

Victorian Government Report on Multicultural Affairs

2022–2023



Authorised by the Victorian Government
1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government acknowledges Victoria's First Peoples and their ongoing strength in practising the world's oldest living culture. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Victoria is a proud, multicultural state. We value diversity, including the 65,000 years of living First Peoples culture. We recognise that since time immemorial, First Peoples in Victoria have practised their law and lore, customs and languages, and nurtured Country through their spiritual, cultural, material and economic connections to land, water and resources.

We acknowledge the strength and resilience of First Peoples in the face of historical and ongoing injustices and the survival of their living cultures, knowledges and traditions.

We will all have a brighter future if we continue to learn about and value Aboriginal culture, practices and ways of working.

Acknowledgement of Treaty and Truth

Treaty gives us a pathway to change what is not working – to finally give First Peoples a say on the policies that impact their lives.

The Yoorrook Justice Commission is helping us understand our history from the perspective of Aboriginal people – how it impacts on their present and how Treaty can be the pathway to practical changes and solutions. Learning more about the history of First Peoples in this state will help us build a shared future and shared pride in the Aboriginal heritage of this land we all love, and which is our home.

We started on the path to Treaty eight years ago, and we have made significant progress in this journey.

Through Treaty, we can bring Victorians together and feel shared pride in Aboriginal heritage, history and culture.

Thank you

The Victorian Government acknowledges the important role of government partners, including local councils and service agencies, in delivering the programs and initiatives reflected in this report. We thank all community leaders and volunteers who have contributed to supporting multicultural communities across our state.

We also thank our government colleagues for their assistance in collating the data for this report as well as all the community members who shared their powerful stories.

Message from the Minister

Victoria continues to pave the way as one of the world's most vibrant and inclusive multicultural societies.

I am proud to share the *Victorian Government Report on Multicultural Affairs 2022–23*. This report highlights our commitment to embracing and celebrating Victoria's unique cultural diversity and ability to create a respectful, dynamic and inclusive society for all.

This report also demonstrates our commitment to transparency and accountability, providing an overview on government spending and outcomes against government policies and initiatives. Most importantly, this document outlines how the Victorian Government has worked with multicultural communities to deliver meaningful programs that have supported multicultural Victorians.

I would like to acknowledge The Hon Ros Spence MP who served as Minister for Multicultural Affairs from March 2020 to December 2022. Minister Spence was critical in leading the government response to support Victoria's multicultural communities at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of The Hon Colin Brooks MP, who served as Minister for Multicultural Affairs from December 2022 to October 2023. During his time, Minister Brooks worked tirelessly to support Victoria's multicultural communities as the state recovered from the pandemic and significant flooding in October 2022.

In 2022–23 the Victorian Government committed **\$63.3 million** for programs, initiatives and communications activities that support our multicultural and faith communities. This included **\$6.4 million** for culturally significant infrastructure upgrades so communities can enjoy culturally safe spaces.

A **\$3.3 million** investment was committed to support Victoria's newly arrived migrant communities and people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to improve settlement outcomes. As well, **\$4.4 million** was committed to continue delivering the Victorian African Communities Action Plan to help address the social and economic needs of Victorians of African heritage.

Victorians were also supported to celebrate cultural festivals and traditions through a **\$2.8 million** investment in the Multicultural Festivals and Events program.

I would like to thank all government departments and staff who have contributed to this report. I would also like to sincerely thank our multicultural community members. Your commitment and leadership supporting your communities is deeply appreciated and I cannot thank you enough for the important work that you do.

I am dedicated to working closely with Victoria's multicultural communities to continue delivering our commitments. I look forward to continuing our shared work in driving meaningful outcomes for all communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ingrid Stitt'.

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

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2022 African Music and Cultural Festival

Introduction

Victoria continues to be one of Australia's most culturally diverse states, with about one-third of our population born overseas.

Victoria's current population represents more than 300 ancestries, speaks 290 languages, and follows almost 200 faiths.

This report is a snapshot of the Victorian Government's commitment to support multicultural and faith communities and to progress multiculturalism across the state.

Legal and policy frameworks underpinning this report

This report fulfils the Victorian Government's requirement of the **Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 (Vic)**. The Act requires government departments to report annually to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and to the Victorian Parliament on programs and initiatives that support Victoria's multicultural community.

Table 1 lists legislative and policy documents that guide the government's mission to build an inclusive, engaged, and cohesive Victoria.

Table 1: Victoria's multicultural frameworks

| Type | Description |
|---|--|
| Acts of Parliament | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multicultural Victoria Act 2011: Provides the framework for a whole of government approach to multiculturalism in Victoria. The Act also establishes the Victorian Multicultural Commission as a statutory authority, sets out reporting requirements for departments and ministers, and requires Victorian government departments to develop and implement cultural diversity plans.• Equal Opportunity Act 2010: All Victorian departments and service providers have a positive duty under this Act to take reasonable and proportionate measures to identify and eliminate discrimination.• Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006: Sets out the basic rights of Victorians to live with freedom, respect, equality and dignity. It also requires public authorities to act compatibly with the Charter.• Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001: Prohibits behaviours that incite or encourage hatred, serious contempt, revulsion or severe ridicule against another person or group of people because of their race or religion. |
| Victorian Government Multicultural Statement | A publicly available policy statement that sets out the Victorian Government's vision and commitment to multiculturalism in Victoria. ¹ |
| Departmental cultural diversity plans | Plans created by government departments to facilitate diversity and multiculturalism both internally and when delivering services and programs to the Victorian community. |
| Individual departmental policies, plans and strategies | Departments undertake ongoing reviews of policies, strategies and planning frameworks. These reviews respond to the changing needs of culturally diverse communities and reflect the government's commitment to multiculturalism. |

¹ The policy statement can be found on the Victorian Government website's Multicultural policy statement page.

Working to achieve positive outcomes

The Multicultural Affairs Outcomes Framework² outlines the Victorian Government's approach to multiculturalism.

Programs and initiatives are grouped under the framework's five goals (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Goals of the Whole of Government Multicultural Affairs Outcomes Framework

| Goal | Desired outcomes for Victorians |
|--|--|
| Victorians are safe and secure | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victorians live free from abuse, violence and fear• Victorians have suitable and stable housing |
| Victorians are healthy and well | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victorians have good physical and mental health• Victorians have equitable access to health and human services |
| Victorians are able to participate fully | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victorians participate in learning and education• Victorians participate in and contribute to the economy• Victorians have financial security• Victorians understand, are empowered by and exercise their rights• Victorians have access to an environment that promotes liveability, sustainability and inclusion |
| Victorians are connected to culture and community | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victorians are socially engaged and live in inclusive communities• Victorians can safely identify with and connect with their culture and identity |
| Victorians have equal rights and opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victorians live free from discrimination• Opportunities to participate in the workforce are available to all Victorians |

This report does not capture the full range of activities Victorian government departments and portfolio agencies have undertaken. Instead, it provides a snapshot of activities and achievements supporting multicultural and multifaith communities between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023 across the Victorian Government. Included case studies highlight the positive impact of initiatives on local communities.

² Victorian Multicultural Policy Statement, p. 25. Available from the Victorian Government website's Multicultural policy statement page.

Terminology, abbreviations and frequently used terms

Language statement

Language is important and can change over time. Words can have different meanings for different people.

We recognise the diversity of First Peoples, communities and culture throughout Victoria. While the terms 'Koorie' or 'Koori' are commonly used to describe First Peoples of southeast Australia, we have used the terms 'First Peoples' and 'Aboriginal' to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who live in Victoria.

The term 'multicultural community' refers to the vast number of diverse cultural and ethnic groups in Victoria.

The term 'multifaith community' refers to the diverse faith groups in Victoria.

The words 'our' and 'we' in this document refer to the Victorian Government.

The phrase 'racism and discrimination' in this document includes all forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, cultural background, country of origin and faith.

List of government departments

| Acronym | Department |
|---------|---|
| DE | Department of Education ³ |
| DEECA | Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action ⁴ |
| DFFH | Department of Families, Fairness and Housing |
| DGS | Department of Government Services ⁵ |
| DH | Department of Health |
| DJCS | Department of Justice and Community Safety |
| DJSIR | Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions ⁶ |
| DPC | Department of Premier and Cabinet |
| DTP | Department of Transport and Planning ⁷ |
| DTF | Department of Treasury and Finance |



³ On 1 January 2023 the Department of Education and Training became the Department of Education.

⁴ On 1 January 2023 the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning became the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

⁵ On 1 January 2023, the Department of Government Services was established as a new department.

⁶ On 1 January 2023 the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions became the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

⁷ On 1 January 2023 the Department of Transport (DoT) became the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

Victorians are safe and secure

Responding to floods

The Victorian floods in October 2022 resulted in evacuations across Melbourne suburbs and towns near the Maribyrnong River and northern communities along the Campaspe, Goulburn and Murray rivers. Communities in northern Victoria lost homes, businesses, infrastructure, roads, and crops.

Led by Emergency Recovery Victoria, the **Flood Recovery Clean-Up Program** supported local councils in flood-impacted areas to clean up flood debris and collect waste (**DJCS and Australian Government: \$95.00m in 2022–23**). As part of this program, Emergency Recovery Victoria provided free all-hazards structural assessments for residents. Residents with a severely flood-damaged home were also able to get the structure demolished for free.

The **Flood Response for Multicultural Communities** activated emergency funding for households impacted by floods and included targeted funding for multicultural communities in flood-impacted areas (**DFFH: \$2.35m in 2022–23**).

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) partnered with community organisations to deliver:

- on-ground support to multicultural communities during and after the floods
- almost 25,000 culturally appropriate food packages
- more than 4,500 emergency supplies such as mosquito repellent
- tailored in-language information
- referrals to support services
- community information sessions and forums.

The **Multicultural Regional Emergency Management Preparedness, Response and Recovery Program** provided immediate funding to the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and seven regional ethnic communities' councils to deliver immediate relief to community members affected by the October 2022 floods (**DFFH: \$0.80m in 2022–23**).

These organisations:

- delivered more than 80 information sessions tailored to multicultural communities
- developed 24 in-language videos and brochures
- supported more than 570 people to access the Personal Hardship Assistance Program and other emergency support payments
- provided culturally appropriate food to more than 390 families
- offered outreach support and referrals to more than 2,000 community members
- delivered 148 information and care packs on mosquito-borne viruses.

LanguageLoop interpreters representing five languages spent 10 days at the Shepparton Relief Centre to ensure community access to information and resources (**DFFH: \$0.20m in 2022–23**). These interpreters answered questions and enabled community members to receive critical and timely assistance in their preferred language.

The **Tenancy Stress Victoria Pilot** program was established to support Victorian renters in flood-affected areas of Western Melbourne, Loddon and Goulburn (**\$0.25m in 2022–23**). This pilot program supported about 150 renters to maintain viable tenancies through access to integrated legal, social work and financial counselling assistance and through negotiating positive outcomes for renters.

CASE STUDY

Know Your Roots – Shepparton seasonal workers

When flood waters divided a town, 45 seasonal workers could not access their homes and workplaces. These community members had to stay in a relief centre for two weeks. Support agencies provided culturally appropriate food and other essential items and created a culturally safe space.

During this time, the seasonal workers also volunteered at the relief centre, sand bagging and delivering food in canoes to other communities affected by the floods.

CASE STUDY

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services

One month before the October 2022 floods, 108 workers from the Solomon Islands arrived in Castlemaine. All were on Pacific Australia Labour Mobility visas and were contracted to work at a local meat works. Eighty-three of the workers were living in a caravan park alongside Forest Creek.

When the floods arrived, all cabins had to be evacuated due to rapidly rising flood waters. Residents lost food and possessions. Many residents could not go to work for several days and reported experiencing trauma and distress associated with displacement and lack of local support and information.

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) partnered with South East Community Links to provide food and to compensate workers for loss of earnings and possessions lost during the floods. LCMS assisted workers with completing request forms for food vouchers of up to \$100 for each person.

They also helped people complete referral forms from Bendigo Family Financial Services to access culturally appropriate foods purchased and delivered from a Pacific Islands food wholesaler in Melbourne.

