

NSW Government Response

NSW Government Response to the Report on
the Inquiry into *Improving crisis
communications to culturally and linguistically
diverse communities*

July 2023



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Introduction

The NSW Government welcomes the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services' (**the Committee**) report on *Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities* (**the Report**). The NSW Government also acknowledges the contributions of the many individuals and organisations to the Inquiry.

The following NSW Government departments and agencies were consulted for this NSW Government response:

- Aboriginal Affairs NSW
- Advocate for Children and Young People
- Anti-Discrimination NSW
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Department of Customer Service
- Department of Education
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- Department of Regional NSW
- NSW Reconstruction Authority
- Infrastructure NSW
- NSW Health
- Multicultural NSW
- NSW Police Force
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW State Emergency Service
- NSW Public Service Commission

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation 1 - That the NSW Government investigates ways to improve CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community involvement in emergency and crisis preparation and communication, such as through a community advisory taskforce, or membership of local emergency management committees, and continues to encourage diversity in leadership and staff roles in government agencies.

Supported.

To ensure the NSW Government response captures all elements of Recommendation 1, it has been separated into two parts under the subheadings below, categorised under:

1. culturally and linguistically diverse communities ('**CALD**') and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community involvement in emergency and crisis preparation and communication, and
2. encouraging diversity in leadership and staff roles in government agencies.

CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community involvement in emergency and crisis preparation and communication

The NSW Government recognises the importance for CALD, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to be involved in emergency crisis preparation and communication.

NSW has emergency management arrangements in place with the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* (NSW) providing the general governance for emergency management in NSW and establishing the State Emergency Management Committee ('**SEMC**'). The SEMC plays a role in coordinating the activities of government and non-government agencies to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. There is multi-agency representation on the SEMC.

Multicultural NSW is working with the SEMC and the SEMC Community Engagement Subcommittee to collectively improve the cultural and linguistic competence of NSW Government emergency management and to build social capital with migrant and refugee communities to improve community resilience. Additionally, Multicultural NSW is also involved with the NSW Government Crisis Communications Executive Committee.

There is opportunity for Multicultural NSW's networks to be called upon during state-wide emergencies. As noted by the NSW Police Force, this is recognised in the Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan (2019) ('**Supporting Plan**'). The Supporting Plan outlines the arrangements for the coordination of the collection, collation of information, advice and warnings for dissemination to the public during times of emergency or imminent emergency events. Under section 7.9 of that Supporting Plan, the Public Information Functional Area Coordinator can call upon Multicultural NSW and the arrangements detailed in Multicultural NSW's Community Resilience & Response Plan ('**COMPLAN**') to access multicultural networks during emergencies to assist in delivering messaging relevant to the particular community.

Aboriginal Affairs NSW has undertaken a process of internal review of their role in emergency management situations, which include fire, floods, drought and COVID-19 responses. The purpose of the review was to identify the challenges in emergencies to reassess where attention needs to be placed to better support Aboriginal communities prepare and recover from future emergency situations. The review identified lessons that need to be learned if Aboriginal communities and government agencies are to achieve better outcomes in emergencies.

This work is being shared with government agencies including the State recovery Committee, and the State Emergency Management Committee – Community and Engagement Subcommittee, and through less formal working relationships within the emergency services and government agencies that are seeking to improve cultural competency.

Further to the above, there is the Aboriginal Communities Emergency Management Pilot ('ACEMP') which is an initiative of the Bushfire Inquiry response (Recommendation 72). This evidence-based program has enabled a small number of Discrete Aboriginal Communities ('DACs') in NSW to design local emergency management initiatives to build resilience to bush fires, floods, storms, and pandemics.

Aboriginal Affairs NSW partnered with the former Resilience NSW, to manage and deliver a pilot program with four Discrete Aboriginal Communities ('DACs') in Emergency Management to understand how DACs prepare and respond when faced with emergency and disasters. The program works to identify how NSW emergency management engages with DACs and identify opportunities to establish solutions to contribute to sustainable emergency management on a local level, regional and state level in co-design and community led practices with DACs.

Encouraging diversity in leadership and staff roles in government agencies

The critical role leaders from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds played in the pandemic response reinforced that cultural diversity is a strength.

