



Evaluation of the Council for Multicultural Australia

and an Assessment of the
implementation of the 1999 *New
Agenda for Multicultural Australia*

May 2003

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

EVALUATION
of the
COUNCIL FOR
MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council for Multicultural Australia (CMA) was established in June 2000 for an initial period of three years. It assists the Commonwealth Government to implement multicultural policy as prescribed in the 1999 *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*. The *New Agenda* requires that an evaluation of the Council's effectiveness be undertaken during the third year of its term. Such an evaluation took place in the period July-December 2002.

Three years after the release of the *New Agenda*, there was also value in assessing its implementation. This assessment was undertaken concurrently with the evaluation of the CMA: the two investigations draw on related and overlapping consultations and surveys, and the results supplement each other. This report covers the evaluation of the CMA followed by an assessment of the implementation of the *New Agenda*. The effectiveness of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs (IDC-MA) established in May 2000 was also examined as part of the latter assessment.

The evaluation of the CMA and the assessment of the implementation of the *New Agenda* indicate an increased interest in multiculturalism in the broader community. Australia's multicultural policy promotes the factors that unite us as a nation while also developing mutual respect between different groups in our society. A significant indication of its success is the fact that despite external threats, Australia's community harmony has remained resilient and strong.

Evaluation of the CMA

The evaluation of the CMA finds that the CMA has met its Terms of Reference well and has complemented the work of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and the IDC-MA. The CMA has been effective in extending the reach of current multicultural policy and raising awareness about its goals.

The Council has had a valuable multiplier-effect in the promotion of Australian multiculturalism, through its success in building partnerships with a wide range of community and corporate groups.

It is recommended that the Council for Multicultural Australia continue, so as to build on the achievements to date, focusing on specific projects which make use of members' knowledge, skills, insights, contacts and networks.

Assessment of the implementation of the *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*

The assessment finds that the broad framework, concepts and principles of the *New Agenda* have considerable support. However, this support is uneven among those consulted for the purpose of this report. Initiatives such as *Living in Harmony* (including Harmony Day), the Access and Equity strategy and the Productive Diversity program are making a positive impact, with strong community recognition.

The assessment confirms that the *New Agenda's* broad framework is sound. It also indicates that effectively communicating the message of multicultural policy remains a challenge, and that its strategic directions could be refocused in order to respond more effectively to a changing environment.

1. EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL FOR MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

1.1 Introduction

The Council for Multicultural Australia, comprising seventeen prominent and well-respected Australians from all States and Territories and a variety of backgrounds, was appointed by the Government in 2000 to assist the Government to implement the 1999 *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*. It has assisted and represented the Minister in dealing with relevant matters affecting the Australian community, and provided advice on matters referred to it by the Minister. The CMA has worked with community organisations, business groups and all levels of Government.

The annual budget allocation of around \$400,000 for the CMA covers:

- sitting fees for quarterly meetings and speaking engagements, including on behalf of the Minister;
- sitting fees for involvement in *Living in Harmony*, Harmony Day and Productive Diversity projects;
- travel and accommodation costs associated with all relevant meetings, speaking engagements and project work;
- publication and distribution of media releases and a quarterly newsletter; and
- printing and distribution of reports.

The CMA Secretariat is located in the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, and funding for this support is not included in the amount above.

Rationale for the evaluation

The Council for Multicultural Australia was established in June 2000 for a period of three years to assist in the implementation of the Commonwealth's multicultural policy, *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*.

The *New Agenda* states “the effectiveness of the Council’s performance will be evaluated during the early part of the third year of its term. Based on the findings of this evaluation the Council will either have its functions confirmed or varied and continued for a further three years, or it will be wound up”.

The evaluation’s terms of reference

The evaluation focused on the effectiveness of the CMA, in the context of its Terms of Reference and its strategic objectives (see Appendix A).

The CMA Terms of Reference

- To assist the government to implement a practical plan of action.
- To assist the coordination of multicultural policies and programs.
- To promote community relations and harmony.
- To assist and represent the Minister.
- To provide advice/report on specific matters to the Minister.
- To report annually to the Minister.

CMA objectives

The CMA’s strategic plan was framed around the following three objectives:

- Inclusiveness – ensuring that Australians understand the relevance of Australian multiculturalism;
- Productive Diversity – ensuring that Australians maximise the economic, cultural and social benefits of our rich cultural diversity; and
- Community harmony – ensuring that Australians acknowledge our success as a harmonious society and work to maintain community harmony.

The evaluation process

The evaluation of the CMA and the assessment of the implementation of the *New Agenda* were conducted in accordance with Department of Finance and Administration guidelines. They were managed by a DIMIA Steering Committee comprising: Thu Nguyen-Hoan, Assistant Secretary, Multicultural Affairs Branch (Chair); Bernie Waters, Assistant Secretary, Business Branch; David Doherty, Assistant Secretary, Citizenship and Language Services Branch; and Con Pagonis, NSW State Manager, Community and Multicultural Affairs.

The key information-gathering processes included a self-evaluation by CMA members. All members filled out a questionnaire, and an independent consultant was engaged to conduct an interview with each member to expand on the questionnaire. The results of the self-evaluation consultations were presented and discussed at the Council meeting on 12-13 August 2002.

A questionnaire was used as part of consultations with the wider community. It included similar, sometimes identical, questions to the Council's self-evaluation questionnaire. Consultations concentrated on: community leaders involved in multicultural affairs; people who work in related areas (including in State/Territory Government agencies); bodies that have worked with the Department and Council; Productive Diversity business contacts; and Commonwealth departments and agencies. Views were sought about the Council in particular and multicultural policy generally.

The consultations were supplemented by a literature review focusing mainly on the period from 1999 to 2002, using the Multicultural Affairs and Immigration Studies (MAIS) database to source the literature. MAIS includes information on books, journal articles and newspapers. The literature review also listed conference presentations since 1999 and recently publicised research.

1.2 The evaluation of the Council against its Terms of Reference

The independent consultant measured the Council's effectiveness in implementing the *New Agenda* against its Terms of Reference.

The following summarises the work undertaken by the Council.

ToR1: To assist the government to implement a practical plan of action

The Council developed a strategic plan to guide its wide range of activities. It also established five working groups to give a strategic focus for members' resources and skills. These working groups focused the Council's work in the areas of: business; government and policy; education; community; and media, sports and the arts (the last two groups later merged). The working groups developed a complementary project management approach to implement the range of activities included within the plan. The Council worked closely with the Multicultural Affairs Branch of DIMIA to implement the plan.

The Council regularly participated in public speaking opportunities and produced newsletters to inform the community on its activities and directions.

In addition, the Council initiated and participated in the development of partnerships and collaborations.

ToR2: To assist the coordination of multicultural policies and programs

The Council met with heads of Commonwealth departments and agencies and their senior staff, renewing interest in multicultural issues within departments and agencies. The Council also met with Premiers, State and Territory Government Ministers, and a wide range of senior private enterprise and government managers and members of the community to promote Australian multiculturalism and its benefits. Council members complemented these meetings with publicity events, radio interviews and public speaking engagements at a wide range of forums, including service clubs.

The Council has worked with the Inter-Departmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs (IDC-MA). It has worked with, or explored the potential to work with:

- State, Territory and Local Government multicultural commissions and policy and program units which are responsible for providing leadership and monitoring the implementation of the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* across all government agencies;
- the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), State Ethnic and Multicultural Communities' Councils, and similar organisations and peak bodies;
- key people who champion Australian multiculturalism in the community, within business and community organisations, government and elsewhere;
- businesses and non-government organisations, which are committed to promoting multiculturalism and realising the benefits of diversity; and
- academic and educational institutions, which specifically address multiculturalism and/or which can promote multiculturalism as part of their core activities.

ToR3: To promote community relations and harmony

The Council's efforts to promote community relations and harmony and the economic and social benefits of cultural diversity included:

- issuing media releases and making appearances to express its condemnation of crime and its serious concern about the nature and quality of reporting and commentary on so-called 'gang' related crime in western Sydney, as well as the subsequent growing community tension during 2001 and 2002; and
- making media statements and appearances and attending events following the terrorist attacks in the United States of America on 11 September 2001 and in Bali on 12 October 2002.

In addition to the media publicity, speaking engagements and meetings, the Council also engaged in events such as Harmony Day activities in 2001 and 2002 and the *21st Century Business: Delivering the Diversity Dividend* conference in November 2000.