LCMS also delivered three information sessions to inform community members about the dangers, actions and prevention of mosquito-borne viruses, mould issues in cabins and the dangers of snake bites. These sessions were held on the caravan park grounds. A community leader translated all information for each session into Pidgin English. Community members were shown how to use repellents and received factsheets on citronella candles, face masks and hand sanitiser.

Continued support to recover from COVID-19

The **Mental Health Uplift COVID-19 Package** provided funding for Cabrini Outreach, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, and Foundation House to continue supporting people seeking asylum and refugees with essential community services through a range of initiatives (**DH: \$2.70m over two years**).

Cabrini Outreach continued its operations at The Hub facility, which provides specialised mental health services to people seeking asylum with or without a Medicare Card. In 2022–23 The Hub assisted 200 people from multicultural backgrounds who faced social isolation and psychological distress through a multidisciplinary approach. This incorporated services such as triage, psychiatric assessment and management, therapeutic intervention, counselling, referrals, and support.

Funding also allowed the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre to deliver the Homelessness and Basic Needs Response Program. This program addressed issues faced by people seeking asylum who were experiencing or were at risk of homelessness due to financial hardship. In 2022–23 the program supported 58 people and 21 households with rent assistance and 96 people and 57 households with short-term accommodation.

This funding also enabled Foundation House to provide more than 11,000 hours of specialist psychiatric and counselling services for people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds who had experienced torture and trauma.

The **Priority Response for Multicultural Communities grants program** supported multicultural community organisations to grow, recover and strengthen from the COVID-19 pandemic (**DFFH: \$2.40m in 2022–23**). In 2022–23, 77 multicultural and faith organisations received funding to strengthen their workforce through professional development programs and jobs training. This program was established in August 2020 to respond to the increasing need for community-led support beyond the immediate emergency response to the pandemic.

The Department of Health's (DH) **COVID-19 Community Grants Program** funded 51 community organisations in 2022–23 to support their communities with information about testing, vaccinations, and access to COVID-19 medication (**DH: \$1.42m in 2022–23**). These organisations successfully reached 31 priority language groups and encouraged behaviour change towards COVID-19 vaccinations, testing and safe social engagement. The program also increased third-dose vaccination rates in 30 out of 31 priority language groups. Eighty per cent of community leaders who took part in program activities reported feeling more confident in their COVID-19 vaccination and protection knowledge.

Located in the northern suburbs of metropolitan Melbourne, the **Northern Community Support Group** distributed accurate COVID-19 messaging consistent with the government's public health advice to address common misinformation and vaccine hesitancy (**DJCS: \$1.50m in 2022–23**). Through its two project sites at the Multicultural Youth Centre and Preston Mosque, the group also ensured the community remained connected through providing emergency food relief.

The **CALD Outreach Initiative** funded the Municipal Association of Victoria and 19 local councils to employ multicultural outreach workers to work directly with culturally diverse families and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services (**DE: \$1.48m in 2022–23**). Outreach workers focused on addressing barriers to participation in kindergarten that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. They supported families and young children to take part in early childhood services and to transition to school. Outreach workers also supported families with kindergarten registration and enrolment, provided advice to ECEC educators, and increased awareness about eligibility for Early Start Kindergarten for children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions' (DJSIR) **Small Business Victoria CALD and Aboriginal Engagement** team provided a dedicated service to improve access and uptake of government business services, supports and programs by Victoria's multicultural businesses (**DJSIR: \$0.90m in 2022–23**). In 2022–23 the team engaged with 1,774 multicultural small businesses and 207 business organisations, delivering 52 in-person and virtual business forums in six languages. The forums attracted 53,292 views online.

The Department of Education (DE) funded the Brotherhood of St Laurence to continue delivering the **Family Learning Support Program**. This program offers intensive outreach support to families and children with culturally diverse backgrounds living in public housing sites (**DE: \$0.40m in 2022–23**). The program employed bicultural workers to apply their cultural knowledge, language skills, lived experience and community connections to link these families with ECEC services and to support transitions to school. They also circulated key COVID-19 health and vaccination messages and helped facilitate social connectedness in the community to reduce COVID-related stress and isolation.

The **International Education Resilience Fund** supported 10 Victorian universities to maintain their international education programs and support their international students following significant disruption to the international education sector (**DJSIR: \$0.20m in 2022–23**). In 2022–23 the fund provided enhanced mental health and employment support for students most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding also supported international students through rising cost-of-living pressures by providing emergency aid bursaries and food vouchers.



Keeping communities safe

The Department of Transport and Planning's (DTP) **TAC L2P Program** supports all Victorian learner drivers to complete the mandatory 120 hours of supervised driving required to qualify for a driver's licence (**DTP: \$8.64m in 2022–23**). Local councils and not-for-profit community agencies deliver the program. In 2022–23 the program supported 50 women from culturally diverse backgrounds over the age of 23 through the WomenCan initiative to get a driver's licence. Community organisations across metropolitan and regional local government areas also actively promoted the TAC L2P Program within their networks. For example, the City of Casey held an L2P presentation at the general meeting of the Sri Lankan Elders Welfare Association and displayed L2P flyers in simple English at council-managed community centres.

The **South Sudanese Australian Youth Justice Expert Working Group** was established to address the over-representation of young South Sudanese Australians in the Victorian youth justice system (**DJCS: \$1.66m in 2022–23**). Prominent South Sudanese Australian community leader Dr Santino A Deng was appointed chair of the Expert Working Group in September 2022. The project was run in partnership with the Commission for Children and Young People. In 2022–23 the project:

- established an advisory group with community and expert representatives to support the Expert Working Group
- consulted with South Sudanese Australian community members, including children and young people, about challenges facing the community
- developed a quantitative evidence base on the experiences of South Sudanese Australians in the Victorian criminal justice system
- reviewed case files of African Australians under youth justice supervision to understand the drivers of contact with the system, identify protective factors and determine prevention and early intervention opportunities
- funded community-led projects aimed at supporting South Sudanese Australian children and young people.

Staff from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's (DEECA) Port Phillip Forest and Fire Planning Unit attended the **Springvale Snow Fest** community event in Springvale to engage the local community in ways to manage bushfires and forests (**DEECA: \$0.03m in 2022–23**). The unit organised bilingual speakers from within the department to attend and offered a forest values survey to better understand the community's needs. Before the event, translators prepared the survey in a range of languages. Of the 156 surveys completed, 24 were completed in Chinese, Vietnamese, Hindi, or Khmer.

Equal access to secure accommodation

Delivered by Tenants Victoria, the **Empowering Victorian Renters Project** provided targeted education for multicultural renters to strengthen community capacity and knowledge of rental rights and responsibilities (**DGS: \$0.33m in 2022–23**).

In 2022–23 this project:

- developed new multilingual digital resources including videos, animations, and in-language factsheets to demystify the **Residential Tenancies Act 1997**
- held three online forums for 100 attendees in partnership with the Victorian Multicultural Commission to cover renters' rights, scams and preparations for moving into a rental property
- held 10 interactive sessions for 101 attendees to educate newly arrived migrant and refugee communities on rental rights, rental discrimination, the functions of VCAT and supporting renters living with disability, family violence.

Between February and March 2023, Consumer Affairs Victoria ran a communications campaign on international students' accommodation and renting rights for Chinese students. The campaign leveraged website content, social media, translated factsheets and regular Mandarin SBS Radio programs to help Chinese students and key stakeholders understand renting and accommodation rights and responsibilities.

The **\$250 Power Saving Bonus Community Outreach Program** assisted vulnerable Victorian households to access the \$250 Power Saving Bonus Program (**DEECA: \$5.70m in 2022–23**). The program provided a \$250 payment to help ease cost-of-living pressures and encouraged households to compare energy prices and save money. The program worked in partnership with trusted community and not-for-profit organisations to deliver targeted assistance to households experiencing vulnerability including culturally diverse Victorians. Between July 2022 and March 2023, the program supported more than 52,000 Victorians to apply for the \$250 payment. Of these people, seven per cent reported speaking a language other than English as their primary language.

Between March and August 2023, the program supported more than 67,000 households to apply for the payment. Of these, nine per cent reported speaking a language other than English as their primary language.

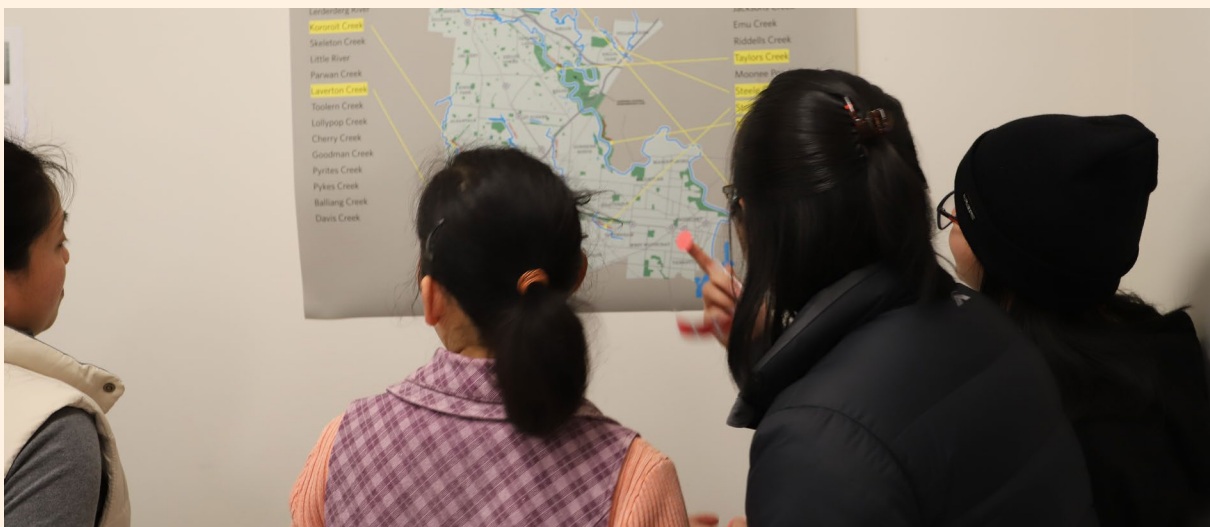
DEECA's **Energy Assistance Program** provided tailored, one-on-one assistance to people experiencing financial hardship to navigate the energy market and save money on their energy bills (**DEECA: \$0.90m in 2022–23**). Program partners have strong relationships with multicultural organisations in their networks to ensure tailored phone support and translations are available when needed. In 2022–23, 2,993 households received support through the program. Of these households, more than 20 per cent reported speaking a language other than English as their primary language.

CASE STUDY

Waterways of the West CALD Engagement Program and Toolkit

The Waterways of the West region comprises Werribee (Wirrbi), Maribyrnong (Mirrangbamurn) and Moonee Ponds (Moonee Moonee) catchments and is one of the most multicultural regions in Melbourne. In partnership with social impact agency Ellis Jones, DEECA engaged with key stakeholders in the region who collectively determined the need for guidelines that outline best practice, case studies and resources to engage culturally diverse communities on waterways in this region.

In response, DEECA developed the Waterways of the West CALD Engagement Toolkit to support community groups in the region to engage with multicultural and faith communities on waterway issues and policies. The Minister for Water launched the toolkit on the banks of the Werribee River (Wirribi Yaluk) in May 2023, with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, the Werribee River Association and culturally diverse community members present. The initiative has been recognised through two awards: the Better Future Australian Design Awards 2023 and the international GOV Design Award 2022.



Community members engaged during the project.

Victorians are healthy and well

Equal access to health and wellbeing

Through the **Priority Primary Care Centres** initiative, DH set up 29 Priority Primary Care Centres across Victoria to alleviate the burden on emergency departments (**DH: \$47.60m in 2022–23**). In 2022–23 the centres provided free GP-led care to more than 15,000 culturally and linguistically diverse people without Medicare cards such as people seeking asylum and international students who needed urgent care but not an emergency response.

The **Life!** program developed a three-year culturally and linguistically diverse program reform strategy to increase program uptake in multicultural communities (**DH: \$5.20m in 2022–23**). The program helps Victorians to reduce their risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease through free group courses and telephone health coaching to adults.