There are a number of NSW Government initiatives driving diversity in leadership and staff roles across the NSW Government workforce including:

- **Public Service Commission – Programs of work seeking to increase diversity in leadership:** The Public Service Commission supports and enables the sector to drive cultural diversity in leadership and staff roles within government agencies, through two programs of work for public sector employees that are committed to increase CALD people in senior leadership and the refreshed *Aboriginal Employment Strategy (2022-2025)* to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders beyond Senior Executive Band 1.
- **Multicultural NSW – Providing support with recruitment processes:** Multicultural NSW is supporting the Public Service Commission in tailoring their recruitment processes to attract more culturally and linguistically diverse talent to the public service. The Multicultural NSW Communications Team is working with the Public Service Commission to tailor their messages and the approach to promoting roles available in the public service. Advertising roles through multicultural media is one method that will be tested.
- **Multicultural NSW – CALD Women in Leadership program:** Multicultural NSW is piloting a CALD Women in Leadership program to support and encourage diversity in leadership across the agency.
- **Multicultural NSW – NSW Settlement Strategy:** As the first of its kind in the State, there is also the *NSW Settlement Strategy*. As detailed in Action 6 of the *NSW Settlement Strategy*, the NSW Government, led by Multicultural NSW, will deliver the NSW Public Sector Refugee Employment Initiative to provide people from refugee and refugee-like backgrounds with an employment pathway into the NSW Government.
- **NSW State Emergency Service – To improve number of volunteers from diverse backgrounds:** NSW State Emergency Service is committed to improving the number of volunteers from diverse backgrounds. The *NSW SES Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework 2020-2025* commits to

strengthen inclusion in six key areas of diversity, two being Culture & Religion and Aboriginal/Indigenous. The *NSW SES Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework 2020–2025* states: “*We recognise the need to actively deliver on diversity and inclusion as part of workplace culture, operational readiness and community engagement resilience building.*”

- **NSW State Emergency Service – Multicultural/Cultural Diversity Network:** NSW State Emergency Service is in the process of creating and launching an internal Multicultural/Cultural Diversity Network. In October 2022, NSW State Emergency Service launched the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network, made up of staff and volunteers from across the State. The purpose of the Networks is to provide peer support, identify issues, review and advise on practices to promote inclusion, and share ideas to improve Service culture. The Networks develop initiatives that aim to increase attraction, retention, support and wellbeing of their focused diversity group. The Networks report to the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee, which was established in 2021. Outlined in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework, the DISC is a strategic action responsible for overseeing programmes and initiatives, and embedding activities that promote diversity and inclusion on visibility, capability, and accountability across the agency through quarterly meetings.
- **NSW Reconstruction Authority – Diversity and Inclusion framework:** The NSW Reconstruction Authority has a Diversity and Inclusion framework detailing their commitment to inclusive work practices and culture including a commitment to develop an Aboriginal Employment Strategy. The NSW Reconstruction Authority will participate in the Indigenous Leadership Summit, the Career Trackers internship and an internal Graduate program amongst other initiatives.
- **Department of Customer Service – Multicultural Plan 2023 -2025:** The Department of Customer Service supports the recommendation to encourage diversity in leadership and staff roles in government agencies. The *Multicultural Plan 2023-2025* commits the Department of Customer Service to increase diversity in leadership roles and to increase the cultural capability of its leaders and team.

Recommendation 2 - That the NSW Government consults with CALD community organisations on how it can support the sector to communicate effectively with CALD communities during crises, including through additional funding, consideration of crisis grants, and capacity building.

Supported.

The NSW Government recognises the integral role that CALD community organisations play in disseminating vital information to CALD communities during times of crisis. The NSW Government is committed to consulting and engaging CALD community organisations and CALD communities both in preparation for, and during crisis periods. This commitment is embedded across a number of NSW Government strategies and plans such as:

- **Multicultural NSW – Action under the *NSW Settlement Strategy*:** The *NSW Settlement Strategy* establishes Action 54 that requires Multicultural NSW to ‘engage senior leaders across NSW Government to ensure NSW Government services and supports are responsive to the impacts of emerging crisis situations on refugees and the settlement sector’. Multicultural NSW will scope this work with the NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee.
- **State Emergency Management Committee – Community Engagement Strategy:** The SEMC has endorsed a Community Engagement Strategy that includes actions relating to multicultural community engagement and communications.
- **Department of Customer Service – State of the Customer Report:** As part of the *NSW Customer Strategy: Towards a customer-centric government*, the Department of Customer Service delivered the State of the Customer report which measures how customers experience government services, including emergency services, in the areas of satisfaction, ease and trust. The report identifies CALD communities as one of the key customer groups, with commitment to progress work to enhance an understanding of diverse communities.
- **Department of Communities and Justice – Update of emergency coordination plans and guidelines:** The Department of Communities and Justice is updating its *Welfare Services Functional Area Supporting Plan* and the *Evacuation Centre Guidelines* and will work with Multicultural NSW to better define its role under these plans.