The Council's Business Working Group worked in close partnership with DIMIA and the Australian Centre for International Business on the development of a business case for diversity management. The collaboration developed a number of resources to assist employers to manage an increasingly diverse workforce. These resources highlight practical strategies that will help employers deliver innovative services and better business solutions to their customers and shareholders, making greater use of the diversity dividend to their competitive advantage.

ToR4: To assist and represent the Minister

Activities undertaken by the Council included:

- Council members accompanying, representing and assisting the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs at numerous events and meetings; and
- participation, by three Council members, at the invitation of the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, in the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR), Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia in Durban, South Africa in September 2001.

ToR5: To provide advice/report on specific matters to the Minister

Members of the Council met with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, and other Members of Parliament at Commonwealth, State and Territory levels to provide advice and information on multicultural issues.

ToR6: To report annually to the Minister.

The Council regularly kept Portfolio Ministers informed of Council activities and directions.

In summary, the Council has met its Terms of Reference well. It has approached its work enthusiastically, planning a structured program of partnerships, collaborations and projects.

1.3 CMA self-evaluation

In their self-evaluation, members were generally positive about the Council meeting its Terms of Reference (as listed in Section 1.1). The Council considered that there was more work to be done in relation to assisting the coordination of multicultural policies and programs and providing advice on specific matters to the Ministers.

The Council set three objectives for their work: Inclusiveness, Productive Diversity and Community Harmony. Regarding these three objectives, members considered they had been reasonably successful:

- Inclusiveness - Members felt that the Council had been successful in promoting the inclusive aspect of Australian multiculturalism. Sections of the community agreed that the policy was relevant to all Australians.
- Productive Diversity - Members considered that a good start had been made in promoting the benefits of cultural diversity.
- Community Harmony - Members were most positive about the CMA's success in meeting this objective, including their personal work regarding Harmony Day.

The evaluation also reported that Council members felt that their knowledge, skills and networks were well-used, and suggested that such attributes were necessary for a body like the CMA to have credibility and to be most effective. They included:

- leadership and personal integrity, commitment and enthusiasm;
- excellent communication and human relations skills, including the capacity to listen;
- strong representational skills, including a good awareness of public relations/media;
- excellent community level knowledge and networks, in ethnic communities and the wider Australian community;
- wide experience in multicultural issues at a national, state and regional level; and
- strong public policy development, analysis and strategic planning skills.

Members felt that effective secretariat support for their operational arrangements, such as briefings and information provided by the Department, was an essential ingredient in the CMA's success.

Council members did, however, express concern about not knowing the resources available to support their activities and in particular, about their inability to expend program funding. There were also concerns about lack of a specific plan and performance objectives.

Generally, members felt that the Council had either initiated, or contributed to, significant achievements over its first two years and is continuing that trend during its third year of operation. Council members felt that their extensive networks, credibility and skills have added significant value to the CMA's work.

1.4 Consultation findings

The Council also worked with the Inter-Departmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs (IDC-MA) which is a Commonwealth committee of officials with members drawn from many portfolios. The Committee was established in May 2000 to assist in implementing the *New Agenda* within Commonwealth agencies.

During their term, some CMA members attended a number of meetings of the full IDC-MA and maintained an active interest in their work. IDC-MA members commented that they considered the CMA to be a valuable group from which to draw ideas, to assist planning for Harmony Day, and with which to work to promote the value of diversity in the Australian Public Service.

Of the 80 individuals and organisations surveyed, 90% said that they were aware of the Council for Multicultural Australia, Access and Equity and Harmony Day. Community views about the CMA reflect agreement that it had been prominent in promoting community harmony, particularly through Harmony Day, and that it had also played an important role in building relationships with Productive Diversity and Harmony Day corporate and community partners.

Community views also suggested that in times of community tension it would be important for the CMA to provide a calming and rational voice promoting respect for difference and opposing

vilification. Respondents also reported that they considered that it was valuable to have a body comprising prominent and well-respected community leaders that promoted multiculturalism, and that its role and relationship to the Government should be clearly stated and publicised.

1.5 Effectiveness of the CMA

The Council, especially through its working group projects, has provided significant assistance to the Government in implementing its multicultural policy.

The 1999 *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* included responses to each of the 32 recommendations of the National Multicultural Advisory Council's April 1999 report, *Australian multiculturalism for a new century: Towards inclusiveness*. The CMA has made significant contributions to progress against these recommendations (see [Appendix B](#)).

Specifically, the CMA has been effective in promoting community harmony, particularly through its work in the *Living in Harmony* initiative and Productive Diversity programs.

The Council has had a valuable multiplier-effect in the promotion of Australian multiculturalism in the community through its success in building links with community and corporate organisations. The CMA participated in the *21st Century Business* conference in 2000, coordinated business diversity workshops in South Australia and hosted the national Productive Diversity Luncheons for Business Partners. This work has enabled the Council to influence several levels of Australia's business management.

Through its partnerships with groups as varied as Surf Life Saving Australia, Reconciliation Australia, Scouting Australia, Girl Guides, the Australian Local Government Association, Rotary, and the Australian Football League the Council has taken a leadership role in promoting Australian multiculturalism.

The Council has also extended the reach of multicultural policy through its newsletters, publications, public presentations, and meetings with a range of community organisations, including

sporting and inter-faith groups. Through its linkages, the CMA has established many areas in which it has been pro-active.

Council members, in their roles as Australian Citizenship Ambassadors, have promoted Australian Citizenship around the country by participating in Citizenship ceremonies, occasionally representing the Portfolio Minister.

Council members have also actively engaged with State and Territory multicultural commissions and maintained an ongoing program of visits to heads of State/Territory multicultural bodies.

Recommendation

That the Council for Multicultural Australia continue so as to build on its success to date, focusing on specific projects which make use of members' knowledge, skills, insights, contacts and networks.

2. ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *NEW AGENDA*

An assessment of the implementation of the 1999 *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* was carried out concurrently with the evaluation of the CMA. The following report arises out of that assessment.

2.1 **Community consultation**

When community groups were consulted about the CMA, they also were consulted, via the same questionnaire, about implementation of the 1999 *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*.

The questionnaire was sent to some 150 organisations and individuals, including migrant community leaders, people who work in multicultural policy areas in State/Territory Government agencies, bodies that have worked with the Department and CMA, Productive Diversity business contacts, and Commonwealth departments and agencies.

Eighty responses came from a cross-section of the community: the community sector (40%), government departments (31%), business (5%), individuals (7%) and other, mainly local councils (17%). The following reflects and summarises the information and views provided by those organisations and individuals.

The respondents were generally well-informed about multicultural issues. For instance: around 90% had heard of the CMA, Access and Equity and Harmony Day; 60% reported being aware of Productive Diversity; but slightly less than half had heard of the *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*.

While over 90% of respondents said their support for multicultural policy was high or very high, only half rated their understanding as high or very high. Their responses to specific questions, about the key messages of Australia's multicultural policy and the factors that had helped or hindered its implementation, reflect a wide range of views. Many respondents, although professing high levels of support for and understanding of multiculturalism, seem generally unaware of the meaning of multiculturalism in the *New Agenda*.

Views on multicultural policy

The majority of respondents saw the Commonwealth's multicultural policy as having nation-building goals, with its primary focus on issues such as harmony and inclusiveness. At the same time the misconception that multicultural policy only relates to minority groups, and has a part to play in the migration program, was clearly apparent in numerous responses.

Key messages

When asked to say what they think the key messages should be, many respondents mentioned elements of current multicultural policy such as social harmony, inclusiveness, access and equity, productive diversity, no discrimination, respect, two-way street and the right to be an Australian while maintaining one's own culture. Some respondents thought the key messages should be about the immigration and humanitarian intake.

Factors that have helped policy implementation

Respondents pointed to a wide range of factors that they believed have helped with the implementation of multicultural policy including: good communication; the current policy framework; good leadership; focusing on benefits; and aspects of the Australian character.

