



## MCOT submission to 2021-22 state budget

Summary .....	2
Peak body funding request .....	5
Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project .....	7
Multicultural Governance and Sustainability Project request .....	10
'Multicultural Tasmania' Report request.....	12
Cross-cultural Celebrations Project request .....	14



## Summary

The Multicultural Council of Tasmania (MCOT) is the peak body representing more than 100 multicultural organisations across Tasmania.

This submission to the Tasmanian Government 2021-22 State Budget requests funding to MCOT to continue to deliver peak body services and to deliver a number of new projects.

Each requested funding stream offers a direct benefit to the State Government by improving the capacity of the multicultural sector to engage with State Government policy, including with respect to COVID-19. A more engaged multicultural sector also boosts economic and social participation and social cohesion across Tasmania.

Each requested funding stream is a response to, and is necessary to deliver on, the following recommendations of the interim report of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC):

- Recommendation 2 'for immediate action': "The State Government should explain to the community its future COVID-19 management strategy including how any future outbreaks will be handled";
- Recommendation 50 'for immediate action': "The State Government should prioritise work, including shared data capability, to identify, engage and support vulnerable cohorts that may have ongoing disproportionate adverse impacts during recovery, including through disruption to education, training, and employment";
- Recommendation 39: "The State Government should implement and fund the Community Arts and Cultural Development strategy"; and
- Recommendation 63: "The State Government should implement a regionally-based model for coordinating the recovery journey".

MCOT is performing strongly as Tasmania's multicultural peak body, as indicated by:

1. MCOT's burgeoning membership growth across the State;
2. its recent self-funded multicultural festival;
3. its vital communications and emergency relief roles during COVID-19 (including delivery of a recent State Government 'Temporary Residents' program);
4. its previous coordination of Harmony Week arrangements to boost social cohesion (under a recent State Government 'Harmony Week' program);
5. its previous assistance to local governments to attract and retain new residents (under a recent State Government 'Welcoming Cities' program);
6. its recent roadshow on Australia's system of government (under a Federal Government 'Fostering Integration' program);
7. its early work to record the stories of Tasmanians living with disability under the recently commenced 'Speak My Language' program; and
8. its active management of a thriving Multicultural Hub under an agreement with Glenorchy City Council.



MCOT generates some revenue from its membership and works hard to garner private-sector sponsorship. MCOT also receives funding under the program at item #7 (until end 2022) and anticipates renewed funding under the program at item #8.

However, funding has recently ceased under items #3 to #6 listed above, including the multi-year State Government program funding of items #4 and #5.

Given this cessation of program funding, even if peak body funding to MCOT is renewed at the current quantum, MCOT would need to reduce staffing (currently 3 ½ full-time-equivalent staff). Only through increased peak body funding and/or new program funding could current staff levels be maintained.

Any reduction in MCOT staffing would hamper the State Government’s ability to communicate and work with Tasmania’s multicultural communities.

- Staff losses would likely include closure of MCOT’s small Launceston office. This would undermine engagement across the North, as regular face-to-face contact is vital for engagement with diverse multicultural communities.

Below is a summary table of the requested funding streams.

	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Peak body funding</b>	\$175,000	\$180,000	\$186,000	\$191,000	\$732,000
<b>Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project</b>	\$30,200	\$31,060	\$32,300	\$32,900	\$126,460
<b>Multicultural Governance and Sustainability Project</b>	\$43,400	\$44,700	-	-	\$88,100
<b>‘Multicultural Tasmania’ Report mid-2022 and mid-2024</b>	\$14,200	\$14,600	\$15,000	\$15,400	\$59,200
<b>Cross-cultural Celebrations Project</b>	\$17,100	\$17,300	\$17,500	\$17,700	\$69,600
<b>Total if each adopted</b>	\$279,900	\$287,660	\$250,800	\$257,000	\$1,075,360



If each of the requests outlined above were accepted, State Government funding to MCOT would continue to be less than State or Territory funding to any multicultural council representing any other state and territory in the federation (e.g. [Multicultural Council of NT annual report](#)), and would continue to be less than State or Territory funding to any multicultural council serving a jurisdiction of similar size to Tasmania (e.g. [Geelong Ethnic Communities Council annual report](#)).

Details for each requested funding stream are set out below.