In 2022–23 the program:

- engaged 74 multicultural groups, including people from Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic-speaking backgrounds, to provide nutrition, stress management and physical health supports
- engaged health professionals, interpreters and bilingual facilitators to deliver 14 evidence-based and culturally relevant Healthy Living sessions addressing health risks and healthy behaviours for multicultural communities
- partnered with 12 community-led organisations to establish culturally responsive referral pathways for patients from multicultural backgrounds to reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

BreastScreen Victoria re-engaged with clients from non-English speaking backgrounds through the **Reengaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Clients for a Breast Screen** initiative to address lower rates of breast screening among women with multicultural backgrounds.

In 2022–23 the initiative successfully:

- contacted 1,775 clients, of which 88 per cent attended screening
- reached 5,033 lapsed clients from 15 language groups through in-language SMS and 3,314 through outbound in-language calls
- screened 223 new clients through 26 language group bookings with in-person interpreters
- provided 6,032 clients with multilingual resources and translated materials via SMS.

Through the **Mental Health Practitioners (MHP) Initiative**, the Victorian Government provided funding for MHPs in specialist schools with secondary-aged enrolments (**DE: \$5.00m in 2022–23**). In 2022–23 MHPs supported 4,336 English as an Additional Language students and 2,736 students from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to increase mental health promotion and prevention strategies. DE also partnered with the national centre of excellence in youth mental health, Orygen, to develop a practice resource for MHPs to support the mental health and wellbeing of culturally diverse young people in Victoria.

The **Gambler's Help Multicultural Program** provided culturally appropriate services to minimise community and individual personal, health, social and financial harm that arises from gambling (**DJCS: \$1.10m in 2022–23**). Seven partner organisations were funded to deliver services focused on counselling and community engagement initiatives.

Key activities included:

- therapeutic counselling and financial support services that engaged about 460 people across Victoria
- community development, education and awareness raising including in-language resources that reached 70,000 people through community engagement efforts
- providing small grants to community organisations to develop creative approaches to encourage community conversations around gambling harm.

CASE STUDY

Building Bridges Project – Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health

Through DH’s Community Grants program, the Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health delivered the Building Bridges Project. This was one-year advocacy and research project that enabled people with migrant and refugee backgrounds to take part in ‘share circles’ focus group discussions and action research to inform the mental health reform process.

The project used a community-based participation approach to conduct the share circles. This allowed Building Bridges to collect rich, in-depth information about the complexity of migrant and refugee women’s experiences of mental health and wellbeing.

The project engaged 99 migrant and refugee women, non-binary, and gender diverse people from 21 cultural groups and eight stakeholder organisations across Victoria.

The Building Bridges’ research report has contributed to the evidence base on how sociocultural factors, such as access to health information and services, the migration process and gender and cultural norms, disproportionately affect and shape mental health outcomes for migrant and refugee women. It also highlighted how to strengthen existing understandings of mental health and wellbeing, and help-seeking practices.



Four engaged community members holding the completed Building Bridges research report.

Victorians are able to participate fully

Communicating with Victoria's multicultural communities

Culturally competent communication is critical for programs and initiatives to create meaningful outcomes for communities. Effective communication is key to:

- breaking down barriers
- improving access to services
- better outcomes for Victoria's multicultural and multifaith communities.

Interpreting and translation services

In 2022–23 DFFH supported state-owned language services provider LanguageLoop to implement its transition from a contractor-based model to an employment-based model. The transition will support a high-quality, professional, and sustainable interpreting and translating sector in Victoria to ensure culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians can access essential language services.

Table 3: Expenditure on interpreting, translating and language allowance services, 2022–23

| Department | Expenditure (excluding GST) | Percentage of total government expenditure on translation (%) |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Department of Education | \$2,818,678 | 8.23 |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | \$326,243 | 0.95 |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | \$4,516,406 | 13.19 |
| Department of Government Services | \$166,355 ⁸ | 0.49 |
| Department of Health | \$23,712,066 | 69.26 |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | \$316,288 | 0.92 |
| Department of Justice and Community Safety | \$1,739,815 | 5.08 |
| Department of Premier and Cabinet | \$403,290 | 1.18 |
| Department of Transport and Planning | \$239,583 | 0.70 |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | \$0 | 0.00 |
| Total | \$34,238,724 | 100 |

⁸ \$83,651 of the total provided above covers expenditure over the first half of the financial year (1 Jul 2022 – 30 Dec 2022) prior to the Department of Government Services being established.

Multicultural media campaigns

In 2022-23, the Victorian Government committed that departments and agencies spend at least five per cent of campaign advertising budget on multicultural media (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: Departmental multicultural media campaign expenditure as a percentage of total media campaign expenditure⁹

| Department | 2021–22 expenditure (%) | 2022–23 expenditure (%) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Department of Education | 10.51 | 8.80 |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | 10.56 | 8.97 |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | 7.50 | 10.44 |
| Department of Government Services ¹⁰ | N/A | N/A |
| Department of Health | 15.99 | 11.10 |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | 12.72 | 11.79 |
| Department of Justice and Community Safety | 9.24 | 9.48 |
| Department of Premier and Cabinet | 19.68 | 12.05 |
| Department of Transport and Planning | 7.30 | 11.45 |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | 5.27 | 6.34 |



⁹ These figures represent campaign advertising only and exclude expenditure on interstate and international advertising. Figures include campaign advertising undertaken via all channels, including both digital and non-digital.

¹⁰ No data is available for 2021–22 because the Department of Government Services was established on 1 January 2023.

Table 5: Total Victorian Government multicultural media campaign expenditure as a percentage of total media campaign expenditure

| Financial year | Multicultural expenditure (%) |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 2022–23 | 6.7 |
| 2021–2022 | 10.4 |
| 2020–2021 | 9.6 |
| 2019–2020 | 7.6 |
| 2018–2019 | 5.0 |
| 2017–2018 | 5.2 |
| 2016–2017 | 6.0 |
| 2015–2016 | 5.5 |
| 2014–2015 | 5.8 |

The **Empowering Victorian CALD Communities to confidently use public transport** research project was undertaken in partnership with Bastion Insights to better understand the behaviours, needs, challenges and pain points of Victoria’s multicultural communities accessing public transport (**DTP: \$0.23m in 2022–23**). Research included in-depth interviews with South Asian, Chinese-speaking diaspora, Greek, Middle Eastern, Vietnamese, and African groups to develop a best practice Marketing Playbook for future communication campaigns.

DPC conducted **paid advertising for multicultural events** and celebrations to mark significant community celebrations and encourage community members to gather in COVID-safe ways. Advertising was designed specifically for each event and featured in-language and English content across radio, print and social media channels. Advertised events included:

- the birth of Guru Nanak in November 2022 (Hindi, Punjabi)
- Indian Independence Day (English, Punjabi, Tamil, Bengali)
- Afghan Independence Day (Dari)
- Mid-Autumn (Moon) Festival (Chinese, Vietnamese)
- Rosh Hashanah (English, Russian)
- Yom Kippur (English, Russian)
- Sukkot (English, Russian)
- Dussehra/Vijayadashami (Hindi, Nepalese, Burmese, Bhutan)
- Turkish Republic Day (Turkish)
- Diwali/Deepavali (English, Hindi, Tamil, Nepali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu, Sinhalese)
- Hanukkah/Chanukah (English)
- Christmas (Greek, Italian)
- Eid al-Adha (Arabic, Farsi, Indonesian, Turkish).



CASE STUDY

'Stay Well This Winter' advertising campaign

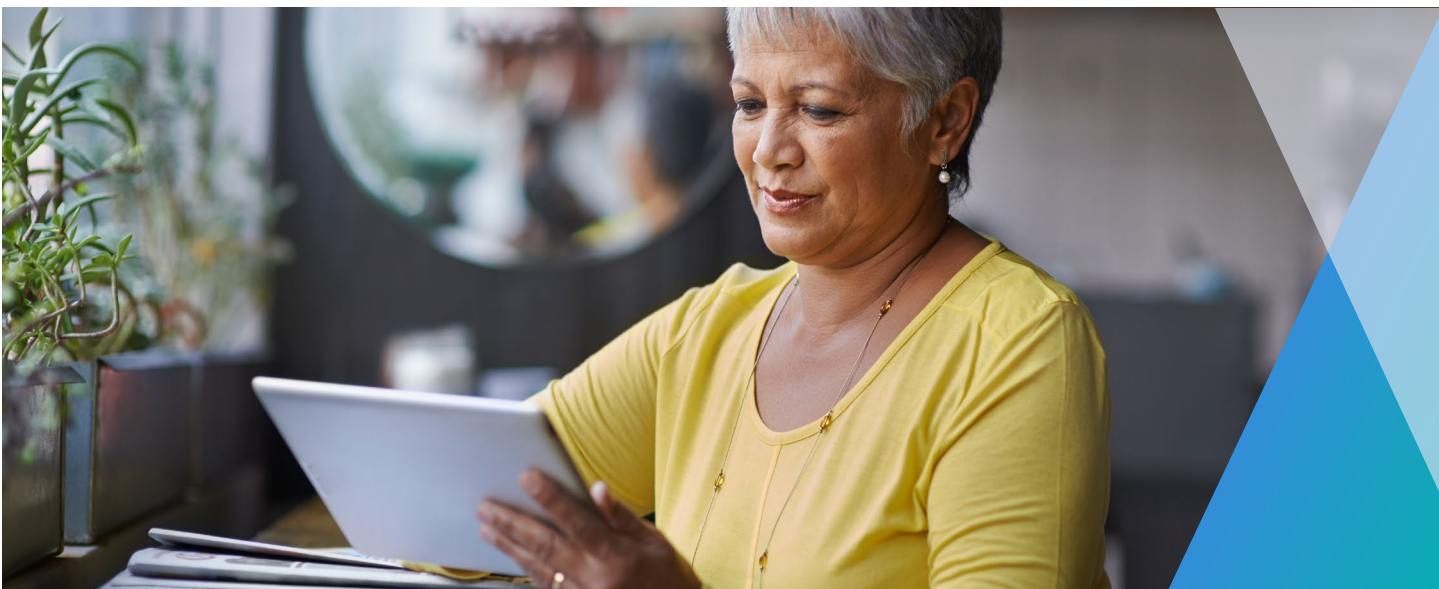
Between 20 July and 4 September 2022, DPC ran a major public health and safety campaign to encourage Victorians to protect themselves and vulnerable community members from infectious diseases and COVID-19. Messaging encouraged Victorians to wear masks indoors, gather in well-ventilated spaces, get vaccinated and access respiratory clinics for treatment if they were ill.

The campaign included approximately 15 per cent of expenditure on multicultural media channels to reach Victorians from all cultural backgrounds. It was launched across social media, radio, audio streaming, outdoor advertising and print channels.

Campaign assets were translated into a range of community languages based on population size, English language proficiency and vulnerability to COVID-19.

These languages included:

- Arabic
- Cantonese / Traditional Chinese
- Farsi
- Filipino/Tagalog
- Greek
- Hindi
- Italian
- Malayalam
- Mandarin / Simplified Chinese
- Punjabi
- Spanish
- Turkish
- Urdu
- Vietnamese.



Opportunities to learn and grow

From 2023, all three- and four-year-old children from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds have been able to access a free or low-cost kindergarten program through DE.

Free Kinder was available in 97 per cent of funded kindergarten services. This allowed children to attend kindergarten for free or at a reduced cost for:

- between five to 15 hours per week for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten
- 15 hours per week for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

The **Kindergarten Fee Subsidy** allowed access to a free or low-cost kindergarten program for eligible families in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten programs. Also, **Early Start Kindergarten** supported eligible three-year-old children to access up to 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten per week. DE's **Pre-Purchased Kindergarten Places** reserved places for children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage to enrol outside of normal enrolment periods.

The **Early Childhood Language Program** supported around 7,000 four-year-old children in funded kindergartens to learn a language other than English (**DE: \$5.38m in 2022–23**). Around 190 kindergartens offered learning in-language three hours per week, and 10 kindergartens offered learning in-language for 12 hours per week. The program employs about 200 language teachers and is delivered in 22 languages including six different Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Auslan, Cantonese, Mandarin, Chin Hakha, French, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese.

