

Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council

Meeting communique

The fifth meeting of the current term of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council (the Council) was held in Townsville on 2 September 2020.

Members travelled to Townsville to host a consultation with young people in the region on attitudes towards multiculturalism, immigration and cultural diversity in a time of COVID-19, increased racism and unemployment and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Firstly, the Council heard a presentation from Professor Andrew Markus from Monash University on the key findings for Queensland from the 2019 Scanlon Foundation Social Cohesion Survey. The Survey showed age and education are key factors in positive attitudes towards multiculturalism and cultural diversity with more negative attitudes existing amongst people who do not have education and economic opportunities.

Council members were then provided with an update on the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs' preparedness and COVID-19 rapid response for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Department has been working with other agencies to continuously improve engagement with communities and to learn from the experience of other jurisdictions such as Victoria. Members spoke of some of the issues they were aware of such as problematic translations – wrong dialects, providing the wrong message or messages simply not making sense, and the need for information to be accessible, not just in written form.

The Council was also provided with an overview of market research commissioned by the Department through Multicultural Australia and Essential Media, to understand community sentiment, attitudes and aspirations towards diversity and inclusion. The research findings are anticipated to have practical application, to inform future targeted messaging in State, regional and local communications, and support the design of local and community-led actions to strengthen welcome and inclusion.

Lastly, the Council reviewed its Work Plan for 2020, which has been impacted by COVID-19. Some activities have been postponed until later in the year.

Following the meeting, members hosted the consultation with more than 20 young people and people who work with youth in Townsville. Participants included students from Kirwan State High School, the Cathedral School of St Anne & St James and James Cook University, as well as representatives from the Townsville Youth Council.

A report will be compiled outlining the findings from the consultation and will be available on the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs' website.