## Peak body funding request

MCOT requests renewed peak body funding at the following level:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
<b>Peak body funding</b>	\$175,000	\$180,000	\$186,000	\$191,000	\$732,000

MCOT is a small organisation consisting of 3 ½ full-time-equivalent staff in Hobart and Launceston, overseen by an elected board. The staff and board of MCOT are held in high regard in Tasmania’s multicultural community, as indicated by MCOT’s burgeoning membership growth across the State (see [https://www.mcot.org.au/our\\_members](https://www.mcot.org.au/our_members)). The regard for MCOT is also indicated by strong positive feedback from inside and outside government on MCOT activities including its:

- recent self-funded multicultural festival;
- vital communications and emergency relief roles during COVID-19;
- previous coordination of Harmony Week arrangements to boost social cohesion;
- previous assistance to local governments to attract and retain new residents;
- recent roadshow on Australia’s system of government;
- early work to record the stories of Tasmanians living with disability; and
- active management of a thriving Multicultural Hub.

This demonstrates that MCOT is well placed to continue to carry out the peak body function.

The current peak body agreement between MCOT and the State Government — covering the three years to 2021-22 — provides annual funding of \$142,000 after accounting for the equal remuneration order.

Since the current peak body agreement was struck:

- The share of Tasmania’s population that is born overseas has grown by 12 per cent.<sup>1</sup> This growth has made the job of representing the interests of culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities in Tasmania more complex. There are more people to connect with, more distinct cultural backgrounds and languages to navigate, and more cross-cultural issues to address.

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<sup>1</sup> This growth is over the most recent three years for which data are available, with three years being the duration of the current, soon-to-expire peak body agreement.

In June 2020 an estimated 15.1 per cent of Tasmania’s population was born overseas, compared to 13.5 per cent in June 2017. This represents growth of 12 per cent.

The estimation of the share of Tasmania’s population born overseas in these non-census years draws on ABS 3101 (Estimated Resident Population, Tasmania, and Population Change Components) and ABS 3412 (Estimated Resident Population, Australia and Tasmania, Country of Birth).

Country of Birth data are estimated by assuming that 100 per cent of net overseas migration relates to people born overseas and 28.9 per cent of net interstate migration relates to people born overseas. 28.9 per cent is the proportion of the non-Tasmanian Australian population in 2016 that was born overseas.



- We have been hit with the COVID-19 crisis. The State Government requires more of Tasmania's multicultural peak body under COVID-19 given:
  - the need to explain COVID-19 management (consistent with PESRAC recommendation #2),
  - the need to identify, engage and support vulnerable cohorts (consistent with PESRAC recommendation #50), and
  - the need for regionally-based COVID-19 recovery (consistent with PESRAC recommendation #63).
- Tasmania's overall population has grown by 3.5 per cent<sup>2</sup> while prices have grown by 6.6 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

To ensure continuing social and economic engagement and participation from multicultural Tasmania and to ensure continuing social cohesion, increased peak body funding to MCOT needs to reflect the developments outlined above.

Given the 12 per cent growth in the share of Tasmania's population that was born overseas, the 3.5 per cent overall population growth and the 6.6 per cent increase in prices, a 23 per cent increase in peak body funding is warranted — even without taking into account the addition requirements arising from COVID-19.

A 23 per cent increase suggests base annual funding of \$175,000 in 2021-22.

Three percent annual indexation of base funding would reflect future population and prices growth.

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<sup>2</sup> This growth is over the most recent three years for which data are available, with three years being the duration of the current, soon-to-expire peak body agreement. There were 540,569 Tasmanians in June 2020 compared to 522,410 in June 2017 (ABS 3101, Estimated Resident Population, Tasmania).

<sup>3</sup> This growth is over the most recent three years for which data are available (December 2017 to December 2020), with three years being the duration of the current, soon-to-expire peak body agreement (ABS 6401, Consumer Price Index, All Groups, Hobart).



## Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project

MCOT requests funding for a Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project as follows:

<b>Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>Total</b>
Customer relationship management system; bulk SMS service; ICT software including graphic design, and subscriptions for survey, scheduling, event calendar and analytic tools; media subscriptions; translation and interpreter costs; social media advertising costs; postage and stationery; training; travel.	\$12,000	\$12,360	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$40,360
Part-time communications and engagement officer (19 hours/week)	\$18,200	\$18,700	\$19,300	\$19,900	\$76,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$30,200</b>	<b>\$31,060</b>	<b>\$32,300</b>	<b>\$32,900</b>	<b>\$126,460</b>

As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the State Government has a particular need for enhanced multicultural communications and engagement, beyond the baseline expectations of a funded peak body.

Funding MCOT to deliver a Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project would provide the following benefits to the State Government and the State more broadly:

- Such a project would ensure effective explanation to Tasmania’s multicultural community of the State Government’s COVID-19 management strategy, with respect to outbreak prevention, outbreak management, vaccination, and recovery.
  - See PESCRAC Recommendation 2 ‘for immediate action’: “The State Government should explain to the community its future COVID-19 management strategy including how any future outbreaks will be handled”.