DE funded Foundation House to deliver the **Early Years Program** with expanded activities to support new arrivals from Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Myanmar/Burma. This included a series of videos on transitions from kindergarten to school in Afghan community languages such as Dari, Pashto and Hazaragi. These videos were co-designed with communities from Afghanistan to increase understanding of the importance of early years education and to help with the transition to school.

The **Refugee Education Support Initiative** helped build the capacity of schools to meet the education and wellbeing needs of students and families from refugee backgrounds (**DE: \$2.60m in 2022–23**).

There were three initiatives delivered under this program:

- The Refugee Education Support Program, delivered by Foundation House and the Centre for Multicultural Youth, supported 35 schools across five government and non-government school clusters to support the achievement, engagement, and wellbeing of students from refugee backgrounds.
- The Schools Support Program delivered professional development sessions to more than 2,000 school staff across Victoria.
- Learning Beyond the Bell supported more than 200 homework clubs and established 12 new clubs with resources, advice and training for coordinators and volunteer tutors.

DE's **Place Based Partnerships to Support School Engagement and Completion Initiative** funded 26 school communities with high populations of students from African and Pasifika backgrounds to co-design and deliver place-based approaches to increase school participation and completion (**DE: \$2.00m in 2022–23**). DE partnered with North Melbourne Football Club (the Huddle), Mushroom Group and Melbourne Victory to deliver tailored face-to-face school holiday programs for culturally diverse young people.

DE also funded 24 school communities with high populations of students with African backgrounds as part of their commitment to the **Victorian African Communities Action Plan (DE: \$2.60m in 2022–23)**. DE recruited an African heritage school community liaison officer to coordinate activities aimed at boosting educational engagement among African heritage students and their parents. DE also funded 14 African-led community organisations to deliver extra tuition in a culturally safe space for young people of African heritage who need extra support.

CASE STUDY

Connecting Schools with Indian Communities

Preston South Primary School used Connecting Schools with Indian Communities funding to create its own Bollywood-style film. With the support of teachers and volunteer parents, the students scripted, acted, and directed the film, which combined dance, drama, humour, and moral punchlines. The final product was a culmination of the students' diverse skillsets and allowed every student to shine. Parents and members of the local Indian community were also involved in creating the film.

There were close to 1,000 local community members at the viewing of the film, who enthusiastically participated in the dancing, singing and celebrations of diversity.

School principal Leon Leonadis said:

'It is often hard for us to get our Indian families involved in the school. It was terrific to see them attend the viewing. We have had two families from India want to enrol at our school stating that they heard about the film and how inclusive we are.'

Employment assistance and career development

The **CareerSeekers Internship** initiative supported people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to undertake professional work-readiness training by partnering with Major Roads Projects Victoria and the Level Crossing Removal Project (**DTP: \$0.15m in 2022–23**). This targeted recruitment approach supported four interns to complete a 12-week paid internship through Major Roads Projects Victoria's Internship and Graduate Program and four interns to undertake a six-month internship with the Level Crossing Removal Project from October 2022 to April 2023.

Delivered by Major Roads Projects Victoria, the **2022–23 Engineering Pathways Industry Cadetship program** supported 20 participants from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to gain industry experience to improve employment opportunities (**DTP: \$0.15m in 2022–23**). Participants gained experience in the civil construction industry through placements on major civil construction projects with qualified engineers to guide and mentor them. The 2022–23 cadetship program received the Refugee Advocacy Award at the Victorian Multicultural Commission's 2022 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence.

The **Women Leading Locally** initiative supported 21 culturally and linguistically diverse women to undertake 10 masterclasses with optional supplementary classes to build leadership capabilities and experience (**DGS: \$0.27m in 2022–23**). The Institute of Community Directors Australia delivers the initiative in partnership with Women for Election and Politics in Colour.

Participants also received mentoring sessions and a Certificate in Community Leadership and Governance (Local Government) on graduation.

DTF's **Diversity Scholarship 2022–23** supported two scholarship recipients to undertake tertiary study. These scholarships provide mentoring, financial support, and an opportunity to take part in a work placement with DTF.

The **Victorian Skilled and Business Migration Program** supported skilled and business migrants and newly arrived qualified professionals with visa nomination services, market outreach, Commonwealth policy advocacy and free overseas qualifications assessments. These services were also provided to humanitarian visa holders.

The **Jobs Victoria Program** provided targeted mentoring and support for culturally diverse Victorians who faced challenges finding work. In 2022–23 the program delivered free employment services in 70 languages. Participants from multicultural backgrounds represented 53.9 per cent of total job placements.

The **Digital Jobs program** is developing a new talent pool by reskilling mid-career workers to help them transition into digital and technology-related careers. In 2022–23 program participants completed 12 weeks of industry-backed training and received career coaching, employability support and opportunities to apply their new digital skills in paid 12-week work placements within a variety of businesses. Participants from multicultural backgrounds represented 64 per cent of total program enrolments.

CASE STUDY

Digital Jobs Program

When Ghada Mahmoud moved to Melbourne from Egypt in 2017 with her young family, she found it difficult to find professional work despite having a telecommunications engineering background.

Then she heard about the Victorian Government's Digital Jobs Program:

'I hoped Digital Jobs would help me get the skills and confidence I needed to start a new career in Australia.'

Through Digital Jobs, Ghada enrolled in a free 12-week training course in cloud computing. She found that she could fit her online course and study around raising and caring for her children. She dedicated two hours per day to study after her children went to sleep.

After completing training, Ghada secured a paid work placement with one of Australia's major consulting companies. Her mature attitude and transferable skills from her previous career impressed managers enough to offer her an ongoing role.

She said:

'I would have never dreamed of being able to work in a career like this, especially with two young kids. I feel so supported and I'm excited for this next step in my career.'



Ghada learning from a mentor during her paid work placement.



Victorians are connected to culture and community

Celebrating culture

The **Multicultural Festivals and Events** program funded 458 multicultural community organisations in metropolitan and regional Victoria to help them deliver culturally significant festivals and events (**DFFH: \$2.80m in 2022–23**). The program supports Victorians to celebrate, preserve and share traditions and is an opportunity for the broader community to further understand and participate in shared cultures and traditions.

The **Multicultural Seniors Support Program** supported more than 990 multicultural seniors organisations to foster connection and reduce social isolation (**DFFH: \$2.00m in 2022–23**). The program funded organisations to:

- deliver social and cultural activities
- improve digital accessibility and literacy
- provide practical support
- purchase essential equipment and resources for members.

The **Youth Engagement Grants** supported small multicultural organisations with funding up to \$50,000 over two years to deliver activities for children and young people to increase community connections (**DJCS: \$0.85m in 2022–23**). These grants helped 34 organisations to deliver projects that use cultural connection, sport, arts, music, and other creative activities to engage more than 3,000 children and young people.

CASE STUDY

2022 African Music and Cultural Festival

The African Music and Cultural Festival celebrated its ninth year as the largest African festival in Australia. The event aims to promote cross-cultural awareness and foster intercultural relationships. More than 35 African-Australian communities and organisations were involved in the festival. More than 40,000 people attended the event, which was free and inclusive and reached metropolitan, regional and interstate attendees.

Through the 2022–23 Multicultural Festivals and Events program the organisation was awarded \$50,000 to run the three-day festival at Federation Square, Melbourne from 18 to 20 November. The multilayered festival program had cultural performances and artists who displayed dance, music, fashion and drumming lessons, as well as offering face painting and street food.



Musicians engaging the audience during the festival.

CASE STUDY

2023 Holi Bendigo (Festival of Colours)

More than 1,600 people from different ethnic backgrounds and faiths attended the 2023 Holi Bendigo (Festivals of Colours) event in Golden Square Pool on 4 March. The festival is a free and inclusive family-friendly event with live music and free food. It includes the iconic use of coloured gulal powder and water, a hallmark for this colourful festival. The event aims to celebrate the traditions of Hindu people with the broader community

in central Victoria, promoting social cohesion in the region.

Through the 2022–23 Multicultural Festivals and Events program, the Golden Square Pool was awarded \$50,000 to deliver this popular festival. The organisation delivered the event in partnership with the Indian Association of Bendigo Inc. to demonstrate the vibrancy of Bendigo's growing multicultural community.



Community members partaking in festival activities.

Connecting communities to culturally significant spaces

The **Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund** supported 32 community organisations to create and maintain their culturally significant spaces and facilities (**DFFH: \$6.40m in 2022–23**). The program recognises that multicultural communities need safe, accessible and culturally accessible spaces to increase community connectedness and share cultural understanding.

DTP's **Community Funds** initiative supported community projects and groups in areas affected by the North East Link Program and the West Gate Tunnel Project.

In 2022–23 the following grants were awarded to multicultural community organisations:

- The InPlace Inc Project was funded \$100,000 to support redevelopment of the Garambi Baan/Laughing Waters residency centre through the **North East Community Fund**.
- Australian Multicultural Community Services Inc was funded \$500,000 to upgrade the Millennium House into a multicultural community hub in Footscray through the **West Gate Neighbourhood Fund**.
- The East African Women's Foundation Inc was funded \$70,000 in 2022–23 to upgrade its premises to include space for social and cultural gatherings through the **West Gate Neighbourhood Fund**.

CASE STUDY

Nepali Community Centre upgrades

The Nepali community is considered 'emerging' because they are still a growing community in Victoria. While the community had an existing facility for religious and cultural celebrations, it was not equipped to handle larger events due to limited access to amenities such as temple rooms, toilets, a kitchen, and parking.

Through the 2022–23 Multicultural Community Infrastructure program, the Australian Nepalese Multicultural Centre received \$281,587 to deliver building upgrades to the centre. Renovations started in July 2022 and included new temple rooms, a peaceful meditation room, functional office space, upgraded toilets and a fit-for-purpose kitchen. Large parking facilities and specially designed disability accessible toilets were also constructed to improve accessibility. A large space at the rear of the main building was revamped to provide an outdoor area for hosting events.

The facility has now become a vibrant hub for celebrating cultural and religious events. The project has also provided a space for community members to practise their faith, meditation, and yoga.

The project has strengthened community bonds by providing a shared space for community members to connect, build relationships and share experiences. This project has also enabled the Nepalese community to maintain their traditions for future generations while fostering interfaith dialogue between different religions.



Renovated Temple room



2022 African Music and Cultural Festival

Victorians have equal rights and opportunities

Anti-racism and anti-discrimination

The **Swastika Education and Awareness Campaign** was co-designed with peak Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and Jewish community organisations to deliver an awareness campaign when the Victorian Government banned publicly displaying the Nazi Hakenkreuz symbol in December 2022. The campaign focused on educating communities about the distinction between the Nazi Hakenkreuz and the sacred Swastika symbols. It also raised awareness on specific exemptions including for genuine religious, cultural and education purposes. DFFH, DJCS, DE, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Victoria Police worked in partnership to embed community-designed messaging in government policies, procedures, and online resources accessible to the broader community. Victoria Police also worked with community leaders to train frontline officers across metropolitan, regional, and rural Victoria. The campaign included factsheets, posters, in-language information sessions, translated resources and newsletters for the wider community, and specific policy advice to schools.

Launched in 2018, the **Delivering the Victorian African Communities Action Plan** is a 10-year plan developed in partnership with African communities to improve social and economic outcomes. In 2022–23 the following initiatives were delivered under the plan (**DFFH: \$4.43m in 2022–23**):

- The Victorian African Communities Committee was established with 13 community members to advise the Victorian Government on the design and delivery of action plan initiatives (**\$0.13m in 2022–23**).
- The Employment Brokers program assisted more than 400 jobseekers to access support and training and more than 110 people into employment (**\$1.04m in 2022–23**).
- The Alcohol and Other Drugs initiative 'Project Sunrise' employed bicultural workers to provide specialist services to 95 African young people. It also engaged more than 3,000 people through training, education, and events to improve awareness of substance abuse (**\$0.63m in 2022–23**).

Promoting human rights within government departments

The Victorian Government is committed to building multicultural capacity in our departments and embedding human rights knowledge and practices at every level of government.

All Victorian government departments have contributed to and participated in the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)-led Charter Education program. The program supports education initiatives that build a culture of human rights across the Victorian public service (VPS).