- Communication emerged as the most prevalent theme including marketing and promotion, education (community and schools) and use of the media.
- The current policy framework and programs were seen as assisting significantly in several areas. Not only do they provide a standard definition of 'multiculturalism', but they also provide clear and understandable objectives which address a range of socioeconomic, environmental, community and humanitarian needs. The policy programs demonstrate Government's commitment to access and equity, workplace diversity initiatives and management education in diversity issues, and argue the business case for diversity management. Such policies are seen to encourage economic growth, but not at the expense of social goals. Respondents commented that the communications strategy of the *Living in Harmony* initiative (which includes

Harmony Day) has lifted the awareness of the need for respect for and acceptance of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds who live and work in Australia.

- Continued strong leadership about the importance of having a balanced, inclusive and effective multicultural society was seen as very important. Respondents indicate that such leadership could also be increased to emphasise the values of inclusion and diversity within the community, at the same time advocating unity within that diversity. However, there was a perception that there is insufficient public acknowledgment of multiculturalism.
- There was considerable support for focusing on the economic benefits of diversity.
- Various aspects of the Australian character were also seen as helping the implementation of multicultural policy. First among these characteristics is the accepting attitude of the Australian people. Respondents noted that in their everyday lives, the average person recognises the visible benefits of a diverse society. The proliferation in all walks of life of Australians of many cultural backgrounds is also seen to expand the range of positive role models for younger Australians of diverse backgrounds.

Factors which community respondents have identified as a hindrance to policy implementation

Respondents said that hindrances to implementation of multicultural policy included: low levels of understanding that Australian multiculturalism benefits all Australians; the actions of the media; and related portfolio policies and events.

- The low level of understanding in the community of the benefits of multiculturalism has a negative impact on how effectively multicultural policy is implemented. Community apathy and ignorance of other people's cultures were also seen as contributing to this factor.
- Many respondents were concerned by media interpretation of various events that took place. Several respondents believed that the media were partly responsible for racism in the community, by stereotyping whole groups of people on the basis of a few individuals who had broken the law.

- Some respondents commented that related portfolio policies and events have had an impact on the perception of multiculturalism.
- A small number of respondents blamed unemployment and cited competition for jobs and resources as having a negative impact on the policy's implementation.
- Some respondents cited the resistance by some communities to 'integrate' into Australian society as a factor that negatively contributed to the implementation of the policy.

2.2 Literature review

The consultations were supplemented by a literature review focused mainly on the period from 1999 to 2002. The literature survey included a scan of the views reflected in the opinion pages of newspapers and (where possible) from the electronic media. It also listed relevant conference presentations since 1999. The literature review includes analyses of recent surveys.

Literature

The Multicultural Affairs and Immigration Studies (MAIS) database was also used to identify relevant literature, including books, articles, conference papers and press articles from 1999 to 2002. 135 items were located. The MAIS abstracts were summarised and grouped into themes.

A wide range of views about multicultural issues is reflected in the literature, largely mirroring those found in the direct consultations.

Additional key themes were: the question of inclusion/exclusion in Australian society; links to reconciliation issues; and the question of citizenship in a multicultural society.

There has also been extensive media coverage of both domestic issues and international events, such as the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA and the 12 October 2002 Bali terrorist bombing, much of which raises issues of direct relevance to multicultural policies.

Conferences

A search of the Internet using the keywords 'Australia', 'multicultural' and 'conference' reveals a wealth of discussion in Australia about multicultural issues in recent years, by a wide range of organisations. The sample includes conferences that were fully dedicated to a multicultural theme, and papers with a multicultural theme that were presented at a conference with a wider theme.

- Many conferences and forums were run by organisations with direct connections to immigrant groups and interests.
- Numerous religious organisations have organised conferences to address multicultural issues relevant to their pastoral work.
- Universities and other teaching/learning organisations appear to have been more active than any other sector.
- A number of conferences covered issues such as housing design and urban heritage, which go beyond the usual boundaries of multiculturalism.
- Health issues are quite extensively covered.
- Multiculturalism and the law remains a current issue.
- An important development is the number of conferences on multicultural themes organised on a commercial basis by professional conference organisers.

Media

The media appear to have increasing interest in multicultural issues. In May 2002 *The Australian* published a major series titled *The Cultural Divide* which examined "what Australians really think about multiculturalism and their society, and whether the term itself has outlived its usefulness".

There has also been extensive media coverage of international and domestic events, a sizeable portion of which has been about concerns with religious diversity in Australia. It is noted that a *Living in Harmony* partner, the Australian Multicultural Foundation, has examined religious diversity in Australia, and is due to finalise its report to the Department in mid 2003.

A *Living in Harmony* partnership with the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) has led to the publication of a booklet,

Appreciating Islam. This booklet is being distributed in direct response to community issues following the events of both 11 September 2001 and 12 October 2002.

Generally, media reporting is characterised by a misunderstanding of multicultural policy. Some well-recognised figures' publicly expressed the views that multiculturalism was only for 'ethnic or cultural groups', and that it encourages them to 'live their own lives independently of Australian lifestyles, Australian standards, Australian culture, and Australian laws'.

Surveys

The evaluation was also informed by a number of relevant surveys conducted in the recent past.

SBS survey

In late November 2002, the Special Broadcasting Services Corporation (SBS) released the results of a major research project into trends in multicultural Australia. The purpose of the research was to inform strategic decision-making on the development of SBS services. The authors suggest that the findings indicate a paradox in contemporary Australia. They claim that

"... on the one hand Australia is obviously a plural society with an increasingly diverse population, most of whom thrive well in their lives. On the other hand, Australian *culture* is still not as open and inclusive as it could be: it is still strongly dominated by a core, Anglo-Celtic culture from which people of other cultural backgrounds are marginalised. In essence, some of these people see themselves as *in* Australia, but not *of* Australia. Their sense of belonging is incomplete."

Among the key quantitative findings of the report are:

- for the national sample, 59% responded that they considered cultural diversity to be a strength of Australian society;
- 64% considered immigration to be beneficial to Australia; and
- 72% of the non English-speaking background respondents believed cultural diversity to be a strength of Australia.

Preliminary analysis of the report indicates that a number of findings in the report could be used to inform aspects of future multicultural programs. However, the direct policy relevance of the

report is limited by the fact that it equates multiculturalism, principally, with cultural maintenance, rather than the principles of the *New Agenda* (civic duty, cultural respect, social equity and Productive Diversity).

Australian Multicultural Foundation Roundtable

In November 2002 the Australian Multicultural Foundation and Manning Clark House organised a Roundtable discussion with a group of interested people to assist in mapping key issues, priorities and requirements that will ensure Australia remains a harmonious and culturally diverse society into the future, and for the purpose of developing a program/agenda for a larger public forum in 2003.

The Roundtable addressed the question 'What will Australia be like in 2020 from a cultural and population perspective?' Beginning with characteristics of Australia in 2002, participants considered issues including:

- the lack of formal population policy;
- current immigration policy;
- a decline in fertility;
- a distrust among some people of other groups in the Australian community especially following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and 12 October 2002;
- the relevance of tolerance; and
- successful settlement.

Participants said 2020 may see the following changes:

- we will not be employing terms like 'multiculturalism';
- we will not be employing the term 'ethnic';
- newspapers will no longer employ ethnic affairs reporters, for even relatively new groups of settlers will be seen as just another of the many groups of Australia who make up the mosaic of Australia;
- we should see Vietnamese names in our major sports teams and Test teams; and
- we should see a Muslim as Australian of the Year.

Clemenger BBDO survey

On 3 December 2002, *The Daily Telegraph* published the findings of a survey by Clemenger BBDO on the issues of concern to Australians. Clemenger BBDO has conducted surveys for over 25 years on issues that people felt 'very concerned' about. While there have been major changes in the top 8 such issues of concern in the Clemenger surveys of 1977, 1988, 1997 and 2002, it should be noted that immigration and multicultural issues were not among the top eight issues that people felt 'very concerned' about in 2002.

2.3 The role of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs

In addition to the CMA, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs (IDC-MA) has also had a role in implementing the *New Agenda*. As part of the assessment of the implementation of the *New Agenda*, formal feedback was sought from Commonwealth agencies about the IDC-MA's role and achievements and its possible future role and structure. Detailed discussions were held with five agencies followed by a plenary discussion at the IDC-MA meeting on 5 November 2002.

Agencies felt that the IDC-MA has provided a valuable forum for exchanging information and sharing ideas. It has also developed practical ways to help agencies to implement the Government's multicultural policy. The forum has played a particularly important role in progressing implementation of the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*. It has encouraged useful cross-agency planning around specific issues such as Harmony Day, community harmony and streamlined reporting on diversity issues through its working groups.