- Such a project would ensure that the State Government captures ongoing intelligence about Tasmania’s multicultural community. This will help shape future policy, including with respect to education, training and employment.
  - See PESRAC Recommendation 50 ‘for immediate action’: “The State Government should prioritise work, including shared data capability, to identify, engage and support vulnerable cohorts that may have ongoing disproportionate adverse impacts during recovery, including through disruption to education, training, and employment”.
- Such a project would communicate State Government policy to multicultural communities across each region of Tasmania, and would gather intelligence from each region to inform future State Government policy.
  - See PESRAC Recommendation 63: “The State Government should implement a regionally-based model for coordinating the recovery journey”.

MCOT is well placed to deliver a Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project.

- In March 2020 MCOT was instrumental in initiating the State Government’s Migrant Support Network, convened by the Health Department and engaging officials from State Growth, Education, Communities Tasmania, Premier and Cabinet, and the Commonwealth. MCOT then played a key role in communicating the key messages emanating from this network of State Government officials to Tasmania’s multicultural community, and in providing feedback to these officials from Tasmania’s multicultural community. MCOT operated beyond the sustainable capacity of its staff and technology during this period, but with appropriate investment MCOT can build on the success of its contribution over the past year to deliver important communications and engagement throughout the future stages of the COVID-19 crisis.
- MCOT gathered considerable intelligence from Tasmania’s multicultural community through its self-funded emergency relief to temporary residents late in the 2019-20 financial year, and through its delivery of the State Government’s emergency relief program early in 2020-21, with this intelligence promptly passed to State Government officials.
- MCOT has experience in delivering complicated messaging in understandable ways, as demonstrated through its successful delivery of a roadshow across Tasmania in 2020-21 on Australia’s system of government and civic participation.



A Multicultural Communications and Engagement Project that achieves State Government objectives in the context of COVID-19 would involve costs that go beyond the baseline expectations of a funded peak body, and include costs related to a part time, relatively junior communications and engagement officer, as well as costs including:

- a customer relationship management system,
- a bulk SMS service,
- ICT software including graphic design, and subscriptions for survey, scheduling, event calendar and analytic tools,
- media subscriptions,
- translation and interpreter costs,
- social media advertising costs,
- some additional postage and stationery costs,
- training, and
- some travel costs.



## Multicultural Governance and Sustainability Project request

MCOT requests funding for a short-term Multicultural Governance and Sustainability Project as follows:

<b>Multicultural Governance and Sustainability Project</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>Total</b>
Community consultation, consultancy on governance, and board training	\$4,000	\$4,100	\$8,100
Additional staff hours to oversee governance and sustainability reforms (additional 9 hours/week for part time CEO) and to assist the community develop sustainable revenue streams independent of the State Government (part time community revenue officer, 19 hours/week)	\$39,400	\$40,600	\$40,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,400</b>	<b>\$44,700</b>	<b>\$88,100</b>

### *Governance*

Tasmania's multicultural community has a high regard for MCOT, as indicated by MCOT's burgeoning membership growth (see [https://www.mcot.org.au/our\\_members](https://www.mcot.org.au/our_members)). Tasmania's multicultural communities are also highly engaged with their representative body and have a strong sense of ownership, as demonstrated in the strong attendance at MCOT general meetings and engagements. Perhaps more than other cohorts of the Tasmanian community, Tasmania's multicultural communities are keen to ensure that their diverse interests are represented by their peak body, and that their peak body is structured to best achieve this representation.

Our membership has responded to initial inquiries and surveys with a wide range of ideas for future governance, such as proportional representation. However, a more intensive consultation and analysis is required to get a result that best reflects the wishes of Tasmania's multicultural community. Detailed input is required not just from across Tasmania's multicultural community, but from experts in not-for-profit governance such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors and TasCOSS. In addition, board members and staff would require specific training on reforming governance, beyond the usual degree of regular board and staff training expected of a peak body, to ensure that MCOT responds with vision to the directions provided by community members and to the input provided by experts. Such training is consistent with TasCOSS submissions calling for greater investment in the not-for-profit workforce.

A short-term project to achieve the representative structure that best suits Tasmania's multicultural community would be of benefit to the State Government and the State more broadly, by maximising the range and quality of information from community members to the State Government, and maximising the impact of information from State Government to the community. Such a project would complement the ongoing efforts of MCOT to assist community members to form associations and to get the most out of these associations.



The governance aspect of a Multicultural Governance and Sustainability Project would include costs related to in-depth community consultation, consultancy input from experts such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors, specific training for the board on reforming governance, and additional managerial staff hours to oversee governance reforms.

### *Sustainability*

A short-term governance and sustainability project would also put Tasmania's multicultural community on a more financially-independent footing. Through the short-term appointment of a part-time community revenue officer, the current dependence of MCOT and its member organisations on State Government funding would be eroded. Through private sector liaison and assistance with identifying and applying for grants, the temporarily-appointed officer would help MCOT and its member organisations to ratchet up their ongoing revenue streams from private sponsors and federal and local government.