Initiatives undertaken in individual departments are outlined below.

Department of Education

In 2022–23 DE promoted Human Rights Week and Human Rights Day to staff through its Corporate News. DE encouraged staff to take action and celebrate these events among their teams including taking part in the A week of action for human rights campaign. Also, a personal message from a Deputy Secretary in the department was circulated to recognise these observances and encourage reflection among staff on implementing the Charter in their work.

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

DEECA delivered tailored cultural training to managers, supervisors and staff including:

- an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety workshop for managers, supervisors, and team leaders through Koorie Heritage Trust
- Levels of Racism and Anti-racism training from VEOHRC.

The cultural safety workshop was a four-hour program where participants explored aspects of cultural safety and how it applies to them and their workplace.

VEOHRC also provided training to executive-level staff to build capability and understanding of human rights obligations, applying the Charter, managing risk and compliance including understanding frameworks for embedding human right through role modelling, systems, and processes.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

DFFH's mandatory induction training includes the e-learning module on the Charter. DFFH acknowledges key events annually that celebrate human rights including:

- Cultural Diversity Week
- Harmony Day
- Human Rights Day
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- International Day of People with Disability
- International Women's Day
- NAIDOC Week
- Reconciliation Week.

Also, Fairer Victoria is leading and influencing policy and program development for diversity and inclusion across the Victorian Government.

All initiatives and policies consider the Charter through design and implementation.

Department of Government Services

All staff at DGS undertake training modules to understand their obligations as Victorian public sector staff under the ***Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006***.

Also, DGS' Women Leading Locally initiative directly responds to and supports the right under the Act to take part in public life. It does this by supporting eligible women in Victoria to have the opportunity to participate in the conduct of public affairs, and to have the opportunity to be elected at municipal elections.

Department of Health

Every DH employee has a vital role in promoting a human rights culture in their daily work for the advancement of Victorian communities. Throughout 2022–23 the department remained dedicated to its mandatory human rights e-learn training, focusing on the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Developed by the VEOHRC, this training is compulsory for new staff and as a refresher every two years. The course aims to help employees understand their obligations under the Charter and to integrate a human rights culture into their routine work, contributing to improved outcomes for diverse Victorian communities. In 2022–23, 2,780 staff completed the training.

Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

DJSIR is committed to upholding the principles enshrined in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities by actively implementing, promoting, and supporting human rights, including for multicultural communities.

DJSIR supports team members to increase their capacity to make decisions and provide advice consistent with the Charter through tailored learning guides, events, and activities.

To better understand the Charter, DJSIR encourages all staff to complete the first three modules in the VEOHRC online education program:

- Introducing the Charter
- Rights and Obligations under the Charter
- Embedding a Human Rights Culture in Victoria.

The Charter Guide for Public Sector Workers is available on the intranet as a resource to aid team members in understanding their responsibilities under the Charter and how to implement human rights in their work.

The department also acknowledges key events that celebrate human rights including Cultural Diversity Week, Harmony Day, Human Rights Week, and the International Day of Human Rights annually.

Department of Justice and Community Safety

Training on the ***Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act*** is provided to all Youth Justice operational staff as part of their induction to ensure they understand the rights of children and young people. All training and practice instructions also reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Human Rights Location Leads Group (HRLLG) was established in 2022 to help develop and implement human rights initiatives in Victoria's public prisons. The HRLLG influences how the Charter of Human Rights is applied to prison operations. It fosters engagement and collaboration across prisons to develop best practice in human rights application and to support staff in their decision making. The HRLLG also promotes a culture of continuous improvement and professional development by reviewing processes through a human rights lens. The group focuses on initiatives and actions that members are responsible for implementing, embedding and overseeing in their respective locations. The HRLLG oversees local human rights action plans to ensure each prison effectively considers human rights in local decision making in the custodial setting.

The Human Rights Network was established in 2021 to consider and collaborate on human rights issues that have an impact on the adult custodial corrections system. The objective of the Human Rights Network is to support HRLLG members in implementing human rights location action plans and increasing awareness and education of human rights among Corrections Victoria staff. The network comprises representatives from across Corrections Victoria who act as human rights champions across the state.

Department of Premier and Cabinet

DPC's mandatory induction training includes the e-learning module on the Charter. DPC also acknowledges key annual events that celebrate human rights including:

- Cultural Diversity Week
- Harmony Day
- Human Rights Day
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- International Day of People with Disability
- International Women's Day
- NAIDOC Week
- Reconciliation Week.

Department of Transport and Planning

All staff are required to complete e-learning modules on the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. This includes a specific module for people leaders in the organisation. Also, in 2022–23, two in-person Charter Education Program sessions were provided to the Legal and Governance Division and the Inclusion and Diversity Branch.

DTP acknowledges key annual events that celebrate human rights including:

- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- International Day of People with Disability
- International Women's Day
- NAIDOC Week.

Department of Treasury and Finance

Commitment to the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities forms part of the VPS values and is highlighted for all new staff during the department's corporate induction.

DTF continues to include the Charter learning modules as part of its mandatory induction and compliance training. The online Charter training is mandatory for new starters, and refresher training is required every two years for all employees. During 2022–23, 286 employees completed the online training. The online training is complemented with VEOHRC-facilitated interactive training.

In 2022–23 DTF promoted Human Rights Week during the week beginning 3 December.

Progress on departmental cultural diversity plans

Cultural diversity plans help Victorian government departments provide more inclusive, accessible, and responsive services to multicultural and multifaith communities.

Cultural diversity plans (CDPs) cover many areas including:

- workforce diversity
- engagement
- participation
- inclusion
- cultural competency in service delivery.

Departments report their progress on their CDPs every year, in line with the **Multicultural Victoria Act 2011**. **Table 6** shows the status of departmental CDPs as at 30 June 2023.

Table 6: Department cultural diversity plans

| | |
|---|---|
| Department of Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE has launched its 2023–2027 CDP with revised objectives and actions to meet the emerging needs of multicultural communities and reflect the evolution of the department’s operating context |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019–2022 • Plans to update this strategy are underway |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2022–2027 |
| Department of Government Services¹¹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DGS is in the process of developing a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Roadmap |
| Department of Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health Multicultural Health Action Plan 2023–27 |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions Cultural Diversity Plan 2018–2024 |
| Department of Justice and Community Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural and Multifaith Action Plan 2023–2027 |
| Department of Premier and Cabinet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019–2021 • Plans to update this strategy are underway |
| Department of Transport and Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and Delivering an Intercultural Department of Transport and Planning: Intercultural Action Plan 2023–2028 |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021–2025 |

¹¹ The Department of Government Services was established on 1 January 2023 following machinery of government changes that brought together employees from four different departments: DJSIR, DJCS, DPC and DTF. For the 2022–23 reporting period a memorandum of understanding was signed and DGS staff were covered by their originating department’s CDPs.

Departmental cultural diversity plans

Department of Education: Cultural Diversity Plan 2023–2027

Vision

DE's CDP identifies four focus areas for delivering the department's culturally sensitive services:

- early childhood participation
- student learning and wellbeing
- intercultural capability in schools
- workforce diversity and professional learning.

The focus areas bring together the department's work under current strategic reforms to improve outcomes for children and young people with multicultural and faith backgrounds.

Goals

There are four objectives in DE's CDP:

- **early childhood participation** – support improved participation in early childhood education for culturally diverse children, families, and carers
- **student learning and wellbeing** – foster a culturally safe and equitable school education system
- **intercultural capability in schools** – build the intercultural capability of school leaders, teachers and students
- **workforce diversity and professional learning** – support cultural diversity, equity and inclusion in our early childhood, school education and corporate workforces, and promote professional learning.

Governance and ownership

DE's Culture, People and Integrity Committee and Executive Board oversee the CDP. DE has established a companion action register to track actions across the CDP's focus areas. Each CDP action includes an acquittal measure to identify annual progress of CDP services. The acquittal of actions will also be considered collectively to assess the achievement of the CDP's focus areas and objectives.

Cultural competence training

DE is committed to strengthening cultural diversity in its corporate workforce and leadership in alignment with equal opportunity and diversity practices across the VPS.

DE provides a range of information and resources to support staff to build their knowledge and capability around cultural diversity. This includes an internal collaboration page that is regularly promoted and online resources to support staff fostering cultural competency and tackling racism at work. These resources outline suggested actions, inclusive language techniques when communicating across cultures and information about DE's e-learning courses.

DE's professional development programs, such as its corporate mentoring program, have embedded diversity and inclusion as a key success factor. This program includes a specific focus on diversity and inclusion in training sessions for both mentors and mentees. It highlights additional hurdles in career development that people from minority groups may experience and the importance of culturally safe and sensitive conversations in mentoring relationships.

DE provides the Respectful Workplaces Program as a suite of e-learn modules as part of its induction program for all new staff (in corporate and schools) and encourages staff to complete these at regular intervals after induction. This includes the following e-learn modules:

- Respectful workplaces
- Human rights and responsibilities
- Equal opportunities
- Addressing workplace bullying
- Understanding the DE values.

The following modules are also offered to all staff to support inclusive workplace behaviours, inclusive recruitment practices and encourage staff to raise concerns when they have them:

- Sexual harassment
- Leading a respectful workplace, addressing concerns, complaints, and serious behaviours (for managers)
- Inclusive recruitment.

As demand for highly skilled early childhood and school education professionals continues to rise, DE is implementing workforce initiatives to support diversity, inclusion, and equity. These initiatives will continue to evolve over the life of the CDP to respond to complex needs across policy and practice.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DE has a register of community stakeholders and organisations for consultation on program and policy development. The department has established internal processes for consulting directly with multicultural community stakeholders and organisations.

DE also provides immersive placement experiences to develop intercultural capability of pre-service teachers. DE has committed to undergoing period reviews and evaluations of all programs, informed by best practice methodology. This includes incorporating the views of diverse or vulnerable groups in evaluation design and implementation.

Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action: Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019–2022

Vision

DEECA aims to create a culture that embraces individual differences in all forms and fosters innovation and inclusion to support:

- liveable, inclusive and sustainable communities and thriving natural environments
- all staff to achieve their full potential and work in a flexible way that meets their needs
- a community charter that emphasises the diversity and inclusion values of building enduring and genuine partnerships.

Goals

The goals of DEECA's CDP are to:

- improve service delivery and decision making through strong, inclusive leadership, and training and development opportunities
- foster attitudes and practices that better support diversity and inclusion
- create opportunities to recruit and retain staff from diverse groups in the community
- adopt an intersectional lens when developing key diversity and inclusion initiatives that are fit for purpose in addressing systemic barriers to social cohesion and equity.

Governance and ownership

The People and Culture Division consults broadly on decisions relating to the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy including proposed changes to whole of department policies, procedures and processes. Key departmental stakeholders include:

- DEECA's six staff-led networks
- the Workforce People Partners Working Group
- People and Culture's leadership team and Stewardship Committee
- the Executive Board.

The Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, drives key commitments in the CDP. A team leader and two staff from the Diversity and Inclusion team work on the CDP.

Two voluntary staff-led networks, Multicultural@DELWP and DEECA's Women of Colour Network, inform and progress the CDP and action plans.

For an intersectionality lens, DEECA also consults with other staff-led networks including:

- Place of Pride
- All Abilities Network
- Emerging Professionals Network
- Aboriginal Staff-led Network
- Autism Success Network.

The department also consults with broader VPS-wide networks.

Cultural competence training

DEECA delivered the following initiatives to support increased cultural competence:

- promoted diversity and inclusion learning opportunities to new staff through the new starter induction program
- Levels of Racism and Anti-racism training through the VEOHRC for executive staff
- Charter of Human Rights training and resources for all staff through the VEOHRC
- impactful inclusion training on intersectional gender equality for DEECA's Bushfire and Forest Services Group
- the DEECA Women of Colour network mentoring program
- safe and respectful training for all staff including the Charter of Human Rights and diversity and inclusion principles

- Navigating Recruitment eLearn to embed knowledge of bias, discrimination, inclusion and diversity throughout the recruitment and onboarding process
- the Multicultural@DEECA staff-led network
- made available the SBS Inclusion and Cultural Competency training modules for all staff.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DEECA's Community Charter helps the department build better relationships with stakeholders and communities through leveraging local networks, processes, tools and resources. This improves interactions and engagement in policy planning. It also informs delivery of programs and projects.

