proud to be working in partnership with culturally and linguistically diverse communities
multicultural policy statement

contents

01 overview
02 message from the chief commissioner
03 message from the chairperson
04 our commitment
06 making it happen
09 the future
Community safety is everybody’s goal and we know that the best way to achieve this is in partnership with government agencies and service providers, community groups of all faiths and backgrounds, and the private sector.

The benefits and advantages of multiculturalism are there for everybody to see and build upon.

Let us all work together…
Victoria Police is everybody’s police service. Regardless of culture, faith, gender, or background, Victoria Police provides its services to all Victorians. The Victoria Police Multicultural Policy Statement is an affirmation of this approach.

Over the course of the last five years we have been particularly focused on providing proactive police services by connecting regularly and actively with the communities that we serve across Victoria. This is community policing.

Community safety is everybody’s goal and we know that the best way to achieve this is in partnership with government agencies and service providers, community groups of all faiths and backgrounds, and the private sector.

The benefits and advantages of Multiculturalism are there for everybody to see and build upon.

The Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee (PACMAC) remains an effective vehicle for constructive engagement with CALD community stakeholders, and to initiate and coordinate initiatives which make a difference.

The development of a New and Emerging Communities Forum, the establishment of community safety planning forums, and the initiation of Australia’s first known policing Multi-Faith Council originated from PACMAC.

Our Multicultural Liaison Officers do an outstanding job and are viewed by the communities they serve as an invaluable bridge to understanding police services, and extending citizen knowledge of rights and responsibilities.

They are also contributing to the building of social capital through actions and initiatives that are underlined by respect, cultural exchange, and professionalism.

We are proud of our achievements and the people who have helped make this happen, although we also acknowledge that we can do more.

The Victoria Police Multicultural Policy Statement is based on extensive research conducted over a period of more than twelve months. The experiences and views of Victoria Police officers, community stakeholders, and service providers from across Victoria have been absorbed and articulated into a consolidated policy document for all to use in their every-day policing work.

The central part of this Policy Statement is a commitment for each of our five police regions across Victoria to produce Multicultural Plans. Each plan will be reflective of regional and local priorities, relationships, and issues, therefore making them real to both Victoria Police members and the communities they serve on a daily basis.

Each of the plans will also be underpinned by a series of generic principles that recognise and respond to equity, diversity, access, responsiveness, communication, participation, and accountability.

The Policy Statement represents an exciting initiative for Victoria Police. The extent of our success will depend on maintaining and extending our partnerships with CALD communities.

To this end, the relationship with the Victorian Multicultural Commission, as the principal advisory body to government on CALD issues, and other relevant agencies and groups, is vital.

I pay particular tribute to Mr George Lekakis and the rest of his Commission for their support throughout the development of this document and other initiatives.

This Policy Statement provides the basis for strengthening such partnerships, and continuing to make a difference for the people we are all here to serve.

Christine Nixon
Chief Commissioner, APM
Victoria Police
It is my great pleasure to welcome Victoria Police’s Multicultural Policy Statement which further recognises and responds to community needs with pro-active initiatives that promote and augment multiculturalism and inter-faith dialogue.

Partnership and educational policies such as this acknowledge that “one-size-fits-all” policing cannot apply in a society as diverse as ours. Rather, communication, cross-cultural understanding and interconnected perspectives are required, not only for the practical application of law but also for the successful appreciation of those laws by Victorians from every walk of life, language, culture and faith.

In this regard, innovative community engagement strategies and programs established by Victoria Police are instrumental in addressing numerous ongoing social issues. It was particularly pleasing to read that the New and Emerging Communities Fund is to be strengthened with the goal of improving relationships between local police and local communities. In undertaking these initiatives, Victoria Police is demonstrating that the Police oath of office to protect the community encompasses all Victorians, from all backgrounds, at all times and, I strongly believe, establishes an international benchmark.

I wish to stress that critical to Victoria’s multicultural and multi-faith harmony is the fact that members of the Victoria Police force, Police Command, and Chief Commissioner Nixon in particular, have been at the forefront of promoting principles of inclusiveness and mutual respect.

In this regard, innovative community engagement strategies and programs established by Victoria Police are instrumental in addressing numerous ongoing social issues.

My Commission looks forward to continuing to work closely with Victoria Police in implementing this new policy.

George Lekakis
Chairperson
Victorian Multicultural Commission
Victoria Police is committed to ensuring that multiculturalism is an integral part of policing and that our service delivery to the people of Victoria is resolute in recognising and including diversity in culture, language and faith.

The Victorian Government’s vision for a culturally diverse Victoria is encompassed within the policy framework of Growing Victoria Together (2001 & 2005) and the social policy action plan of a Fairer Victoria. Through these the Victorian Government has identified and promoted the need for a whole of government approach to strengthening communities within Victoria and recognising the value of our diversity.

Within Victoria Police we are guided by our strategic plan, The Way Ahead 2003-2008. Our commitment to community and partnership policing supports our progress towards enhancing social cohesion and community strengthening through active liaison with cross-agency and community wide forums and networks and provides a focus for our multicultural projects, policies and reforms.

