



MULTICULTURALISM

Protecting and celebrating our diversity

A comprehensive approach to multiculturalism in Australia

Multiculturalism is one of Australia's enduring successes, and it should be protected and celebrated. In a culturally and linguistically diverse society, we have to make sure our Government serves the needs of all Australians. Together we can ensure that Australia prospers.

The Greens believe that Australia's multiculturalism is an important part of our national identity and has contributed to making Australia a prosperous nation. With over 85% of Australians agreeing that multiculturalism is good for our country,¹ and a quarter of our citizens hailing from overseas,² it's something we should work hard to promote and protect.

Our multiculturalism is something to be proud of, and to celebrate. But we also need to make sure that our Government, our schools, workplaces and services are well placed to empower and support our migrant communities.

The Greens have listened to the migrant community in Australia, and will ensure that the right resources, tools and opportunities are available through a number of key multiculturalism measures to make sure all Australians are empowered to participate in Australian society.

The Greens will:

- work towards the establishment of a **National Multiculturalism Act**;
- introduce programs to promote **diversity in the workplace**
- protect the integrity of the **Racial Discrimination Act**
- increase Australia's **humanitarian intake**
- broaden eligibility for migration to better take account of **people escaping family violence**
- improve the data about **mental health** needs to better inform service planning
- improve access to **domestic violence services**
- respect and promote diversity in **early childhood education**
- stand up for **fair funding for SBS**
- champion the establishment of an **Australian Centre for Social Cohesion**.

> A NATIONAL MULTICULTURALISM ACT FOR AN INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP

National legislation on multiculturalism would not only recognise the enormous contribution of migrant communities to Australian life, but also work as a base from which to enhance and protect rights and opportunities of multicultural communities. Legislation like this has been demonstrated to be a success in countries like Canada.

The Greens will commence a national stakeholder consultation to develop this national framework through establishment of a Joint Select Committee, ensuring the voices of the community and key stakeholders are heard.

A national legislative framework would be a critical step in taking a whole-of-Government approach to multiculturalism, embedding these principles across all the work of various Departments, and making it clear as a priority of Government.

The Greens are also committed to moving multicultural affairs back into the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. This is the best means of driving a whole-of-government approach to multiculturalism across various departments.

> WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

Our workplaces benefit from cultural and linguistic diversity, and Australia should do all we can to ensure our workplaces are well placed to harness this opportunity.

The Greens will announce initiatives to support migrant employment and to promote the benefits of employing people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and support.

> STANDING STRONG AGAINST ATTACKS ON LEGAL PROTECTIONS

The Greens have a proud history of standing strong against recent attacks on our Racial Discrimination Act, particularly attempts to repeal Section 18C. We don't want to see a change

¹ Scanlon Foundation (2016) *Multiculturalism Discussion Paper*, p.7.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census.

to this law that would allow people to be abused on the basis of their race.

Our Racial Discrimination Act has served Australia well, striking the right balance between freedom of speech and protecting people against racial vilification.

Members of the Coalition and the crossbench have made clear they intend to pursue this legislative change, and the Greens are committed to standing firm against their attempts.

> MIGRATION

Australia has a proud history of welcoming people to our country, including those who are in need.

The Greens' bold and responsible plan, A Better Way, will see us increase the number of people Australia helps from 13,750 to 50,000 people who are in need of protection each year.

This will include 10,000 people who will come to Australia under a new 'skilled refugee' programme. By doing this we can offer protection to more people than ever before while also recognising that refugees contribute to our communities and are often highly skilled, entrepreneurial people.

In addition, the Greens will broaden the definition of family violence that currently governs migration intake, to ensure that people who experience family violence perpetrated by those other than a spouse can apply for the family violence exception. In addition, we will expand the exception to cover secondary applicants, and those who haven't married their Australian sponsor but who have experienced family violence.

As a generous and caring nation, we will not only welcome people seeking asylum, but these communities strengthen our society and contribute to our economy.

> MENTAL HEALTH

Currently, Australia's mental health system is under-equipped to be able to assist culturally diverse communities.

The Greens would also require the collection, by the federal Department of Health, of appropriate data on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations and their mental health needs. Currently, the data collected focuses solely on 'country of birth' which does not adequately indicate culture, language or ethnicity – meaning often CALD needs are invisible.

This data collection would be able to inform a national strategy for mental health needs in culturally diverse communities, which would further inform the Greens' \$1.4bn investment in our mental health system over the next four years.

> WOMEN'S SAFETY

Right now, Australia is in a domestic violence crisis, with the impacts of this felt by women in CALD communities. Lack of access to culturally appropriate services and cultural values can add to the challenges faced by CALD women experiencing domestic violence.

The Greens are putting forward a bold plan to increase investment in frontline services to address domestic violence by creating a new ten-year, \$5 billion National Partnership Agreement on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women. Under the new NPA, there would be dedicated funding for specialist domestic violence services working with CALD communities.

Changes to migration regulation as outlined above will also work to ensure that those affected by family violence have full access to the support Australia can offer.

A comprehensive plan for primary prevention of violence and gender equality will also be announced in the coming weeks, which will include support for primary prevention specialists, including in CALD communities.

> CHILDCARE TO REFLECT CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Greens recognise the importance of supporting the cultural identities of children from refugee and migrant backgrounds, as well as celebrating Australia's CALD communities in early childhood education. All children benefit from early childhood education that has a local and global outlook.

The Greens will announce an initiative that will increase access to early childhood education and development and will make available a fund to support specific programs tailored to the needs of individual centres.

> STRONG AND VIBRANT MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL BROADCASTING

Over 3 million Australians speak a language other than English at home, and ensuring we have well-funded multicultural and multilingual broadcasters is of critical importance to these communities. In particular, SBS plays a crucial role in promoting and providing social inclusion in Australia.

The Greens will reverse the harsh Abbott-Turnbull cuts to SBS, restoring \$8.3 million in funding to ensure that it can continue to support CALD communities, and make Australia a more cohesive, a more equitable and a more harmonious society.

> A SOCIALLY COHESIVE AUSTRALIA

We need an integrated approach to combat stereotypes, prejudice and racism in Australia. We need to build a sense of community, and ensure all Australians feel that they are part of and contributing to our country.

The Greens believe we need a national approach to develop and implement key preventative programs that help to build social cohesion. Since 2015, the Greens have had legislation before the Parliament for an Australian Centre for Social Cohesion, an independent centre that would bring together the community, Government, experts, academics and researchers to combat racism and prevent violent extremism.

This also includes re-committing the \$11 million cut from the Building Multicultural Communities Program.