DEECA's Engage@DEECA framework enables:

- more confident and effective engagement
- stronger relationships with multicultural communities
- more informed decision making.

The current framework is being reviewed. Once complete, the review will bring the framework in line with the VPS-wide engagement framework.

The department has also developed an internal gender equality action plan and conducts external facing gender impact assessments as part of key diversity and inclusion initiatives. These initiatives adopt a strong intersectional lens, considering multicultural perspectives and initiative impacts.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing: Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2022–2027

Vision

DFFH's CDP vision states the following:

- We will be a proactive leader in diversity and inclusion.
- We will empower people to express their identity and belong.
- We will remove structural and systemic barriers so that everyone can reach their full potential in a safe, equitable and respectful workplace.
- We will create a department that embodies inclusive leadership, celebrates diversity of thought and reflects the diversity of the communities we serve so we can better support them.

Goals

DFFH's CDP goals are to ensure:

- DFFH's leadership profile, governance structures and workforce reflect the community's diversity and all employees are accountable for creating an inclusive workplace
- the department empowers the voices of its diverse workforce, values diversity of thought and creates a workplace where all employees are supported to develop and progress their careers
- diverse people's lived experience is core to policy, programs and services, to improve business practices and outcomes for the diverse communities it serves
- culturally safe actions are embedded into systems and practices as the norm
- work environments are accessible and safe, with prevention, early intervention and suitable responses to discrimination and inappropriate behaviours
- DFFH has transparency, accountability, and measurable targets to achieve its CDP outcomes.

Governance and ownership

DFFH has established an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee to focus on organisational diversity and inclusion in the department. This includes gender equality.

The committee:

- oversees the department's Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Gender Equality Action Plan
- ensures DFFH is taking coordinated action and holds DFFH to account
- monitors progress on equality, diversity and inclusion and acts if progress is not being made
- provides a report to the DFFH Board annually against relevant outcomes, strategies and measures
- authorises changes to the Diversity and Inclusion Framework and implementation plan, in consultation with its diverse staff community of practice.

The committee comprises staff with lived experience of diversity and an accountable executive member who informs and influences decisions.

DFFH divisions plan and manage implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies and actions at the local level, tailoring actions to their workforce profile, needs, priorities and circumstances. Divisions are advised of high-level priority actions reflecting departmental priorities, ensuring a consistent approach across the organisation.

Implementation actions at the divisional level are managed and reported on through existing executive leadership teams, senior management teams and people committees.

Cultural competence training

All departmental staff must complete the mandatory Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion e-learning training. This course is designed to increase staff understanding and knowledge of key priority areas for building diverse workforces including:

- Aboriginal peoples
- people with disabilities
- people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender-diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+) employee communities.

Unconscious bias training is given to staff in both e-learning and instructor-led formats. Anti-racism training is delivered to staff across the department in an instructor-led format. All executives have a diversity performance outcome in their personal development plans to improve diversity and inclusion across the department.

The following projects were completed in 2022–23 to support cultural competence at DFFH:

- a practical guide to creating a multifaith prayer space
- information on understanding Ramadan and how to support employees published and circulated to all staff
- DFFH's Diverse Women in Leadership Fast Track Program supporting 10 diverse women working across the department at VPS5 and VPS6 (and equivalent) levels to gain valuable leadership experience for future manager and executive roles.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DFFH supports consumers, carers, communities, and patients from multicultural backgrounds to make decisions about their health and wellbeing through policies, guidelines and approaches.

This includes:

- consulting with stakeholders on policy and program design
- developing in-language resources
- ensuring translators are provided where required
- supporting bicultural workers to engage with communities
- building the capacity of departmental staff to better engage diverse communities.

The department's diverse staff community of practice meets bimonthly and provides an ongoing voice for diverse employees. The community of practice has nominated representatives with lived experience from DFFH's diverse workforce to be on the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. Nominated representatives report to the committee on risks and issues around the progress of the Diversity and Inclusion Framework implementation plan.

The department also provides employment pathways for refugees and people seeking asylum, particularly through the CareerSeekers Internship initiative. This initiative brings people from diverse communities into the public service.

After the program, 75 per cent of participants secure ongoing employment at the department or in the health and human services sector. They provide valuable lived experiences that inform decision making.

Department of Health: Department of Health Multicultural Health Action Plan 2023–27

Vision

DH's vision is that Victorians are the healthiest people in the world, as outlined in the Department of Health Strategic Plan 2023–27. To achieve this, DH has implemented a new Department of Health Multicultural Health Action Plan 2023–27. The vision of this plan is to ensure multicultural communities can access culturally competent health care and experience equitable health outcomes.

Goals

There are six improvement goals in the department's plan:

- Invest in targeted policies, programs and services that improve health equity.
- Design and deliver accessible and culturally competent mainstream policies, programs, and services.
- Provide language services and accessible communications.
- Strengthen community engagement, capacity building and lived experience representation.
- Enhance cultural competency through workforce capability and inclusive leadership.
- Build evidence-based approaches through data, research, and evaluation.

Improvement goals are interconnected. Collective advancement across all goals is essential to improve health outcomes for multicultural communities and achieve the department's vision.

Governance and ownership

The department's Executive Board is responsible for overseeing the new Department of Health Multicultural Health Action Plan 2023–27, including ensuring the plan is embedded in the department's core business.

Cultural competence training

DH implements workforce strategies that aim to build a diverse workforce that reflects the community they serve. These strategies also aim to create a positive, inclusive, and culturally safe workplace to create a comfortable and productive environment for all staff.

All departmental staff must complete Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion e-learning training. This course is designed to increase understanding and knowledge of key priority areas for building diverse workforces including:

- Aboriginal peoples
- people with disabilities
- people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- LGBTIQ+ communities.

Unconscious bias training is also given to staff in both e-learning and instructor-led formats.

All executives have a diversity performance outcome in their personal development plans to improve diversity and inclusion across the department.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DH supports consumers, carers, communities, and patients from multicultural communities to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing through a range of policies, guidelines and approaches. This includes:

- consulting stakeholders on policy and program design
- developing in-language resources
- ensuring translators are provided where required
- supporting bicultural workers to engage with communities
- building the capacity of departmental staff to better engage diverse communities.

The department also provides employment pathways for refugees and people seeking asylum, particularly through the CareerSeekers Internship initiative. This initiative brings people from diverse communities into the public service.

After the program, 75 per cent of participants secure ongoing employment at the department or in the health and human services sector. They provide valuable lived experiences that inform decision making.

Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions: Multicultural Diversity Action Plan 2018–2024

Vision

- To foster a culturally diverse and inclusive workplace that reflects the sectors and communities we work with.
- To provide inclusive service delivery to culturally diverse clients and communities that fosters greater inclusion in Victoria's economy.

Goals

There are three goals under DJSIR's CDP:

- **Leadership:** Our leaders will champion the CDP to foster engagement at all levels. We will all support cultural diversity through ownership at all levels.
- **Information building:** We will build our understanding of internal cultural diversity. We will build our understanding of the cultural diversity of the communities we work with.
- **A culturally diverse workforce:** We will support opportunities to grow cultural diversity at all levels of the organisation. Our workforce will reflect the communities we work with.

Governance and ownership

The Executive Director, People and Culture is accountable for the CDP.

The CDP is part of the department's Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Framework. The framework's progress is monitored and reviewed by the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Board.

Cultural competence training

All staff are encouraged to develop their cultural competence through professional development opportunities.

In 2022–23 staff had access to many cultural competence training opportunities including:

- a cultural competence e-learning program on the DJSIR learning management system
- a suite of cultural diversity online courses from LinkedIn Learning
- presentations and panel discussions organised by DJSIR's staff-led People of Colour Network.

All departmental hiring managers must complete online unconscious bias training before conducting job interviews.



Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DJSIR's CDP requires that all business areas consult with the community when evaluating programs and services. This is done by:

- consulting with culturally diverse communities and advisory boards when making decisions about programs, policies and services that directly affect culturally diverse communities
- using available demographic and service data on cultural diversity to support decision making for programs, policies and service delivery
- embedding cultural diversity considerations when designing, implementing and evaluating policies, programs and services.

Department of Justice and Community Safety: Multicultural and Multifaith Action Plan 2023–2027

Vision

A justice and community safety system that is inclusive, equitable, culturally responsive and values people from multicultural and multifaith communities.

Goals

There are six goals under DJCS's Multicultural and Multifaith Action Plan:

- **Improving data** – improve our collection and analysis of client and staff experiences to ensure evidence-based reform of systems, structures, and practices, and improve outcomes for people from multicultural and multifaith communities.
- **Building capability and capacity** – enhance departmental capability and capacity to create a more inclusive and equitable culture and environment for clients and staff.
- **Equitable pathways to career development and leadership** – support career pathways and opportunities for progression and development for staff from multicultural and multifaith communities.
- **Creating a safer, empowering, and inclusive culture** – build an organisational culture and justice and community safety system where people from multicultural and multifaith communities feel safe, respected, included and valued.

- **Partnering with communities to build stronger policies and programs** – partner with communities in a robust and appropriate way to ensure policies, programs and services are designed and delivered in a way that delivers the intended outcomes.
- **Cultural responsiveness and inclusion are built into all programs and services** – build inclusive and culturally responsive programs, services, and systems so the department achieves its intended outcomes for clients from multicultural and multifaith communities.

Governance and ownership

DJCS's Inclusion and Intersectionality team (which is part of the People, Safety, Culture and Communications Group) is responsible for the Multicultural and Multifaith Action Plan. The team liaises with business units on development, monitoring and reporting against activities in the plan.

DJCS has established a new executive-level governance body to monitor implementation across all diversity and inclusion strategies to ensure intersectionality is embedded in the department's practices. The Deputy Secretary of People, Safety, Culture and Communications chairs all related meetings.

Cultural competence training

All role-specific training such as induction programs, mandatory e-learning and professional development programs includes cultural competency and awareness training. Topics include:

- Aboriginal cultural awareness
- cultural diversity
- human rights awareness
- respect in the workplace
- the VPS Code of Conduct.

Cultural competency and awareness training is also available as part of regular induction for all Youth Justice custodial staff.

Also, the Centre for Multicultural Youth worked with Youth Justice in 2020–21 to develop a foundational training program for working with young people from multicultural and multifaith backgrounds for custodial and community staff. This training is ongoing as part of induction for all Youth Justice community staff.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DJCS has an engagement framework that supports its commitment to a just and safe Victoria. The framework is a strategic and practical guide for staff that outlines how, when, and why the department engages with its stakeholders. It ensures the department engages with its stakeholders in a consistent, meaningful, effective, and inclusive way. The framework reflects the department's commitment to embedding partnerships in the design, delivery and evaluation of the Victorian justice and community safety system.

Department of Premier and Cabinet: Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019–2021

Vision

DPC is committed to diversity, inclusion and equity to ensure all people:

- are treated with dignity and respect
- have equitable access to employment opportunities and outcomes
- have the ability to participate in all aspects of work life
- can achieve their full potential.

Goals

Across the various diversity and inclusion plans, the department aims for:

- visible leadership and accountability for diversity and inclusion
- attracting, developing and retaining a diverse, gender-balanced and talented workforce
- creating a safe (including culturally safe), respectful and inclusive workplace
- facilitating and promoting a flexible and accessible workplace
- measuring, monitoring and reporting on diversity and inclusion.

Governance and ownership

The DPC Board of Management oversees diversity, equity and inclusion in the department.

The Board of Management appoints executive champions for all key priority areas including:

- gender
- disability
- LGBTIQA+.

Cultural competence training

DPC's People and Culture team provides diversity and inclusion training programs to help employees to:

- understand their rights and responsibilities to create an inclusive environment free from discrimination and harassment, and to identify discrimination and exclusion in the workplace
- understand their role in and strategies for creating a diverse and inclusive workplace
- understand the complex and varied experiences of diverse communities
- identify and address unconscious bias practices.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DPC engages with various networks including:

- Aboriginal Staff Network
- Enables Network
- Gender Equality Network
- LGBTIQ+ Network.