Communities are best placed to articulate the support they need from the NSW Government

The NSW Government recognises that CALD communities and CALD community organisations are best placed to identify and articulate the support they require from government. Multicultural NSW, as well as other NSW Government agencies will continue to build relationships and consult with community organisations through several existing forums and networks. In addition to those outlined across the response to other recommendations, other opportunities for the NSW Government to better understand the sector’s needs include:

- **Multicultural NSW – Strengthening networks through the Community Partnership Action (‘COMPACT’) Alliance:** The COMPACT Alliance is a state-wide community resilience network comprised of over 80 grassroots community organisations, peak non-government organisations and charities, private sector partners, schools, universities, government agencies and police. In addition to delivering funded partnership projects, COMPACT partners come together under a joint program of activities designed to strengthen the COMPACT Alliance as a community of practice and as a collaborative, responsive community resilience network that can support communities in times of need.

- **Department of Education – Consulting communities through the Multicultural Education Advisory Group:** The Multicultural Education Advisory Group is the key consultative body that provides the Department of Education with advice on education matters relating to culturally diverse communities.
- **NSW Rural Fire Service – Engaging with the community:** NSW Rural Fire Service works closely with its emergency management partners and various community groups on community engagement programs, including those which specifically target CALD communities.

The NSW Government's consultation efforts mentioned above are further complemented by current NSW Government capacity building initiatives that support the sector to communicate effectively with CALD communities during and outside of crises, such as:

- **Department of Regional NSW – Providing opportunities for youth to connect to their communities through the Regional Youth Radio Program:** The Office of Regional Youth's flagship Regional Youth Radio Program, including dedicated Aboriginal community projects, is a grants program which provides opportunities for young people living in regional NSW to have a voice and connect to their communities by leading and participating in youth radio and podcasting activities. This program, through its delivery partners, could build skills to support the delivery of crisis communication to young people in regional and remote NSW.
- **Multicultural NSW – Best practice communication guidance through the new Communications Playbook:** The Communications Playbook ('**Playbook**') will provide a general best practice guide for communication professionals across government and community organisations on ways to engage the community in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways. The Playbook was developed in consultation with other NSW Government agencies, multicultural marketing agencies and community organisations.

Recommendation 3 - That the NSW Government uses existing CALD community networks to develop and co-design future crisis communications tailored to CALD community groups.

Supported.

Working with CALD community networks allow solutions to be driven by community-led voices, with in-depth lived experiences. Multicultural NSW and other NSW Government departments have relationships across CALD networks in the State which can be enhanced and expanded, including in the future design of crisis communications.

A number of NSW Government agencies recognise the importance of engaging community networks to develop and co-design communications:

- NSW Health – Build on its existing relationships and those established during COVID -19:** NSW Health (with the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service and relevant local health districts) will build on its existing relationships and those established during COVID -19 to collaborate more effectively with CALD communities, organisations, media, and religious and community leaders at the outset of, and during, the emergence of public health crises. This will include regular consultation and engagement with key CALD stakeholders to share insights and updates, discuss issues and co-design of content where relevant to ensure communications are nuanced as much as possible to meet the different needs of communities.
- Department of Communities and Justice – Using existing CALD community networks to co-design communications:** The Department of Communities and Justice already uses existing CALD community networks to co-design communications. The Department of Communities and Justice notes future crisis communication responses should be informed by lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- NSW State Emergency Service – Translation and checking by existing CALD networks:** NSW State Emergency Service developed web resources for CALD communities which have been translated and checked by existing CALD networks (both internal within the agency and externally through trusted agencies).
- Fire and Rescue NSW – CALD communities understand how best to share information:** Fire and Rescue NSW recognises that CALD communities understand how best to share information amongst one another, and at times this is not traditional forms of media / communication. Fire and Rescue NSW has experienced this through its internal CALD Network. Fire and Rescue NSW's Community Diversity Officer is also involved in a range of CALD Community networks which has allowed for the tailored development of Fire Safety Prevention & Education resources and initiatives.
- Aboriginal Affairs NSW – Pilot study to empower community's role:** Aboriginal Affairs NSW has also noted it is currently working with the Department of Customer Service on a pilot study with Aboriginal communities to empower community's role in developing and sharing communications in emergencies alongside emergency services to achieve better outcomes. It is intended that the local communities will identify their preferred platforms and media that government can link into to share information quickly and effectively to different communities across NSW - where relevant.

Recommendation 4 - That future crisis communications for CALD communities be delivered through a range of channels and formats, including print, video, audio, telephone, social media, and events like public forums.

Supported.

The NSW Government acknowledges that a multi-faceted, multi-channelled communications approach is integral to reaching CALD communities during time-sensitive crisis situations. As such, the NSW Government notes:

1. support for future crisis communications for CALD communities be delivered through a range of channels and formats, and
2. that various capacity building measures currently exist to support multi-faceted, multi-channelled communications more consistently across agencies.