However, the effectiveness of the IDC-MA has been affected by the variation in representatives' seniority, their consequent varying ability to exert influence in their agencies, as well as high turnover among representatives and consequent lack of continuity in conducting IDC-MA business in agencies. The operation of the IDC-MA as a 'one-size-fits-all' committee, trying to cater for a wide range of agency roles, has also had implications for the Committee's effectiveness. For these reasons, the capacity of the IDC-MA to influence the broader multicultural policy agenda has been limited.

It is therefore suggested that a three-tiered structure for a successor be adopted:

1. The first tier would involve senior agency representatives and would be consulted on high level multicultural policy issues.
2. The second tier would consist of ad hoc groups, made up of representatives from relevant agencies, convened in response to current issues such as threats to community harmony.
3. The third tier would be an informal email network of representatives from Commonwealth agencies, which would be renamed the Communications Network-Multicultural Affairs (or Comnet-MA).

Effective communication channels between DIMIA, other Commonwealth agencies and the CMA should be a strategic component of this proposed model.

2.4 The *New Agenda* Plan of Action: Progress

Included in the *New Agenda* was a Plan of Action to take forward the Government's policy. Achievements in relation to the Plan of Action indicate significant progress. The *New Agenda* document also included the Government's responses to each of the 32 recommendations of the National Multicultural Advisory Council's April 1999 report, *Australian multiculturalism for a new century: Towards inclusiveness*. Progress against these recommendations is set out at [Appendix B](#), complementing the following report of achievements against the four elements of the Plan of Action.

- | |
|--|
| <p>1. <i>Facilitate partnerships within sectors of Australian government by means of a 'Diversity Australia' home page, which will not only act as a coordination point for information of national significance but also facilitate international networking.</i></p> |
|--|

The Multicultural Australia website <www.immi.gov.au> has been developed as a focal point for information about Australian multiculturalism. It has been designed to act as a coordination point for information of national significance (such as multicultural

policy, Access and Equity, Productive Diversity and *Living in Harmony*). The site was launched by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs on 21 June 2002.

The Diversity Australia pages have also been developed as part of the Multicultural Australia site <www.diversityaustralia.gov.au>. The majority of material for the Diversity Australia site was prepared for the Department by highly qualified professionals, mainly from Australia's business education and corporate sectors under the Productive Diversity Partnerships Program. The website contains research documents and other publications, case studies, tools and other planning resources to illustrate the benefits of good diversity management practices. Business firms and other organisations will be encouraged to put material on this site, under their corporate logos, as practical demonstrations of their support.

The Multicultural Australia site is linked to other relevant websites, including Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, business and community organisations. The website encourages a stronger sharing of ideas and experiences on current approaches and future options for multiculturalism and diversity practice in Australia.

2. Implement a public information and education strategy to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of Australia's cultural diversity, counter myths and promote behaviour patterns and attitudes that build community harmony.

As the lead agency responsible for the implementation of multicultural policy, the Department supports the Ministers in raising awareness and understanding of Australian multiculturalism. It has mechanisms in place to ensure that the Ministers and the Department are in close contact with communities across Australia on multicultural issues.

Of significance is DIMIA's community liaison structure, comprising a national coordination, analysis and reporting section in Canberra and a network of Community Liaison Officers in the State and Territory Offices. Contact is maintained with some 4,500 community organisations and individuals, directly and through over 2000 formal consultative and other events nation-wide each year.

Effective liaison underpins Departmental reporting and advice provided to Ministers, the Departmental Executive and other Commonwealth agencies, and is crucial for managing Government relations with the Australian community and the promotion of community harmony. It also develops and helps to implement responses to domestic issues and responses to internal threats to community harmony. The formulation of community relations strategies in response to external and domestic pressures, and to developments in Government policy affecting Australia's culturally diverse community, is another important part of the community liaison role.

The Department has been able to promote active awareness of Australian multiculturalism through events and initiatives such as the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, the *Australia 2030*, *Citizen 2030* and *Immigration: The facts* information kits, and Harmony Day.

Sydney 2000 Olympic Games

- The Olympic Games was the theme for the 2000 Multicultural Diary.
- A *Living in Harmony* partnership assisted communities to welcome and host international athletes and guests and supplied participating communities with promotional material.
- A series of community profiles was produced and distributed widely to media from around the world, as well as through the Internet.
- The Department produced the kit *Gateway to the Games*, which showcased countries and cultures that have contributed to our diversity, along with stories of people who have made new lives for themselves in Australia.

Australia 2030

Australia 2030: Investigating the Facts of Immigration was a national program and competition for Australian secondary school students. Central to the program was a multimedia educational resource kit designed to promote informed discussion on Australian immigration and population issues among secondary school students.

Citizen 2030

Citizen 2030: Investigating the Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities of Citizenship was a program designed to provide a series of classroom activities and resources to stimulate and support the teaching of civics and citizenship in secondary classrooms. A key focus of the program was the future - students were asked to think about what Australian citizenship would mean in 2030 (when they are among the leaders of that society), and what qualities and attributes would make Australia a nation of which they can continue to be proud.

CMA members have promoted Australian Citizenship in their role as Australian Citizenship Ambassadors for the 2002-03 Australian Citizenship Campaign. This has involved attending Citizenship/Affirmation ceremonies, sometimes representing the Minister.

Immigration: The facts

In 2001 the Department produced *Immigration: The facts*, a kit containing a range of products aimed at correcting and clarifying misinformation about Australia's immigration and settlement programs as well as issues associated with the cultural diversity of our population. A total of 15,000 kits were either directly mailed out or requested by people and organisations. In addition each week hundreds of people read the information contained in the kit on the Department's internet site. Several items directly related to multicultural policy were included in the kit. These included a question and answer booklet, two fact sheets ('The Evolution of Australia's Multicultural Policies' and 'Productive Diversity: Australia's Competitive Advantage, How Australia's culturally diverse workforce benefits the economy'), and a poster setting out the words of the Parliamentary Statement on Racial Tolerance.

Harmony Day

Harmony Day is a key part of the *Living in Harmony* initiative and has been held on 21 March since 1999. It coincides with the United Nations' Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Harmony Day provides Australians with an opportunity to:

- think about our community's success as a multicultural society;

- re-commit to continuing respect, goodwill and understanding between all Australians of all backgrounds; and
- say “no” to racism.

Each year the number of Harmony Day activities increases as more community groups, businesses, government and non-government agencies, and schools become involved. A comprehensive range of products to assist organisations has been developed and includes posters, planning guides, information kits, orange building wrap and stickers. The Harmony Day website enables the public to obtain information, request products and register events. As a result the Department is able to monitor the growth of participation and support for this national day.

Harmony Day Business Luncheons bring together Harmony Day corporate partners and others to raise awareness of the importance of diversity management. They are organised by the Department with the collaboration of the CMA. In 2002 the Harmony Day Corporate Partners included: AMP, Coca-Cola Amatil, Cadbury Schweppes, Ford Motor Company, Drake, Microsoft, McDonalds, Telstra and Woolworths.

3. Continue to promote the productivity and performance improvements achievable through diversity management strategies including partnerships with the private sector.

Productive Diversity

The *New Agenda* commits the Government to actively seek opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector in order to maximise the economic and social benefits of Australia’s diversity. This commitment is being met largely through the Productive Diversity Partnerships Program administered by DIMIA. The overall aim of this Program is to encourage and support business to make better use of the language skills, business networks, market knowledge and experience of Australia’s diverse population and to remove any impediments to their effective contribution in the workforce.

Since 1999 the Productive Diversity Partnerships Program has developed a number of resources to assist employers to manage

an increasingly diverse workforce. These resources highlight practical strategies that will help employers deliver innovative services and better business solutions to their customers and shareholders, making greater use of the diversity dividend to their competitive advantage. The Program has evolved over three key stages:

Stage 1 – Research Development

Eight partnerships were funded in 1999-2000, including business educators and corporate sector organisations, to undertake specific projects aimed at:

- stimulating discussion among key stakeholders on the economic benefits of productive diversity; and
- identifying practical ways in which Australian business could be supported to implement diversity management in the workplace.