The sustainability aspect of a Multicultural Governance and Sustainability Project would involve costs from the temporary appointment of a relatively-junior, part-time community revenue officer.



### ‘Multicultural Tasmania’ Report request

MCOT requests funding for the production of a baseline ‘Multicultural Tasmania’ report in 2022 and a follow up report in 2024:

<b>‘Multicultural Tasmania’ Report: mid-2022 and mid-2024</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>Total</b>
Two separate six-month periods (April to September 2022; April to September 2024) of a full-time policy officer	\$13,700	\$14,100	\$14,500	\$14,900	\$57,200
Associated research tools/subscriptions and office equipment	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,200</b>	<b>\$14,600</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$15,400</b>	<b>\$59,200</b>

There is a dearth of information on the countries of origin, languages, religions, settlement patterns, employment, social participation, interests and concerns of those who have migrated to Tasmania over recent decades. This hinders State Government policy development aimed at improving the living standards of all Tasmanians.

The production and delivery to government of a ‘Multicultural Tasmania’ Report would resolve this information problem and ensure that future State Government policy is underpinned by highly accurate information.

A report produced and delivered to the State Government in the second half of 2022 would incorporate 2021 census data that will be released in mid-2022, as well as evidence gathered from quantitative and qualitative surveying and consultation with multicultural communities across the State.

A report produced and delivered to the State Government in the second half of 2024 would include up-to-date ABS data on overseas and interstate migration, as well as survey responses on the impacts since the baseline report of government initiatives.

MCOT should be tasked with the production of such reports. MCOT is a trusted organisation that is independent of government but nonetheless understands the importance of government having accurate and up-to-date information on the needs of Tasmania’s multicultural communities. MCOT staff would work closely with the State Government in the planning of surveys and consultations to ensure the most relevant information is gathered. The production of such reports by MCOT would align with the previous production of reports on cohorts of Tasmania by other peak bodies such as Volunteering Tasmania.



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The project to produce the reports would involve costs between April and September 2022, and again between April and September 2024, associated with the temporary hiring of a policy officer and the provision of supporting research tools/subscriptions and office equipment.



## Cross-cultural Celebrations Project request

MCOT requests funding for a Cross-cultural Celebrations Project as follows:

<b>Cross-cultural Celebrations Project</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>Total</b>
20% contribution towards temporary staffing (North and South event officers for three months/year)	\$6,900	\$7,100	\$7,300	\$7,500	\$28,800
20% contribution towards venue hire and logistics (i.e. sound, light, stage)	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$22,800
20% contribution towards performers	\$3,400	\$3,400	\$3,400	\$3,400	\$13,600
20% contribution towards promotions	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$4,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,100</b>	<b>\$17,300</b>	<b>\$17,500</b>	<b>\$17,700</b>	<b>\$69,600</b>

The State Government currently provides support for specific cultural celebrations such as Chinese Lunar New Year and Diwali. However there is also a role for festivals that celebrate all of the cultural traditions present in Tasmania — from Europe, Africa, the Americas, Indigenous cultures, and all the corners of Asia.

Such cross-cultural festivals promote social cohesion amongst Tasmanians from each of the cultural backgrounds present here. They also encourage social participation from communities who migrated to Tasmania in small numbers and may be under-represented.

The State Government is requested to contribute 20 per cent of the costs of an annual cross-cultural event in Launceston and an annual cross-cultural event in Hobart. MCOT has sought funding from the respective local governments for approximately 50 per cent of the costs in 2021-22. We have sought supplementary 2021-22 funding from a federal government arts program. We propose to self-fund the outstanding costs, including through continued efforts to obtain private sponsors and in-kind member contributions.

MCOT has experience in successfully organising cross-cultural celebrations, as indicated in our organisation of a multicultural festival at Sandy Bay in February 2021, in part funded by our arrangement of a significant sponsorship from CommBank. Our event management skills have also been honed through the recently-completed multi-year State Government program to coordinate Harmony Week celebrations.



Our expected overall costs of approximately \$85,500 per annum to organise two festivals reflect our frugal approach to spending on venues, logistical equipment, and performances — while ensuring proper regard for staffing and equipment costs to ensure COVID-safe arrangements, and appropriate compensation to performers from Tasmania’s struggling arts sector. The acceptance of this funding request would be consistent with the Community Arts and Cultural Development strategy, and PESRAC recommendation 39 (“The State Government should implement and fund the Community Arts and Cultural Development strategy”). The State Government may wish to draw on the funds allocated to this strategy to fund this project.