



**MULTICULTURAL**  
COUNCIL of TASMANIA

## ***Australians Today: landmark research into multiculturalism 2016 by the Scanlon Foundation***

27 September 2016, Parliament House, Hobart, Tasmania

### **SUMMARY OF TABLE DISCUSSIONS**

As part of the event tables of 6 – 8 people discussed three questions

- What challenges do multiculturalism and social cohesion face in Tasmania?
- What can be done at personal, organisational and governmental levels to enhance social cohesion in Tasmania?
- With such high levels of acceptance (av. 85% from 2013-2015) why do we continue to see high levels of reported discrimination in immigrant communities?

This is summary of the themes and suggestions made by the discussion groups in response to these questions.

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Suggested Actions</b>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure to diverse individuals and groups is vital for multiculturalism and social cohesion in Tasmania.</li> <li>• Tasmania lower levels of diversity than interstate – particularly regional areas.</li> <li>• Lack of cultural infrastructure (e.g. meeting spaces, cultural centres, places of worship etc.) can lead to social isolation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase and/or create opportunities for exposure, dialogue and collaboration between diverse individuals and groups.</li> <li>• Develop ‘active citizen’ programs.</li> <li>• Support public cultural and community celebrations (e.g. Moonah Taste of the World, Agfest, Harmony Day, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Public Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignorance regarding CALD communities appears to be widespread.</li> <li>• Regional areas face unique challenges (e.g. access, funding, opportunity, etc.).</li> <li>• International students face significant barriers financially, accessing services and settling in Tasmania.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and/or support education initiatives around diversity (e.g. the Human Library).</li> <li>• The Tasmanian Government should establish an organisation to support international students (e.g. Study Melbourne).</li> <li>• Support and finance programs facilitating interaction between schools and emerging communities (e.g. Australian Red Cross ‘In Search of Safety’)</li> <li>• Establish capacity building programs for emerging migrant communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is widespread disillusionment with politics and politicians at all levels.</li> <li>• There is a perceived lack of leadership on issues that matter to CALD communities (e.g. cultural infrastructure, employment, services, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KPIs for state and local government politicians focused on community engagement (e.g. breaking bread).</li> <li>• All leadership roles should increase consultation with CALD communities.</li> </ul>

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Suggested Actions</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space exists for non-political leaders to become more active (e.g. universities, NGOs, religious leaders.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and develop local government initiatives facilitating and/or encouraging interaction amongst communities.</li> <li>Politicians at all should levels commit to openly outline challenges and realistic solutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Self - awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unconscious bias towards the 'other' is common and difficult to detect.</li> <li>There is a general lack of understanding around privilege.</li> <li>Empathy is important for acceptance, but ostensibly lacking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and develop unconscious bias training initiatives.</li> <li>Support and develop cross-cultural awareness training initiatives</li> <li>Make unconscious bias and cross-cultural awareness training mandatory for all public service employees.</li> <li>Advocate for balanced and well-informed media reporting.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities in Tasmania are limited.</li> <li>Amongst CALD communities, there is a perception of better opportunities and/or better networks elsewhere.</li> <li>High unemployment and/or under-employment can lead to disillusionment and an inclination to blame the other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and develop programs that connect education providers and services with prospective employers.</li> <li>Support and encourage local business and community leaders to hire CALD people.</li> <li>Support initiatives educating employers on the benefits of a diverse workforce.</li> <li>Increase assistance and/or incentives for entrepreneurs interested in starting a business.</li> </ul>
<b>History</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-economic disadvantage is grounded in history.</li> <li>Themes can be understood in historical context (e.g. 'white Australia policy').</li> <li>Tasmania is playing catch up with other states that have historically attracted more migration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure issues of historical disadvantage and inequality are considered and addressed in designing and implementing programs and services.</li> <li>Look to adopt locally-tailored policies and/or programs that have proven successful interstate.</li> </ul>
<b>Fear</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-economic disadvantage contributes to, and exacerbates, social challenges.</li> <li>Themes can be understood in historical context (e.g. 'white Australia policy').</li> <li>In a sense, Tasmania is playing catch up with other states that have historically attracted more migration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals, communities and leaders should draw attention to - and condemn - scapegoating, discrimination, etc.</li> <li>Support and develop early intervention strategies around education and awareness.</li> <li>Fund community engagement programs to dispel myths contributing to fear, mistrust and hostility towards CALD communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fear of the unknown is common and exploited by some political leaders.</li> <li>We live in a culture that increasingly looks to apportion blame for everything.</li> <li>The media often focuses on negative or divisive stories.</li> <li>High levels of disadvantage in Tasmania enables public figures to exploit fear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure public messages are informed, inclusive and clear.</li> <li>Move discourse away from how people arrived in Australia.</li> <li>The media should take an active role in encouraging inclusive narratives.</li> <li>Encourage sensitivity around religion and culture. (See: <i>self-awareness</i>).</li> </ul>
<b>Finance &amp; Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders continue to indicate resources are scarce and diminishing.</li> <li>Services are insufficient or ill-equipped to meet the needs of many CALD communities.</li> <li>Real leadership and/or innovation is needed in to increase funding opportunities for organisations and communities championing CALD causes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find ways to better fund and equip frontline services to respond to needs of CALD communities</li> <li>Encourage frontline services to increase trust within communities.</li> <li>Increase funding to agencies supporting new arrivals (all intakes).</li> <li>Increase funding to community and cultural groups.</li> <li>Support and develop programs aimed at creating low cost housing.</li> <li>State and local governments renew commitment to funding cultural infrastructure and public meeting spaces.</li> </ul>