Stage 2 – 21st Century Business: Delivering the Diversity Dividend conference

A major conference was held in Melbourne in November 2000, to provide an opportunity for discussion at a critical stage in the Program's development and to showcase the various resource projects that were completed under Stage 1. It was attended by around 250 people from business, academic, government and community sectors.

Stage 3 – Resource Development and Corporate engagement

This stage built on previous work and noted the aforementioned conference papers. In particular, the work was advanced by articulating a cogent business case for diversity management, supported by practical tools, case studies, business models and checklists. These resources support the practical application of diversity management by business as well as its teaching in training and academic institutions. There were several key results of this stage.

- First, articulating the business case for diversity management. The Australian Centre for International Business at the University of Melbourne developed a four-part business case to demonstrate the economic benefits of Productive Diversity to the Australian business community.
- Second, developing tools and case studies for applying diversity management in the workplace. The Department

formed a range of partnerships with stakeholders in the business, government, academic and business advisory sectors to facilitate the development of resources and tools on issues such as sales and marketing; work/life balance; corporate citizenship and matters of significance to small to medium size enterprises. The resources developed under the Program are now available on the Department's website.

- Third, in 2001 the Department commissioned a major report on understanding the business education and training needs of tertiary level programs for diversity management education and training in Australia. The report will be finalised in 2003. It identifies:
 - key stakeholders, and the stakeholder needs of Australian businesses, tertiary institutions and other appropriate organisations to advise on future directions for developing curricula materials, competency standards and teaching resources on diversity management for business education and training; and
 - opportunities for improved collaboration between businesses and tertiary institutions in the delivery of diversity management education and training in Australia.
- Fourth, engagement with corporate Australia. For example, the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and the Chairman of the Asia Society AustralAsia Centre co-hosted pre-eminent business luncheons in March 2002, in Melbourne and Sydney. They were organised with support from the Council for Multicultural Australia and Reconciliation Australia as part of the Government's Harmony Day 2002 celebrations.

4. Promote an 'outreach' program to encourage harmonious relationships between people or organisations of different cultural backgrounds.

Two primary 'outreach' programs managed by the Department are the *Living in Harmony* initiative and *Access and Equity* reporting of Commonwealth departments' progress in implementing the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*.

Living in Harmony initiative

Since 1998 the *Living in Harmony* initiative has facilitated widespread individual, organisational, community and business level activities directed toward promoting community harmony. This initiative is the Government's response to an election commitment in 1996 to develop an anti-racism campaign.

The Department conducted extensive community consultations and commissioned research to inform the development of the initiative. The consultation and research findings revealed that disharmony is widely perceived in Australia as disturbing and destructive and that Australians believe deeply in the tradition of giving everyone 'a fair go'. The consultations and research emphasised the importance of harnessing community involvement and goodwill through community education activities. They also highlighted the importance of tailoring the initiative's messages and strategies for different audiences and for different parts of the country.

The *Living in Harmony* initiative has a balanced approach of encouraging communities to develop local solutions to promote harmony at the community level, bringing down barriers between cultures, addressing racism issues, and at the same time developing projects of strategic national importance.

The three linked operational elements of the *Living in Harmony* initiative are:

- a community grants program;
- a partnerships program; and
- a public information strategy, incorporating Harmony Day (see above).

The total *Living in Harmony* budget from 1996 to June 2002 was \$12.5 million. The 2002-2003 Budget committed a further \$14 million over four years from the financial year 2002-2003.

The *Living in Harmony* community grants program is the centrepiece of the initiative and the key to its success. It relies on local groups to identify relevant issues at the grass roots level and to propose suitable projects that address their own community needs, using local means and solutions. Target areas have included young people, the education sector, sports, the media,

justice, workplaces, Indigenous issues, religious understanding and the arts.

The number and value of grants awarded to the States and Territories has been, generally, in proportion to their population. The remaining funds were used to develop partnerships, implement the public information strategy, support Harmony Day, provide support for grants and partnerships, and administer the initiative.

The *Living in Harmony* partnerships program complements the 'local solutions to local issues' approach of the community grants program by providing the Commonwealth with a means to work with a number of organisations to develop demonstration projects. *Living in Harmony* partnerships were established through commissioning and co-funding cooperative ventures in fields of national significance, with partners contributing cash or in-kind resources.

Some 34 funded partnerships have been established to date, many breaking new ground by highlighting cultural diversity issues in areas such as sport, volunteering, religion and the arts. A notable example of a *Living in Harmony* partnership has been the *Towards a Better Understanding of Islam and the Muslim Community* partnership with the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC). This project is responding to direct community issues arising from the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and 12 October 2002 and aims to create a better understanding of Islam and the Muslim community in Australia by:

- working with the media through facilitating informed and accurate reporting;
- producing information, articles and media releases on Islam and Muslims; and
- assisting Muslim leaders to handle the media.

Twenty thousand hard copies of the *Appreciating Islam* booklet have been produced by AFIC. The booklet is also accessible on the AFIC website, <www.afic.com.au>.

Other funded partnerships have been with organisations as diverse as the Guides, NSW Rural Fire Service, the Australian Cricket Board, the Australian Multicultural Foundation, the Conference of

Education Systems Chief Executive Officers Sub-Group on Racism in Schools, and We Are Australian Inc.

Some partnerships involve major corporations and do not receive departmental funding. High profile and well-recognised organisations support the *Living in Harmony* initiative from their own resources and through their own networks. These partnerships provide a valuable link to the private sector and complement other elements of the *Living in Harmony* initiative by highlighting harmony in the workplace.

The *Living in Harmony* public information strategy promotes acceptance and harmony in our community and provides communities with opportunities to participate in *Living in Harmony* activities. The particular focus of the public information strategy has been Harmony Day. The Department will continue to seek notable Harmony Day partners for each year to help promote the positive message of Harmony Day.

An evaluation of Phase 1 of the *Living in Harmony* initiative was conducted by DIMIA in late 2001. The evaluation found that:

- Each of the three elements provided a solid framework for the *Living in Harmony* initiative and contributed to meeting its overall objectives.
- It was estimated that the one hundred funded community grants projects in 1999-2000 attracted some 133,520 participants with dissemination of *Living in Harmony* messages through events, radio and print media to over 4.5 million people.
- Many partnerships broke new ground by highlighting cultural diversity issues in areas such as sport, volunteering, religion and the arts.
- The three national Harmony Days between 1999-2001 have demonstrated increasing and more broadly-based participation rates each year.

Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society

The *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* also supports 'outreach' objectives by seeking to ensure that all Commonwealth programs are sensitive to the realities of a culturally diverse society. Progress in implementing the *Charter* is assessed in the Access and Equity Annual Report. There has been significant progress over the past three years, through implementation of a performance management framework, development of standards on statistical reporting, and a review of access and equity reporting requirements.

To assist agencies to report in a more meaningful way, a performance management framework was developed in 2000 after consultation with a wide cross-section of portfolio agencies. It was tested in five agencies with the results of the trials reported in the *Access and Equity Annual Report 2000*. The framework was revised in light of the 2000 trial, and all portfolio agencies used it to prepare their contribution to the *Access and Equity Annual Report 2001*. The framework is built around five key roles of government: policy adviser, regulator, purchaser, provider and employer. Sixteen performance indicators were developed across these five roles. The performance indicators establish a structure for portfolio agencies to report progress in implementing the *Charter*.

In June 2001 the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs launched *The Guide: Implementing the Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity*, which is a tool to assist government departments and agencies to implement the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication, *Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity*. The ABS standards were developed in response to a widely recognised need for a nationally consistent framework for the collection and dissemination of data on cultural and language diversity. The Ministerial Council of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs endorsed the statistical standards in April 1999. The *Guide* contains practical advice on how to improve statistical practices. Progress with implementing the *Standards* is part of the Access and Equity reporting.

During 2001, a Reference Group was set up to review the reporting responsibilities for access and equity, in particular the *Access and Equity* annual reports. The Reference Group included representation from DIMIA, the Office of Disability, the Australian

Public Service Commission and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The review, which was finalised in June 2002, considered a range of accountability options for managing and reporting on access and equity, including how the report aligns with other diversity-related processes such as disability, gender and workplace diversity. Currently, options for streamlining diversity-related reporting are being examined by a Working Group comprising DIMIA and relevant Commonwealth agencies. A manual will also be developed to assist agencies in reporting on Access and Equity.

