides new and existing staff with relevant training at regular intervals including:
	  ○ Working with interpreters
	  ○ Cultural awareness training.
	• Ensure the cost of translating and interpreting is factored into new policy proposals or other budget bids
			Complaints Branch

	• Collect data on the cultural and linguistic diversity of the clients who use the Office's services		Complaints Branch
	• Ensure the Office uses plain English in its publications and translates relevant publications, such as client brochures, in a range of languages other than English. • Ensure the languages for translations are reviewed at regular intervals, drawing on evidence-based advice from the Australian Government's Telephone & Interpreting Service (TIS) or other evidence-based sources, taking into account the intended audience (general public, older migrant groups, international students, immigration detainees etc.)		Complaints Branch
	• Ensure the Office's complainant satisfaction survey is accessible to people in languages other than English and that the languages selected each year are based on robust data		Complaints Branch