Department of Transport and Planning: Intercultural Action Plan 2023–2028

Vision

DTP commits to removing cultural, attitudinal, and systemic barriers that culturally and linguistically diverse people experience in our workplaces.

Goals

There are five key goals of DTP's CDP:

- **Our commitment – Leadership and accountability**
 - Our senior leaders visibly demonstrate their commitment to developing culturally inclusive and competent workplaces for people from multicultural and faith backgrounds and are held accountable for delivering actions outlined in the Intercultural Action Plan.
- **Our environments – Systems, processes, premises**
 - DTP's workplace systems, processes and spaces are inclusive and appropriate for all. Where employees of multicultural heritage are safe to self-identify and express their authentic selves including their cultural and faith identity, and are valued, recognised and supported to reach their full potential.

- **Our culture – Attitudes and awareness**
 - DTP workplaces have intercultural and anti-racism principles embedded within them, openly celebrating the diversity within its workforce, and sharing the commitment to mature our intercultural competency as an organisation.
- **Our talent – Recruitment, development, promotions**
 - Increase multicultural and faith talent representation across all levels of DTP’s workforce, ensuring all talent has equitable access to career development and promotion opportunities.
 - Become an employer of choice for people with multicultural and faith backgrounds over the life of the Intercultural Action Plan.
- **Our community – Inclusive customer service interactions**
 - Leverage the diversity of DTP’s workforce to meaningfully connect and provide quality and appropriate service delivery to Victoria’s diverse and wide-ranging communities.

Governance and ownership

The Deputy Secretary, People and Business Services, along with the Executive Director, People and Culture, have overall responsibility for implementing the department’s Intercultural Action Plan 2023–2028. All areas of the business are responsible for implementing the actions in the plan.

An Inclusion and Diversity Council also influences, advises, oversees, and tracks progress against the plan’s implementation measures. The council is chaired by the Secretary and met twice in 2022–23. In 2023–24 a quarterly Inclusion and Diversity Implementation Steering Committee will be established to oversee the operational delivery of DTP’s Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and related action plans, including the Intercultural Action Plan 2023–2028.

Cultural competence training

From July 2020 onwards, core foundation training called Inclusion Fundamentals and Unconscious Bias has been delivered to DTP employees. This five-hour training includes modules on:

- unconscious bias
- bystander action and inclusive leadership
- fostering cultural humility
- cultural awareness
- the impact of racism on culturally diverse staff in the workplace.

DTP also encourages staff to complete e-learning modules on cultural competency, which have been provided by SBS.

In March 2023, 50 people leaders and executive leaders attended a one-day Courageous Conversations on Race workshop. This provided DTP’s leadership with an opportunity to explore their place as they strive to lead a truly inclusive, equitable and culturally responsive workplace and organisation. Executive leaders explored racial equity and the power of authentic engagement.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

Community engagement is designed and implemented to be inclusive of multicultural communities that are affected by departmental decisions. DTP uses the International Association of Public Association’s spectrum of public participation and a range of engagement methods including:

- social media
- website project updates
- surveys
- community meetings
- consultation committees
- translator services.

In developing policies, processes and programs, DTP seeks feedback and contributions from a culturally diverse Employee-led Network Working Group to ensure lived experience informs the final products.

Department of Treasury and Finance: Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021–2025

Vision

DTF's Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021–2025 aims to embed a diverse and inclusive culture across the department that reflects the diversity of the Victorian population.

Goals

The framework complements other whole-of-Victorian Government initiatives including the Getting to Work disability employment plan and the Barring Djinang Aboriginal employment plan.

There are six goals under DTF's Diversity and Inclusion Framework:

- acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land across Victoria, value self-determination for Aboriginal people and support reconciliation
- remove barriers so people with disability can fully participate and excel
- promote a culture of gender equity, diversity and respect where people of all genders are supported to succeed
- ensure the LGBTIQ+ community is visibly recognised and included
- celebrate cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, and create a workforce that reflects the diverse Victorian community we serve
- enable people of all ages to participate and pursue career development opportunities.

Governance and ownership

The Diversity and Inclusion Framework is overseen by DTF's People Committee, which reports to the DTF Board.

Cultural competence training

Cultural competence training is embedded in DTF's Diversity and Inclusion Framework. The framework is included in DTF's induction program.

All staff complete mandatory training on diversity and inclusion as part of their corporate induction. The department supports its staff to participate in VPS employee-led networks, which give employees an opportunity to connect with peers across the public service and improve cultural capabilities.

DTF has also established:

- inclusive recruitment and selection processes
- a variety of employment programs to increase cultural diversity including diversity scholarships and the Aboriginal Pathway to the Victorian Government graduate program.

Decision-making processes and program evaluation

DTF has a Diversity and Inclusion Committee that meets quarterly to monitor the Diversity and Inclusion Framework's implementation plan.

DTF consults with key stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to monitor and evaluate programs.



Appendix 1: Multicultural representation on government boards, authorities and committees

Table 7: Composition of Victorian Government boards as at 30 June 2023¹²

| Composition | Number |
|---|--------|
| Number of boards as at June 2023 | 366 |
| Board appointments | 3,284 |
| Culturally diverse appointments | 1,041 |
| Culturally diverse percentage of boards | 31.7% |

Table 8: Appointments and reappointments to Victorian Government boards as at 30 June 2023

| Appointment | Number |
|---|--------|
| Number of boards with new appointments or reappointments in 2022–23 | 253 |
| New appointments or reappointments | 1279 |
| Culturally diverse appointments or reappointments | 383 |
| Culturally diverse percentage of appointments and reappointments | 30.0% |

¹² Data for tables 7 to 9 provided by VPSC. Data exclude cemeteries, school councils and small committees of Crown Land Management. Where the *Public Administration Act 2004* status is neither public entity nor special body, and where DPC classification is not applicable, the data is not reported. Figures may differ to previously published data for prior years due to ongoing remediation, increased completeness of data or an appointee's decision to disclose or no longer disclose additional characteristics. Data include machinery of government changes, which can affect departmental figures compared with numbers in publications and reports in previous years.

Table 9: Year-on-year proportion of Victorian government department board appointments or members with culturally diverse backgrounds

| Department | At 30 June 2023 (%) | At 30 June 2022 (%) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Department of Education | 25.6 | 33.9 |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | 34.1 | 37.4 |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | 30.2 | 26.2 |
| Department of Government Services | 15.1 | N/A ¹³ |
| Department of Health | 32.1 | 30.6 |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | 35.3 | 37.0 |
| Department of Justice and Community Safety | 30.4 | 32.0 |
| Department of Premier and Cabinet | 18.5 | 19.7 |
| Department of Transport and Planning | 35.7 | 26.9 |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | 17.8 | 20.3 |

¹³ No data is available for the 2021–22 period because the Department of Government Services was established on 1 January 2023.

Appendix 2: Indicators

Frequently used abbreviations in this section

- CLS: community language schools
- ESB: English-speaking background
- LBOTE: language background other than English
- MESC: main English-speaking country
- NESB: non-English speaking background¹⁴
- NMESC: non-main English-speaking country

Benefits of diversity

A1 Number of children and students being funded to learn languages in community language schools (CLS)¹⁵

| Year | Number of funded CLS | Number of languages being learned | Total children or students |
|------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2022 | 178 | 52 | 37,240 |
| 2021 | 189 | 49 | 38,970 |

Top 20 government-funded languages being learned in Victorian CLS in 2022

| Language | Number of children or students funded |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chinese | 15,121 |
| Greek | 4,122 |
| Arabic | 3,110 |
| Vietnamese | 2,117 |
| Tamil | 1,431 |
| Sinhala | 1,037 |
| Japanese | 764 |
| Dari | 653 |
| Bangla | 606 |
| Korean | 444 |
| Russian | 436 |
| Somali | 422 |
| Cantonese | 358 |
| Punjabi | 323 |
| Persian | 316 |
| Serbian | 305 |
| Assyrian | 283 |
| Urdu | 262 |
| Hebrew | 261 |
| Dinka | 245 |

¹⁴ The Australian Bureau of Statistics uses the term NMESC to represent non-main English-speaking countries, while MESC represents main English-speaking countries. MESC are the United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and South Africa. NMESC covers all other countries of birth. Where appropriate and specifically relevant, some departments and agencies use the term NESB to stand for non-English speaking background and ESB to stand for English-speaking background. LBOTE stands for language background other than English, while LOTE is for language other than English.

¹⁵ Source: Department of Education Languages Report. There were fewer funded CLS in 2022 compared with 2021 due to the amalgamation of 13 Greek CLS into one CLS in 2022 and fewer accredited CLS applying for funding. Fewer students enrolled in CLS in 2022 due to disrupted learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A2 Students enrolled in VCE language studies (Unit 4) in Victorian schools in 2022¹⁶

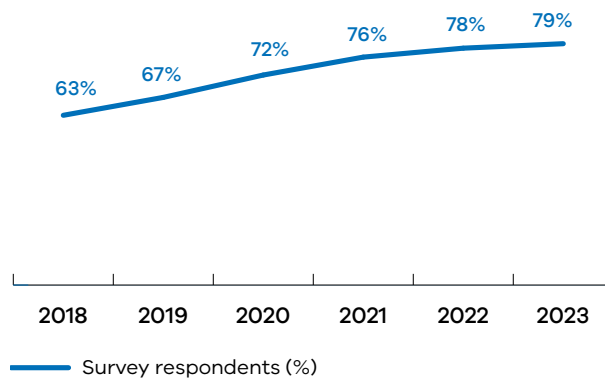
| Language | Enrolments |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| French | 1,487 |
| Japanese Second Language | 1,049 |
| Chinese First Language | 857 |
| Chinese Second Language Advanced | 649 |
| Italian | 582 |
| Chinese Second Language | 554 |
| German | 412 |
| Indonesian Second Language | 379 |
| Latin | 277 |
| Greek | 206 |
| Vietnamese First Language | 179 |
| Vietnamese Second Language | 164 |
| Arabic | 154 |
| Spanish | 129 |
| Chinese Language Culture and Society | 111 |
| Turkish | 81 |
| Persian | 77 |
| Korean Second Language | 60 |
| Hebrew | 40 |
| Khmer | 31 |

¹⁶ Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2022 Satisfactory completion of VCE Units.

Social cohesion and participation

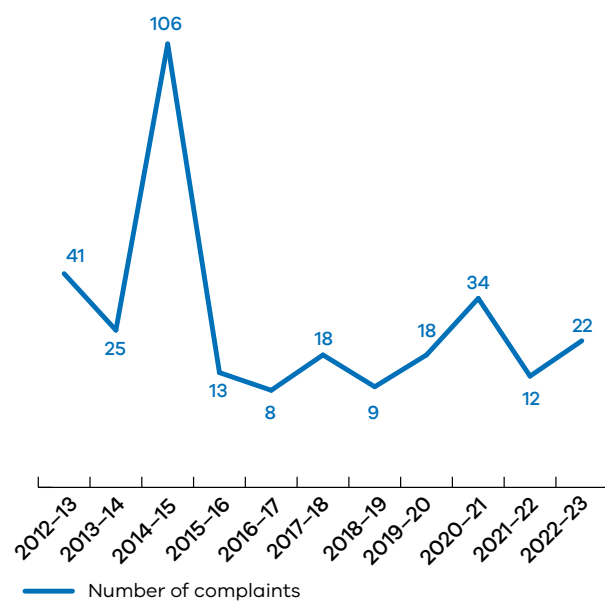
B1 Number of complaints made to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission under the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*¹⁷

| Year | Survey respondents (%) |
|------|------------------------|
| 2023 | 79 |
| 2022 | 78 |
| 2021 | 76 |
| 2020 | 72 |
| 2019 | 67 |
| 2018 | 63 |



B2 Number of complaints made to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission under the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*¹⁸

| Year | Number of complaints |
|---------|----------------------|
| 2022–23 | 22 ¹⁹ |
| 2021–22 | 12 |
| 2020–21 | 34 |
| 2019–20 | 18 |
| 2018–19 | 9 |
| 2017–18 | 18 |
| 2016–17 | 8 |
| 2015–16 | 13 |
| 2014–15 | 106 |
| 2013–14 | 25 |
| 2012–13 | 41 |



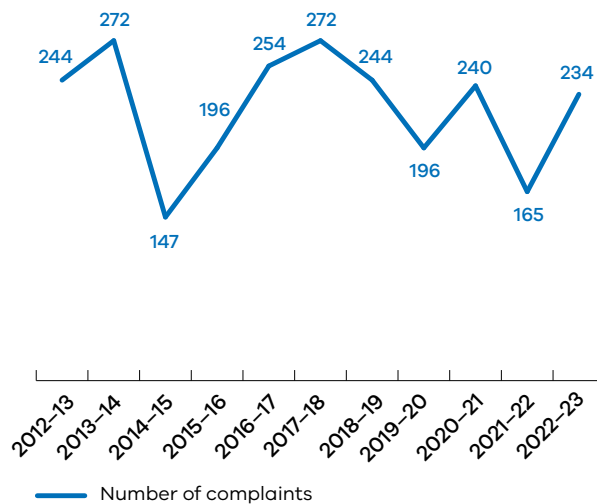
¹⁷ Source: The Scanlon Foundation's Mapping Social Cohesion Survey reports. The surveys are conducted annually. Results collected earlier than 2018 are not included for comparison because a different survey mode was used.

