

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND WATER SUPPLY

### Background

- 'Our story, our future' is the Queensland Government's multicultural policy promoting an inclusive, harmonious and united community for Queensland. The policy focuses Queensland Government action on three policy priorities for culturally diverse communities and Queensland as a whole – achieving culturally responsive government; supporting inclusive, harmonious and united communities; and improving economic opportunities.
- The policy is being implemented through a three year Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2016-17 – 2018-19.
- The policy and action plan are a requirement of the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* (the Act) and represent one of three key provisions of the Act – together with establishing the Multicultural Queensland Charter and Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council.
- Section 24 of the Act requires entities with actions in the action plan to report publicly on an annual basis. The attached report fulfils this requirement for **Department of Energy and Water Supply**.

### Priority area 1: Culturally responsive government

<p><b>Culturally capable services and programs</b></p>	<p>Target information to Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds to help promote greater understanding and participation by these communities in energy and water issues.</p>	<p>DEWS</p>	<p>2016–19</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>The Department of Energy and Water Supply (DEWS) is working across government, industry and the community sector to deliver a range of initiatives to improve energy outcomes for vulnerable households, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.</p> <p><b>Energy Savvy Families</b>                  DEWS has partnered with Ergon Energy, the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) and CitySmart to deliver the Energy Savvy Families program, which will assist 5,500 families in regional Queensland become more energy literate and empowered to better control their energy usage through new digital meters and a wrap of supporting services. The program will provide participating families with a greater sense of empowerment, insight and control over their electricity usage.</p> <p>The Energy Savvy families program is being delivered through local neighbourhood centres in 10 locations (Mt Isa, Mareeba, Cairns, Townsville, Charters Towers, Rockhampton, Murgon, Hervey Bay, Bundaberg and Toowoomba). The selected neighbourhood centres have strong experience with assisting customers from culturally diverse backgrounds and linking them to appropriate services. With this expertise, the centres have identified a number of customers from various cultural backgrounds for participation in the program, and continue to support these customers throughout their entire experience in the program to ensure they realise the full benefits including the online education support services.</p> <p><b>Consumer Education Campaign and Switched on Communities</b>                  During 2016-17, the Queensland Government has also delivered a comprehensive Electricity Consumer Education Campaign to educate consumers about their electricity needs and role in the market, motivate them to become more active market participants, and support vulnerable consumers so they can access the benefits of competition in the electricity market.</p> <p>The \$3.3 million campaign commenced in July 2016, initially with online and social media elements, followed by advertising on television and in cinemas, local newspapers, on radio and on bus shelters, as well as translated materials in key languages to ensure that culturally and linguistically diverse Queenslanders were able to access this information.</p> <p>In addition to this campaign, DEWS partnered with key stakeholders to deliver the Switched on Communities grants scheme, which targeted vulnerable consumer groups to improve their ability to assist, educate and empower disengaged and vulnerable electricity customers to shop around for a better electricity deal. The scheme was funded via a \$500,000 grant from retailer AGL and is</p>
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<b>A productive, culturally capable and diverse workforce</b>	Deliver on the Public Service Commission 2022 foundation non-English speaking background diversity targets for the Queensland Public Sector.	All departments	2016–19	<b>On-track/ Completed</b>	<p>The Department has had a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Program in place since 2015 and has already exceeded its foundation Non-English speaking background diversity target with more than 16% of staff currently identifying as having this heritage.</p> <p>Our workforce is proud of their rich cultural diversity and this was demonstrated during Multicultural Month when staff organised a ‘multi-cultural cook-off’ to raise money for a domestic violence shelter. More than twelve countries were represented in this multicultural event and over \$600 was raised.</p> <p>Our cultural capability continues to grow from strength to strength and during the 2017 diversity and inclusion survey, 92% of staff said the work environment makes them feel included. In addition, 92% of staff said that employees that are different that others are treated fairly.</p>
	Deliver agency-specific workforce inclusion and diversity strategies that identify priority areas for action to improve participation rates for diverse Queenslanders.	DEHP DET DJAG DSITI DEWS DCCSDS DHPW	2016–17	<b>On-track</b>	<p>As a department, we prioritise diversity and inclusion. Our goal is to foster a work environment where our differences are valued and where equal opportunities are provided —not only because it’s the right thing to do, but because it is vital to the success of our business.</p> <p>Our Diversity and Inclusion framework is available on our <a href="#">website</a> and sets our expectations regarding the respect and equal opportunity to be given to all employees, prospective employees and customers to ensure we reflect the community we serve.</p> <p>Specific strategies and focus areas within our diversity and inclusion program include:</p>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ <b>Flexible working</b> – More than 80% of our staff work flexibly. We offer mobile technology and access to Distributed Work Centres so that staff can work from other locations. We are also one of the few public service agency where timesheets are optional and we have led the sector in an evaluation of <a href="#">flexible working practices</a>.</li> <li>✦ <b>LGBTIQ Champions and Inclusion</b> – We have led the sector in this space and partnered with <a href="#">Pride in Diversity</a> to provide a safe, supportive environment where employees can bring their true selves to work.</li> <li>✦ <b>Parents and Carers</b> – We provide open support, networks and resources to allow employees to confidently manage career breaks and external commitments.</li> <li>✦ <b>First Nations Peoples</b> – Our Strategy outlines our commitment to act with conviction and close the gap for First Australians.</li> <li>✦ <b>DEWS-Ability</b>– we want to focus on ability – not disability and provide equal opportunities for all employees, prospective employees and customers with a disability. We have partnered with <a href="#">Job Access</a> to build our capability.</li> <li>✦ <b>DEWS Women Talent Network</b> – we will focus on building and maintaining our talent pipeline for women, now and into the future.</li> <li>✦ <b>Cultural diversity</b> – with more than 16% of our workforce identifying as having a Non-English speaking background, we are proud of our diverse heritage.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spotlight on: asylum seeker and refugee support</b></p>	<p>Provide asylum seekers in Queensland with access to the electricity rebate.</p>	<p>DEWS</p>	<p>2017–19</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>From 1 January 2017, the Queensland Government extended the Electricity Rebate to Commonwealth Health Care Card (HCC) holders and asylum seekers in recognition of the energy vulnerability of these groups. As a result of this reform, it is estimated that approximately 2,000 asylum seeker households in Queensland are now eligible for this assistance.</p> <p>In 2017-18, the Electricity Rebate provides recipients with \$340 worth of assistance each year towards annual electricity bills. Any asylum seeker or HCC households that applies before the end of December 2017 will be provided with a rebate backdated to 1 January 2017, allowing them to access a full year’s worth of assistance in 2017.</p> <p>DEWS continues to work with community groups and Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) providers to promote the rebate to asylum seekers. The department has also developed materials in key languages to ensure easily accessible information on the rebate is available in the asylum seeker community.</p>

