

Proposed New Law to Recognise and Promote Multiculturalism in the ACT



The ACT Government is going to create a new law during 2021 known as the ACT Multicultural Recognition Act. The new law will demonstrate the ACT Government's strong commitment to multiculturalism in the ACT.

Consultation is now open and will conclude in early May 2021.

The consultation aims to:

- increase community awareness of the development of the proposed Multicultural Recognition Act;
- inform and engage organisations working with culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans; and
- generate feedback and insights from all ACT residents on the development of the legislation.

The new law will include three main elements. These include a Multicultural Charter, a Multicultural Advisory Council and a framework that supports Government priority setting and reporting back to the community. These are explained below.

Multicultural Charter

A Multicultural Charter will be developed that highlights 'key principles' that are required to support the policy of multiculturalism. These key principles can be used by governments, businesses and communities to make assessments about whether multiculturalism is being advanced within our ACT community.

Multicultural Advisory Council

The new law will include the current Ministerial appointed Multicultural Advisory Council. The Council's role is to provide advice to the ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs on a range of issues and topics. The functions and make-up of the Council will be informed by the consultation process.

Priority setting and reporting framework

The new law will guide the ACT Government and its agencies when setting priorities and developing, delivering and evaluating policies, programs and services for the ACT community. It is also expected the new law will require agencies to publicly report on their initiatives to implement agreed priorities.

How you can get involved and find more information

Visit www.communityservices.act.gov.au/multicultural/multicultural-recognition and register to attend a community consultation workshop

Email multiculturalaffairs@act.gov.au with any questions

Complete the survey at <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/multicultural-recognition-act>

Proposed New Law to Recognise and Promote Multiculturalism in the ACT

Draft ACT Multicultural Charter for Consultation

The ACT strives to be one of the greatest multicultural communities of the world.

We recognise our First Nations People, and respect their heritage, culture and the continuing contribution they make to the ACT and region. We promote reconciliation and recognise that this land was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

We value all ACT residents, and we can all contribute towards making our Territory a harmonious and respectful place to live, where we rejoice in sharing our humanity, by learning about each other and extending the hand of friendship.

We recognise we all have a role to play through our workplaces and organisations, as individuals and collectively, in promoting an inclusive and respectful ACT society.

We each recognise shared principles being:

- a shared commitment to Australia and the ACT;
- a shared commitment to the rule of law;
- freedom to express cultural, linguistic and religious diversity;
- mutual respect regardless of background; and
- equal access to participation.

As a multicultural community we will continue to support multiculturalism by:

- Making services accessible and responsive to the multicultural community;
- Promoting active citizenship, participation and social cohesion;
- Capitalising on the benefits of cultural diversity;
- Creating opportunities for our organisations, agencies and institutions to better to embrace, promote and champion the philosophy of multiculturalism and the benefits of cultural diversity; and
- Supporting our diverse multicultural communities to develop and actively contribute to our great city.

Key Questions:

1. What should be included in our ACT Multicultural Charter?
2. How should the Charter be inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ACT residents?
3. Are there any other principles, not mentioned above, that should be considered for inclusion in the ACT Charter?
4. What ambition and/or aspirations should we set for ourselves as a community?

Proposed New Law to Recognise and Promote Multiculturalism in the ACT

Possible statutory functions of the ACT Multicultural Advisory Council

The functions of the ACT Multicultural Advisory Council are to advise the Minister on:

- Ways to increase opportunity and reduce barriers for Canberrans from culturally and diverse backgrounds to actively participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life in the ACT;
- Improvements to the way government services are delivered to multicultural communities in the ACT;
- The consultation required to determine the needs of the ACT's diverse multicultural communities;
- The needs of migrant communities, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, regarding their integration into the ACT community and identifying opportunities to improve their integration;
- Fostering harmonious community relations in the ACT and surrounding regions; and
- Any other functions as directed by the Minister.

Additionally, it is proposed the Council will:

- Undertake consultation with relevant bodies and representatives to determine the needs of the community.

Key Question:

1. What should the functions of the Multicultural Advisory Council be?

Proposed New Law to Recognise and Promote Multiculturalism in the ACT

Possible make-up of the ACT Multicultural Advisory Council

- The council consist of between 9 and 11 members
- The term of appointment for members be 3 years
- Appointments be staggered with half of the membership being renewed every 18 months
- Council members may serve no more than 2 consecutive terms
- The Chair and Deputy Chair be remunerated, with the remuneration determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal
- The legislation be reviewed after 5 years of operation
- The membership of the council be outlined by the Minister by way of regulation. The Minister consider factors such as a mix of cultural background, gender, age and persons with expertise in contemporary issues. The Minister might consider representatives with expertise in the following areas:
 - Emerging communities
 - Settlement of migrants
 - Community and race relations
 - Language services
 - Interpreters and Translators
 - Leadership
 - Business
 - Community Language Schools
 - Community development
 - Community representative bodies
 - Faith groups
 - Youth
 - Arts and Culture
 - Intergenerational and multi-racial

Key Questions:

1. What should the term of appointment for multicultural advisory council members be?
2. What should be the maximum number of terms, or years, a council member can serve?
3. Should a summary of the MAC's meetings be made available publicly following meetings?
4. What, if any, expertise should be prioritised in the make-up of the Council?
5. Are there any other issues that should be considered when developing the governance for the MAC in the Act?

Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an **alternative format** – such as large print or audio – please telephone **(02) 6205 0282**.

If English is not your first language and you require the **translating and interpreting services** – please telephone **131 450**.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the **National Relay Service**, phone **133 677 then ask for 133 427**