We recognise that a diverse workforce will enable us to better understand and communicate with the community we are here to serve, and through the Victoria Police Diversity Strategy (2006-2008) recognise our commitment to creating a workforce that is diverse in character that respects, supports and values diversity.

Victoria Police has a significant role in contributing to the government’s vision of a more just society by seeking to enhance social cohesion, safety and the rights of citizens in our community. We intend to do this through promoting an inclusive community that respects and celebrates diversity in its many forms, including language, faith and culture. To achieve this, Victoria Police has identified a suite of principles to guide the delivery of our police service that ensure that policing is equitable and responsive to the needs of a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community.

Through this consolidated approach to multicultural issues we aim to:
- Improve our organisational capacity to respond to matters of cultural and religious diversity
- Build on the present levels of support and engagement with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
- Ensure our existing and future approaches to crime and road safety consider the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Victorian community
- Increase perceptions of safety amongst Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
- Improve customer satisfaction and confidence in police within Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, and
- Create opportunities for mutual information sharing and collaboration.
Victoria Police is strengthening the capacity to provide an equitable, accessible and responsive policing service to the culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Victoria.

**EXPANDING CAPACITY**

**0.1 Cross cultural training**

Victoria Police will build on its current capacity to deliver appropriate cross-cultural training to its members and will better reflect cultures and faiths pertaining to new and emerging communities. There will also be an expanded emphasis on providing education on broader faith issues.

**0.2 Integration of policing issues among culturally and linguistically diverse communities**

Victoria Police will enhance links between our Multicultural Liaison Officers and proactive portfolio holders, including our Youth Resource Officers, Crime Prevention Officers, and Family Violence Liaison Officers as each work with common issues, and often with members of the same communities. Victoria Police will also continue to build upon existing work to link communities into established service areas, such as the Ethical Standards Department.

**0.3 Peer support**

Victoria Police recognises the importance of ensuring that it provides a work environment which is supportive of the cultural characteristics and faith needs of its members. Victoria Police will build on current peer support structures by providing the capacity and opportunity for members to establish groupings that are sensitive to their particular cultural or faith issues.

**0.4 Recruitment**

Victoria Police is committed to creating and sustaining a workforce that is diverse and strongly representative of different cultures, experiences and background, so that our workforce is as diverse as our community.

The Victoria Police Diversity Strategy 2006-2008 provides a framework for increased diversity capability within our workforce. A key element of this strategy is attraction and retention initiatives that produce sustained growth in the diversity of our workforce.
FURTHER CONNECTING VICTORIA POLICE AND COMMUNITIES

0.5 Communication

To assist in fostering a greater understanding and communication of Victoria Police services, functions, and activities, Victoria Police will seek to enhance the availability of multilingual publications in particular those relevant to our:

a. Code of Conduct and Practice
b. Strategic Directions, including Crime, Road Safety, Youth, Victims and Family Violence, and
c. Public interface

Victoria Police will provide capacity for interpreters to be used, where possible, in the provision of our policing services. Victoria Police will continue to build on its bilingual service and capacity and ensure that language both in written and verbal forms is not a barrier in the provision of and access to police services.

0.6 New and emerging communities fund

The New and Emerging Communities Fund will be strengthened so that relationships between local police and local communities may be enhanced. Conducted as a partnership between Victoria Police and the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the availability of this Fund has had great success in bringing together Victoria Police and new and emerging communities at the local level.

0.7 Multifaith initiatives

As is the case with the long established Police & Community Multicultural Advisory Committee (PACMAC), the Victoria Police Multifaith Council has provided a unique source of interaction and communication between Victoria Police and relevant community stakeholders. The capacity of the Multifaith Council will be strengthened by the development of an Action Plan that will focus on incorporating further faith issues as part of Victoria Police service delivery.

Victoria Police will continue to build on its bilingual service and capacity and ensure that language both in written and verbal forms is not a barrier in the provision of and access to police services.
0.9 Family violence initiatives

The Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence recognises that family violence occurs in all communities. It also recognises that some victims may be more disadvantaged than others due to factors such as isolation, cultural differences and language barriers. To further advance understanding and knowledge of our response to family violence Victoria Police will work to develop a structured program of engagement with our new and emerging communities.

0.10 Strengthening our links with young people

The Victoria Police Child and Youth Policy identifies seven principles that are the foundation on which police work with and respond to child and youth issues in the community. Central to these principles is the recognition of the value of children and youth in society and as such the need for police to treat all young people with fairness and respect and to recognise their diversity.

Drawing on an improved understanding of the issues affecting culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Victoria Police will develop a series of local plans that reflect the principles and issues contained in this strategy.
In Victoria, differences in culture, language, faith and background are the embodiment of our diversity. Victoria Police is committed to ensuring that all Victorians can access the policing services they require.

We are particularly committed to fostering and strengthening links with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities to ensure our practice, activities and programs are consistent with the principles and commitments contained within this statement.

Drawing on an improved understanding of the issues affecting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, Victoria Police will develop a series of local plans that reflect the principles and issues contained in this strategy.

The overriding premise in these local plans will be that Victoria Police members and the communities they serve at the local level are best placed to develop the programs that reflect their specific needs.

**Further Information**
Multicultural Advisory Unit
Community & Cultural Division
Operations Coordination Department

Telephone: 9247 5233