¹⁸ Source: Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission annual reports. The data is collected annually.

¹⁹ Lockdowns during COVID-19 impacted on the number of complaints made. The 2022–23 figure is consistent with pre-COVID levels.

B3 Number of complaints made to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission in relation to discrimination on the basis of race and religious belief under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*²⁰

| Year | Number of complaints |
|---------|----------------------|
| 2022-23 | 234 ²¹ |
| 2021-22 | 165 |
| 2020-21 | 240 |
| 2019-20 | 196 |
| 2018-19 | 244 |
| 2017-18 | 272 |
| 2016-17 | 254 |
| 2015-16 | 196 |
| 2014-15 | 147 |
| 2013-14 | 272 |
| 2012-13 | 244 |

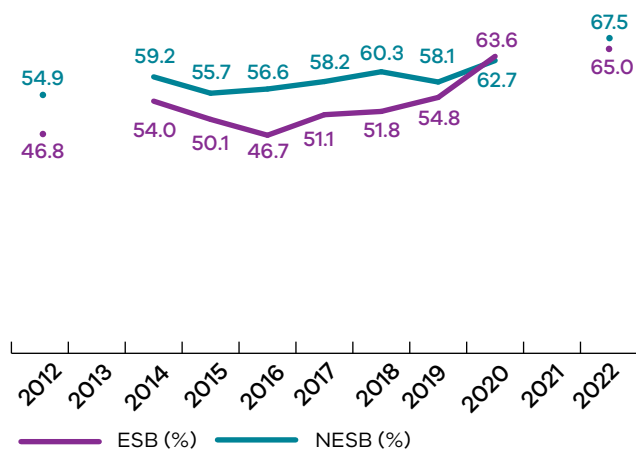


²⁰ Source: Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission annual reports. The data is collected annually.

²¹ Lockdowns during COVID-19 impacted on the number of complaints made. The 2022-23 figure is consistent with pre-COVID levels.

B4 Proportion of Victorians from a non-English speaking background who feel multiculturalism at least sometimes makes life better in their area²²

| Year | ESB (%) | NESB (%) |
|--------------------|---------|----------|
| 2022 | 65.0 | 67.5 |
| 2021 ²³ | N/A | N/A |
| 2020 | 63.6 | 62.7 |
| 2019 | 54.8 | 58.1 |
| 2018 | 51.8 | 60.3 |
| 2017 | 51.1 | 58.2 |
| 2016 | 46.7 | 56.6 |
| 2015 | 50.1 | 55.7 |
| 2014 | 54.0 | 59.2 |
| 2013 ²⁴ | – | – |
| 2012 | 46.8 | 54.9 |



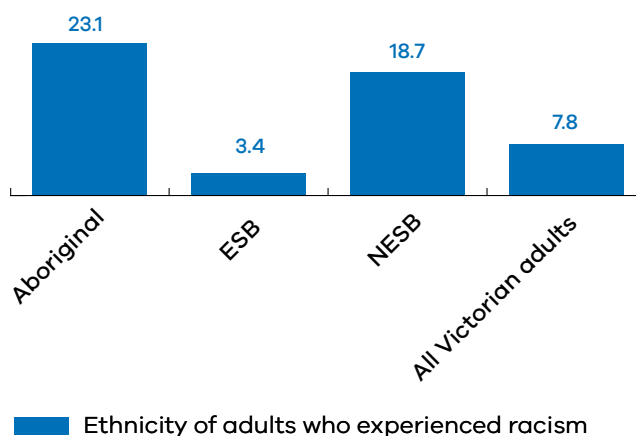
²² Source: Department of Health, Victorian Population Health Survey. This data is collected annually. Estimates prior to 2015 are not directly comparable with estimates from 2015 onwards due to a significant change in the survey methodology. NESB is defined as adults in Victoria who spoke a language other than English at home. ESB is defined as adults who only speak English at home.

²³The Victorian Population Health Survey was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey resumed in 2022.

²⁴No data was available for 2013 because the question was not asked. Data for 2015 onwards cannot be compared with previous years due to a change in survey methodology.

B5 Proportion of adults who felt they experienced discrimination or were treated unfairly by others in the past year because of their skin colour, nationality, race, ethnic group or identifying as Aboriginal²⁵

| Ethnicity of adults who experienced racism | Proportion (%) of adults who experienced racism in the past 12 months |
|--|---|
| Aboriginal ²⁶ | 23.1 |
| ESB (only spoke English at home) ²⁷ | 3.4 |
| NESB (spoke a LOTE at home) ²⁸ | 18.7 |
| All Victorian adults ²⁹ | 7.8 |



²⁵ Source: Department of Health, Victorian Population Health Survey. The 2022 survey was conducted at the state level at a reduced sample size of 7,500. With the exception of Aboriginal status and NESB status, the data cannot be further broken down to specify ethnicity. Every three years the Victorian Population Health Survey is conducted at the local government area level with a larger sample size of approximately 34,000. This enables data to be disaggregated into further categories based on ethnicity, which is why past reports have included these breakdowns. Reported percentages are based on 95 per cent confidence intervals (CI).

²⁶ CI 13.8–36.1 per cent.

²⁷ CI 2.9–4.1 per cent.

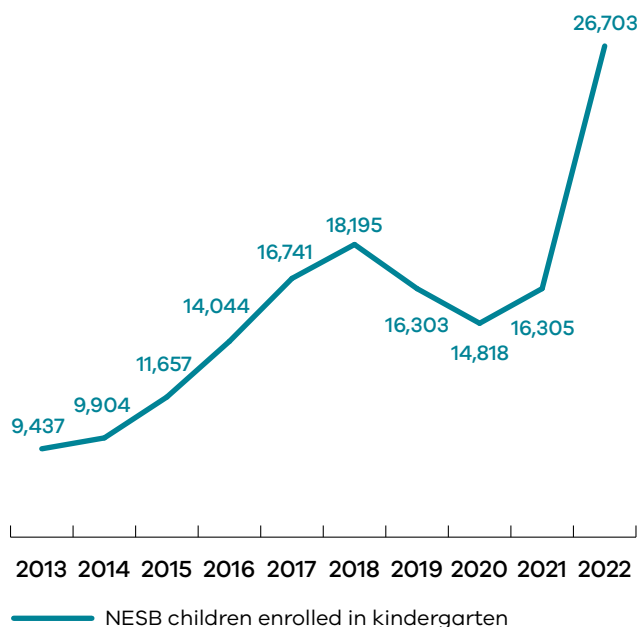
²⁸ CI 16.4–21.3 per cent.

²⁹ CI 7.0–8.7 per cent.

Accessible and responsive services

C1 Number of Victorian children from a non-English speaking background enrolled in a Victorian government-funded kindergarten program³⁰

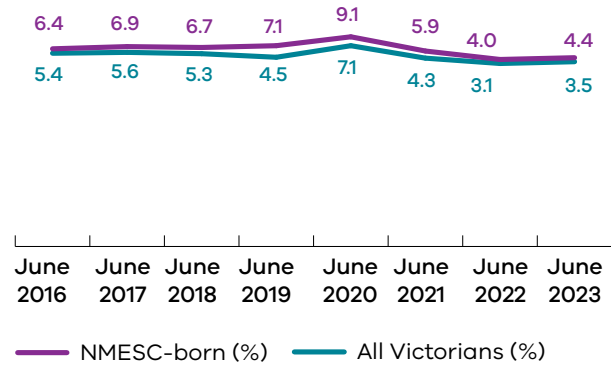
| Year | NESB children enrolled in kindergarten |
|------|--|
| 2022 | 26,703 |
| 2021 | 16,305 |
| 2020 | 14,818 |
| 2019 | 16,303 |
| 2018 | 18,195 |
| 2017 | 16,741 |
| 2016 | 14,044 |
| 2015 | 11,657 |
| 2014 | 9,904 |
| 2013 | 9,437 |



³⁰ Source: Department of Education Kindergarten Census Collection. Data is collected annually. The significant increase in 2022 is due to the statewide rollout of three-year-old kindergarten. The data represents the number of children who were enrolled in a funded kindergarten program and whose family indicated that they speak another main language at home other than English. It is not feasible to calculate a kindergarten participation rate for NESB children because there is no suitable NESB population denominator for children eligible to enrol in three-year-old or four-year-old kindergarten. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, there was a system error in the Kindergarten Information Management System. This error has removed the ability for service providers to select 'other' under the question for 'Main language spoken at home (if not English)'. Kindergarten services that would have usually entered data in this field may have left this blank. (In 2018 almost 3,500 children had 'other' entered in this field.)

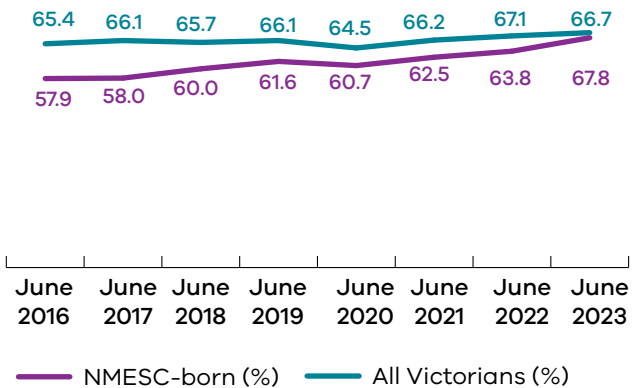
C2 Unemployment rate of Victorians born in non-main English-speaking countries compared with the unemployment rate of all Victorians³¹

| Year | NMESC-born (%) | All Victorians (%) |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------|
| June 2023 | 4.4 | 3.5 |
| June 2022 | 4.0 | 3.1 |
| June 2021 | 5.9 | 4.3 |
| June 2020 | 9.1 | 7.1 |
| June 2019 | 7.1 | 4.5 |
| June 2018 | 6.7 | 5.3 |
| June 2017 | 6.9 | 5.6 |
| June 2016 | 6.4 | 5.4 |



C3 Workforce participation rate of Victorians born in non-main English-speaking countries compared with the workforce participation rate of all Victorians³²

| Year | NMESC-born (%) | All Victorians (%) |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------|
| June 2023 | 66.7 | 67.8 |
| June 2022 | 63.8 | 67.1 |
| June 2021 | 62.5 | 66.2 |
| June 2020 | 60.7 | 64.5 |
| June 2019 | 61.6 | 66.1 |
| June 2018 | 60.0 | 65.7 |
| June 2017 | 58.0 | 66.1 |
| June 2016 | 57.9 | 65.4 |



31 Australian Bureau of Statistics (February 2024) 'Table 2 - Labour force status by State, Territory, Greater capital city, Rest of state (ASGS) and Sex, Australia, accessed 26 February 2024. <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/dec-23#labour-force-status>>

32 Australian Bureau of Statistics (February 2024) 'LM7 - Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory, January 1991 onwards', Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, accessed 26 February 2024. <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/dec-23#labour-force-status>>