2.5 Public understanding of multiculturalism

Consultations show that, for those who were familiar with the current policy framework as set out in the *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*, it is perceived as generally appropriate and provides a widely supported rationale for multicultural policies and programs. Although many people seem to be unfamiliar with the way in which the principles of Australian multiculturalism are expressed in the *New Agenda*, they nevertheless express similar sentiments in different words. This, in turn, indicates that the definition and principles provide a sound basis for an effective multicultural policy.

There is, however, a continuing lack of consensus in people's understanding of particular themes and concepts within the broad framework of Australian multiculturalism. Much of the media coverage, and many of the views reflected in the literature review, letters to Ministers and general consultations, show various interpretations of aspects of multiculturalism. For example, while the *New Agenda* states that Australian multiculturalism is for all Australians, there remains a perception that it is about and for ethnic communities only.

While acknowledging the complexities of current terminology, especially the term 'multiculturalism', the clear advice from the consultations is that the broad policy framework and its programs should remain, but that multicultural messages should be articulated more clearly. This would involve raising awareness and understanding of the meaning, principles, and programs of multicultural policy, as well as forms of words and descriptions that can convey policy objectives clearly to different audiences.

Specific programs, such as Harmony Day, Productive Diversity, Access and Equity, and especially *Living in Harmony* were widely recognised in the community. The Council for Multicultural Australia also expressed a clear preference for contributing to these practical programs. The level of support indicates that people can relate to the aims and concepts of these programs.

It is noted that the *New Agenda* indicates that Government will “work closely with the Council for Multicultural Australia to implement a communication strategy, following an evaluation of the *Living in Harmony* initiative. Its key objective will be to raise awareness and understanding that cultural diversity is important to all Australians and that its benefits should be maximised in the national interest”. The evaluation of *Living in Harmony* (phase one) has been conducted. There has been extensive communication with stakeholders on multicultural issues, including through:

- meetings between CMA and community, business and government;
- DIMIA’s community liaison network;
- Productive Diversity forums and products;
- the *Living in Harmony* initiative and publications;
- Harmony Day activities;
- CMA newsletters and publications; and
- conference presentations by the Ministers, CMA members and the Department.

The evaluation of *Living in Harmony* confirmed its success in communication. Given the lack of widespread understanding of Australian multiculturalism and the success of *Living in Harmony*, there is merit in developing strategies for communicating the overall multicultural message through similar concepts.

2.6 Conclusion

The assessment of the implementation of the 1999 *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* confirms that the broad multicultural policy framework is appropriate. However, it points to the need to continue to promote the relevance of Australian multiculturalism to all Australians, and emphasise its logical relation to familiar values, language and perspectives.

Public understanding of Australian multiculturalism

Current terminology, especially the term 'multiculturalism', is not well understood. It is therefore important that the message of multicultural policy be effectively communicated.

In this context it is valuable to examine the communication success of the *Living in Harmony* initiative, in particular its practical, visible and targeted nature and the clarity of its messages.

Productive Diversity

Selling the benefits of cultural diversity remains an important objective for multicultural policy. Further work could be done through the Productive Diversity program to:

- contribute to the Government's broader policy objectives aimed at achieving high and sustained economic and employment growth, improved productivity and competitiveness in a global trading and investment market; and
- build on the momentum of the Productive Diversity and Harmony Day corporate partnerships, develop good practice examples and consequently make an effective contribution to the implementation of broader Government policy, such as the Prime Minister's Business Community Partnership initiative.

Access and Equity

The Access and Equity strategy has made a significant impact on the way the Australian Public Service operates. However, work remains to be done in addressing both economic efficiency and social justice outcomes in the public service by incorporating both Productive Diversity and Access and Equity messages in

implementing the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*. Community feedback indicates that improvement is still required, particularly in regional Australia and with regard to small/emerging communities.

Community harmony

In the aftermath of recent international and domestic events, perceptions of culture, ethnicity and religion have become more sensitive and emotive issues. Australian multicultural policies and programs provide vital tools for containing and combating these stresses, and the resulting threat to social cohesion. The current environment underscores the importance of multicultural policy that can:

- respond effectively to new and emerging priorities;
- enhance and encourage inclusion of all Australians in our public forums; and
- promote the relevance of Australian multiculturalism for Australia as a united, harmonious and cohesive society.

Living in Harmony

Continuing to build on the outstanding impact of the *Living in Harmony* initiative, including Harmony Day, should remain a priority, including targeting specific areas for community grants.

Emerging issues and possible future directions

Some multicultural issues that were raised during consultations that may warrant future consideration include:

- maintaining and strengthening community harmony as a pivotal dimension of the high priority currently being given to national security;
- maximising the contributions of multicultural programs, such as *Living in Harmony*, Access and Equity, Productive Diversity and community liaison to support the strategic objective of community harmony;
- the implications for community harmony of increasing cultural and religious diversity; and
- the balance of rights and responsibilities that underpin a multicultural civil society.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Terms of reference for the evaluation

Scope and Outcomes of Evaluation

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the CMA against the Council's Terms of Reference particularly its assistance to the Government in implementing the *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*.

The evaluation, as required in the *New Agenda*, will inform a decision by government as to continuation, variation or termination of the CMA.

Advice about the effectiveness of the CMA should be provided to the Minister by early 2003 so that a budget submission relating to the future of the CMA can be considered in the context of the 2003-2004 budget.

Terms of reference of the evaluation

1. The primary focus of the evaluation will be the effectiveness of the CMA against its Terms of Reference and particularly its objectives, taking into account:
 - the CMA's impact on the implementation of the *New Agenda*;
 - value added by CMA activity (output, impact and outcome);
 - the level of awareness of the role and performance of the CMA among stakeholders;
 - the effectiveness of the mix of members' skills, capacity and representation;
 - implementation of the Council's strategic plan;
 - the adequacy of levels of resourcing and support at both Central Office and State and Territory level including for meetings and other activities; and
 - possible alternative models.

2. A secondary focus of the evaluation will be the effectiveness of implementation of the *New Agenda* taking into account:
 - the level of awareness of the policy among key stakeholders and the public;
 - the level of awareness of key messages of the policy, ie. inclusiveness, community harmony and productive diversity;
 - the level of agreement among stakeholders about directions;
 - the extent to which the policy has been implemented; and
 - the extent to which implementation of the policy addresses the intention of the policy.

3. A further focus for the evaluation will be the extent to which the *New Agenda* meets current needs taking into account:
 - community understanding of multiculturalism for all Australians;
 - perceptions of leadership including among political, community, academic and multicultural communities;
 - community and key stakeholder awareness of, and level of agreement with, multicultural policies at Commonwealth, State and Territory and local levels;
 - perceptions of factors which support or undermine multiculturalism;
 - effect of racism, ethnic related violence including incidents, context and links with international and other domestic events;
 - relationship between inclusiveness and community harmony;
 - contribution of diversity to society, culture and business; and
 - possible modifications/revisions required for government policies.

Method

- key stakeholder interviews;
- self-assessment by CMA members, including individual interviews;
- focus groups – specific constituencies; and
- literature review, including media reports, commentaries, and conferences which either focused on multiculturalism or had a multicultural component.

Management

- The evaluation will be conducted in-house.
- The evaluation will be managed by a Steering Committee chaired by the Assistant Secretary, Multicultural Affairs Branch. It will report to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.
- The Steering Committee will comprise representatives of Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Division (eg. Citizenship and Language Services Branch), Migration and Temporary Entry Division (eg. Business Branch) and a DIMIA State or Territory office (eg. NSW).
- The Steering Committee Chair will brief the CMA Chairman as appropriate on progress of the evaluation and issues arising.
- An Evaluation Team of two people will support the Steering Committee with substantial input from other MAB staff.

Critical Dates

The evaluation commences in July 2002 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2002.

Attachment to Terms of Reference for the evaluation

Terms of Reference for the Council for Multicultural Australia

The Council for Multicultural Australia will:

1. assist the Government in developing and implementing a practical plan of action (which will include an active program of consultation, discussion and communication) to ensure that Australia's cultural diversity is a productive and unifying force in our society;
2. assist the coordination of the Government's multicultural policy and programs within the Commonwealth and in relation to other levels of government, the private sector and the wider community;
3. promote community relations and harmony, with a particular emphasis on raising awareness and understanding of:
 - the relevance of Australia's multicultural policy for all Australians; and
 - the economic and social benefits of cultural diversity;
4. assist and represent the Minister in dealing with relevant issues affecting the Australian community or representative groups;
5. provide advice and report on specific matters referred to it by the Minister; and
6. report annually to the Minister on the Council's activities and achievements.

In carrying out its work, the Council undertakes appropriate activities, including to:

- consult stakeholders;
- hold seminars, workshops and/or conferences;
- undertake activities to clearly explain the definition and principles of Australian multiculturalism and its practical applications; and
- facilitate liaison between government and the community.

Appendix B: Progress regarding recommendations of the National Multicultural Advisory Council

The *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* included a Government response to the 32 recommendations made in the report by the National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC), *Australian multiculturalism for a new century: Towards inclusiveness* (1999). A great deal of progress has been made in line with these recommendations, by the CMA, the IDC-MA, DIMIA and other Government agencies. The progress is summarised in the following table. The summary table should be read in conjunction with the summary of progress in implementing the Plan of Action in the *New Agenda*, as discussed in this report's assessment of implementation of the 1999 *New Agenda*.

Recommendations	Government response and summary of actions
<p>Recommendation 1: Continued government support for Australian multiculturalism as a fundamental requirement and opportunity arising out of the cultural diversity of Australian society, and that this commitment be reflected in all government policies.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Commonwealth Inter-Departmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs (IDC-MA). The IDC-MA has worked in collaboration with the CMA and has been a good vehicle to progress <i>Charter</i> implementation and Commonwealth involvement in Harmony Day and community relations issues arising from external and domestic events. The IDC-MA has also been evaluated and this is discussed in section 2.3 of this report. • Commonwealth agencies have reported in the Access and Equity Annual Report on how they have addressed language and cultural diversity issues in their policies and programs.
<p>Recommendation 2: The retention of the term 'multiculturalism'.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> The term has been retained and promoted.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: The prefix 'Australian' be used whenever appropriate.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> The expression 'Australian multiculturalism' is used to describe the policy and is promoted.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: The adoption of a definition of Australian multiculturalism.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> The definition has been used where appropriate. The evaluation has shown that it remains valid and relevant; however, it is not well known or understood in the wider community.</p>

<p>Recommendation 5: The definition of Australian multiculturalism be clearly explained through a communication strategy.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. The Government will adopt a communication strategy which will be developed following an evaluation of the <i>Living in Harmony</i> initiative.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> There has been extensive communication with stakeholders and the public on multicultural issues, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings between CMA and community, business and government; • Productive Diversity forums and products; • <i>Living in Harmony</i> (LiH) initiative and publications; • Harmony Day activities; • CMA newsletters and publications; and • Conference presentations by the Ministers, CMA and Department.
<p>Recommendation 6: The adoption of a vision for Australian multiculturalism.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> Vision statement has been used and promoted.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: The active promotion of the benefits of Australian Citizenship to encourage its take-up.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> The Government conducted a major national Australian Citizenship Promotion Campaign in 2001 and 2002. Australian Citizenship Day was commemorated for the first time on 17 September 2001, in the Centenary of Federation year. September 17 was chosen as Australian Citizenship Day because on 17 September 1973 the <i>Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948</i> was renamed the <i>Australian Citizenship Act 1948</i>. Australian Citizenship Day is an opportunity for all Australians to reflect on the meaning and importance of our citizenship. It is a chance for Australians to reflect on the changes that have formed our nation and the role all Australian citizens have played in building Australia and shaping our future. Australian Citizenship Day provides a focus, a special day on which we highlight the values which underpin our democracy – equality and respect for each other's beliefs – and other aspects of Australia and our way of life that we cherish and which unite us. Some CMA members are also Australian Citizenship Ambassadors.</p>

<p>Recommendation 8: The <i>Discovering Democracy</i> program be used to reach as many Australians as possible.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported in principle. The <i>Discovering Democracy</i> program was scheduled to finish in June 2000, and a formal evaluation was to be completed by the end of 1999.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> The <i>Discovering Democracy</i> program has been continued to the end of 2004 and DIMIA is providing input to the program to increase focus on Australian multiculturalism and citizenship.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: That any communication strategy highlight the positive and mutually supportive relationship between Australian culture and Australian multiculturalism.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> As the summary of action under Recommendation 5 indicates, there has been extensive communication with stakeholders. The evaluation shows that sections of the Australian community still appear not to recognise that there is a positive and mutually supportive relationship between Australian culture and Australian multiculturalism. Further efforts in this area are required.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: That future multicultural policies and strategies give high priority to the notion and promotion of inclusiveness.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> Inclusiveness has been a constant theme in the work of the Ministers, the CMA and the Department, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Living in Harmony</i> initiative; • Harmony Day; • The CMA's work with Reconciliation Australia; • <i>Racism No Way</i> (a <i>Living in Harmony</i> project that addressed racism in schools) • The <i>Discovering Democracy</i> program (a Commonwealth civics and citizenship education program); and • <i>Citizen 2030</i> (a resource for schools that aims to encourage young Australians to think about the values and institutions which underpin Australian citizenship).

<p>Recommendation 11: The transformation of Australia from a somewhat insular and largely Anglo-Celtic white society to one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world is given the prominence it deserves in events to mark the Centenary of Federation.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported in principle. The overall objective of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation is to work with State and Territory bodies to ensure broad community and corporate participation in the centenary celebrations.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> Many Commonwealth agencies, including relevant Australian institutions such as the National Archives, National Museum, National Library and the Australia Council had active programs for the Centenary of Federation. DIMIA and the CMA contributed to various Centenary of Federation activities.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: That individuals as well as government, private and community organisations commit themselves to carry forward the work of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> This recommendation has been actively pursued through numerous DIMIA programs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CMA and Reconciliation Australia have agreed to work co-operatively to further their shared objectives, for instance through planning shared activities in Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) and on Harmony Day (21 March) and cross promotion of reconciliation and Australian multiculturalism through newsletters and mail outs; • Access and Equity reporting processes are being streamlined in consultation with other government agencies. Initiatives on issues of concern to Indigenous Australians continue to be reported on. They remain a particular focus for a number of agencies. • The <i>Living in Harmony</i> initiative includes Indigenous and reconciliation issues; • Increased proactive targeting of Indigenous organisations to join in Harmony Day is planned. Cooperation with Reconciliation Australia in planning/staging of Harmony Day will continue; and • The Citizenship Ceremonies Handbook, the Australian Citizenship Booklet and the National Australian Citizenship Promotion Campaign conducted in 2001 and 2002 all contribute to reconciliation and social harmony in Australia by enhancing community awareness and understanding of Indigenous issues, culture and heritage, and the status of Indigenous people as the first Australians.

<p>Recommendation 13: Any revision of the preamble of the Australian Constitution incorporates recognition of the diverse backgrounds of the Australian people, including such acknowledgment of the unique status of our Indigenous people.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> A referendum on the proposed preamble was held on 6 November 1999 in conjunction with the referendum on whether Australia should become a republic. It included recognition of the diverse cultural backgrounds of the Australian people and the nation-building contribution of generations of immigrants. It also recognised Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as the nation's first people and honoured them for their deep connection with their lands and for their ancient and continuing cultures which enrich the life of our country. The proposed preamble has not been introduced because it was not approved at the referendum.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14: That future multicultural policies and strategies give high priority to outreach strategies that build bridges of understanding and mutual interest among individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> The CMA, <i>Living in Harmony</i> initiative and the Productive Diversity program have developed links with a wide range of business organisations and groups that outreach to their communities. These links have encouraged two-way information exchange, understanding and participation in these organisations, as well as the internalising of the values of Australian multiculturalism within the organisations.</p> <p>Liaison with diverse communities through DIMIA's community liaison network and through its relationship with the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia has provided opportunities for enhancing understanding, resolving misconceptions and explaining the policy of Australian multiculturalism.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: That future multicultural strategies and policies give high priority to raising awareness of the critical importance of leadership, in all walks of life, for the harmony and well-being of our culturally diverse society.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> The Government and the CMA have provided leadership in this area, for instance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the creation of a Ministry of Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs; • extensive meetings and presentations across the country; • media appearances at times of national importance, such as following the Bali bombing; and • active support for, and promotion of, Harmony Day and Citizenship Day.

<p>Recommendation 16: That responsible political leaders not lend support to or confer any political respectability or credibility on individuals or parties that espouse policies that violate the spirit of the Joint Parliamentary Statement of 30 October 1996</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Noted. (<u>Summary of action to date:</u> Not applicable.)</p>
<p>Recommendation 17: ...Urges all Parliamentary parties throughout Australia, particularly those in Government and Opposition, to seek common ground in relation to multicultural policy and to avoid political point-scoring that would send the wrong signals to the community and might damage community harmony.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Noted. (<u>Summary of action to date:</u> Not applicable.)</p>
<p>Recommendation 18: The adoption of a statement of the foundations and principles of multiculturalism.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> The principles have been used as appropriate to inform program development, and to explain multicultural policy. The evaluation has shown that they remain valid and relevant, however, they are not well known or understood in the wider community.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19: That these principles be adopted as the basis of an enhanced and refocussed multicultural policy framework.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> Current multicultural programs apply three of the four principles, eg: Access and Equity (social equity); Ministerial meetings, multicultural diary (cultural respect); Productive Diversity program (productive diversity). The principle of 'civic duty' of Australian multiculturalism has been implemented through collaborative efforts across the Commonwealth. The tragic events of 11 September 2001 and 12 October 2002 triggered a public debate in which varying opinions were stated and inferred about the loyalty and commitment of individuals and communities to Australia. This highlights the need for an integrated approach to ensure that everyone understands their rights and responsibilities as members of the Australian community.</p>

<p>Recommendation 20: The enhancement and refocussing of multiculturalism.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> This recommendation is a summary of others.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21: That multiculturalism continues to be developed as an important and distinct priority, in addition to the continuation of settlement programs designed to accommodate the settlement requirements of new migrants.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> While settlement and multicultural programs continue to be managed separately, it has been recognised that good settlement programs would allow migrants to fully participate in our society and thereby contribute to multicultural Australia (see also response to recommendation 14).</p>
<p>Recommendation 22: ...Proposes the main criteria by which the merits of funding for multicultural programs are assessed.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> These criteria have been used to develop criteria for assessing ad hoc funding requests.</p>
<p>Recommendation 23: Project a positive image of Australia internationally, including through the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Noted. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> There were highly successful depictions of Australia's diverse cultures in the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2000 Olympic Games and Paralympics.</p>
<p>Recommendation 24: That the Australian Government in particular, but other levels of government as well, provide leadership by example by increasing diversity, particularly on advisory bodies and boards, management and workforces involved in the delivery of services and community contact.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> DIMIA's Productive Diversity program has promoted greater awareness of the benefits of diversity in the workplace. The Commonwealth <i>Select</i> database has been maintained and reviewed (<i>Select</i> is a register of suitably qualified people from diverse backgrounds who have indicated their willingness to serve on Commonwealth boards, committees and councils). The CMA and IDC-MA also showed leadership by example after the Bali bombing on October 12, 2002 when calling for calm. Members of the CMA are also on other boards and advisory committees.</p>

Recommendation 25: That future multicultural policy give high priority to initiatives in education and training that promote productive diversity principles and develop the skills needed to maximise the diversity dividend.

Government Response: Supported.

Summary of action to date: DIMIA's Productive Diversity program has given effect to this recommendation as follows:

- The *21st Century Business* conference held in Melbourne in November 2000;
- Building on the outcomes of the conference, the development of a business case on diversity management together with a range of practical tools, case studies and other resources to support its application;
- A national survey of human resources professionals, business educators and managers exploring diversity management skills with a view to setting some future directions in business education;
- A series of consultation workshops around Australia to engage business views on diversity management and identify practical ways, and partnership opportunities for supporting greater use of language and cultural diversity in the workplace in the future;
- Other forums such as Harmony Day-related Productive Diversity Luncheons for Business Partners, held in March 2002 in association with the Asia Society. The CMA has been extensively involved in promoting Productive Diversity at every opportunity, including participation in the above events;
- The Diversity Australia website has been developed as part of the Multicultural Australia website and is at <www.diversityaustralia.gov.au>; and
- Five Corporate Partners under the Productive Diversity Partnerships Program have provided input to case studies under the thematic title "valuing and celebrating diversity makes good business sense". The five partners involved were AMP, Drake, Ford Australia, McDonald's and Telstra.

<p>Recommendation 26: That the APS values be modified to acknowledge that the Commonwealth Government's clients have diverse backgrounds which need to be addressed in the development and delivery of services to them.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. The <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (the Act) was passed by Parliament on 20 October 1999. In light of the Council's recommendations, the Government amended the APS Value relating to client service and has included this in the Act. The Government believes that there is likely to be a strong link between the effective utilisation of diversity in the workplace and effective client service to a diverse community, and is keen to encourage a holistic approach to the management of diversity. Given this holistic approach to diversity, the Government is reviewing the different reporting responsibilities for Access and Equity (by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), client service charters (by the Department of Finance and Administration) and workplace diversity (by the Public Service Commission). This review will take into account the differing functions and responsibilities of these agencies, the varying accountability obligations on which the reports are based, the varying aims and coverage of the reports and the differing interests of stakeholders in them.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> Progress has been made as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIMIA has developed a performance management framework for <i>Charter</i> reporting, based closely on the framework developed by the Office of Disability around five core roles (policy adviser, regulator, purchaser, provider and employer); • DIMIA has undertaken a review of Access and Equity reporting, which identified opportunities for streamlining diversity-related reporting; and • The Inter-Departmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs has established a working party to develop a streamlining tool, in line with review recommendations.
<p>Recommendation 27: That private and community sector organisations consider how the APS values and the principles of the <i>Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society</i> might be relevant to their diversity management and planning processes.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Noted.</p> <p><u>Summary of action to date:</u> Although the Commonwealth cannot be prescriptive, the diversity management tools and case studies developed under the Productive Diversity Partnerships Program address the intent of this recommendation.</p>

<p>Recommendation 28: The continuation of the high priority that has been given for many years to English language tuition for adult migrants.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> Delivery of English language tuition continues to be given high priority. Contracting arrangements put in place in 1998 stress the importance of reaching and delivering English tuition to eligible clients. Effective monitoring on the progress of this is carried out through an established contract management process.</p>
<p>Recommendation 29: Endorses the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy and two language elements – Community Languages and Priority Languages – and recommends their continuation.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> Commonwealth funding for the NALSAS Strategy ended in December 2002. In 2001 the former Priority and Community Languages elements of the School Languages Program were broadbanded into the Languages Other Than English element. Funding was maintained at the same level and included in agreements with education authorities through to the end of 2004. These education authorities in the States and Territories decide how their share of the funding can best be used to support languages. The Commonwealth has initiated a review of its School Languages Program. The external consultant reported to the Minister in December 2002 and the Government is currently considering its response.</p>
<p>Recommendation 30: The formation of a central coordinating agency, responsible to the Prime Minister or a Cabinet Minister, to help formulate and implement the Australian Government's multicultural policies and to coordinate them with the initiatives of other levels of government and the wider community.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported in principle. The Government will establish a Council for Multicultural Australia. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> The Council has been established to assist the Government in implementing the <i>New Agenda for Multicultural Australia</i>. It interacts with other levels of government and a wide section of the community.</p>

<p>Recommendation 31: The Council recommends that the proposed agency be given responsibility to promote cooperation between Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies in relation to multiculturalism. The Commonwealth will establish a 'Diversity Australia' home page.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> Council members have links to State and Territory multicultural commissions and maintains an ongoing program of visits to heads of State/Territory multicultural bodies. The Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and the Standing Committee of officials on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs meet on an on-going basis. It has an established arrangement to liaise at times of heightened community tension. The DIMIA website has been enhanced in line with the home page commitment. The Diversity Australia website has been developed as part of the Multicultural Australia website and is at <www.diversityaustralia.gov.au>.</p>
<p>Recommendation 32: That the agency described above take responsibility for developing and implementing the communication strategy both immediately and on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p><u>Government Response:</u> Supported. The Commonwealth will work closely with the Council for Multicultural Australia to implement a communication strategy, following an evaluation of the <i>Living in Harmony</i> initiative. <u>Summary of action to date:</u> <i>Living in Harmony</i> Phase 1 has been evaluated. There has been extensive communication with stakeholders on multicultural issues. It is acknowledged that a clearer and more effective way of conveying the intended meaning and objectives of Australian multiculturalism is needed.</p>