NSW Government agencies support a multi-faceted, multi-channelled communications approach to ensure greater engagement with diverse cohorts

The NSW Government currently employs a multi-faceted, multi-channelled communications approach, including the following examples:

- **Department of Customer Service – Utilising a range of advertising and community engagement channels:** The Department of Customer Service supports this recommendation, given the lead role the agency played in response to COVID -19 during which time it utilised a range of advertising and community engagement channels to promote COVID -19 messaging. This included television, radio, print, outdoor, social, media partnerships, translated flyers, emails, cultural festival materials, chalk stencils and in -language in -person and online information sessions.
- **NSW Health – Multi -faceted and multi -channelled approach for time -sensitive messaging:** NSW Health will continue to employ a holistic, multi -faceted and multi -channelled communications approach when communicating with CALD communities in ongoing and future crisis communications, especially when trying to reach audiences with time -sensitive messaging. This includes using a wide range of culturally appropriate and relevant channels and formats such as paid advertising, social media, proactive PR/media, electronic direct mail, website content, community forums and participation at cultural events.
- **Multicultural NSW – Multi -formatted approach to reach CALD communities:** Multicultural NSW uses a mix of written, audio and video content delivered face -to-face (online and in-person) communication, including the Multicultural NSW website, social media channels, and monthly stakeholder newsletter (Multicultural Link) which enable Multicultural NSW to connect with its audiences and provide essential messaging for CALD communities.
- **Department of Education – Sharing key information through interpreters and translated documents:** The Department of Education funds the provision of telephone, onsite and online interpreters to facilitate communication between NSW public schools and parents/carers and provides key documents in translation. In addition, some schools employ bilingual and bicultural community liaison officers and other staff to support communication with families from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- **NSW State Emergency Service – Disseminating information through CALD stakeholder networks through the CALD Communities Project:** The NSW State Emergency Service’s Culturally and

Linguistically Diverse Communities Project will establish a targeted CALD stakeholder network comprising of key community organisations and leaders from identified language groups in regional and metropolitan areas. It will develop bespoke communication materials in formats wanted by language groups, that focus on flood, storm, and tsunami hazards. These communication assets will be disseminated via newly established CALD stakeholder networks to ensure greater reach, understanding and impact.

Capacity building measures that support other agencies, and communities to consider a range of communication formats and channels

The NSW Government recognises that people from CALD backgrounds are not a homogenous group and that the diversity which exists within CALD communities should be considered when developing communication approaches. The NSW Government has several capacity building initiatives in place that encourage agencies, and communities to consider culturally appropriate communication formats and channels:

- **Multicultural NSW – Best practice communication guidance through the new Communications Playbook:** The Playbook will provide a general best practice guide for communication professionals across government and community organisations on ways to engage the community in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways. The Playbook was developed in consultation with other NSW Government agencies, multicultural marketing agencies and community organisations.
- **Multicultural NSW – Complimentary whole -of-government translation program:** Multicultural NSW received 2-year funding in July 2022 to provide whole of government translations for key government messages across a range of channels including the development and production of in-language material for alternative social media and multimedia channels. This program is complementary to NSW Government agencies and includes distribution of messaging to in-language media and CALD community groups, and for agencies to seek advice on the most effective strategies to reach CALD communities, including language selection, channel preference and geographic locations.
- **Fire and Rescue NSW – CALD Research Program on reducing risk and increasing community resilience in CALD communities:** Fire and Rescue NSW is currently conducting research through a Resilience NSW funded Disaster Risk Reduction Fund CALD Research Program – Reducing Risk and increasing community resilience in CALD communities through culturally appropriate communication. This research will inform future communication with CALD communities by Fire and Rescue NSW and other emergency services.
- **Multicultural NSW – Use of specialist technology for simultaneous interpreting:** Multicultural NSW's Language Services Division can provide language services to agencies in aid of crisis communications, including specialist technology for simultaneous interpreting which can be used in community settings and to support public forums during crisis situations.

Recommendation 5 - That the NSW Government works with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to develop a targeted, culturally appropriate crisis communications strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Supported in principle.

The NSW Government recognises the importance of targeted, culturally appropriate crisis communications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The NSW Government notes that it is vital to recognise there is diversity that exists within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and not to assume homogeneity.

The NSW Government's commitment to working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations ('**ACCOs**') and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve targeted services and communication during crises is demonstrated by the following existing partnerships and initiatives:

- **Aboriginal Affairs NSW – Growing partnerships with ACCOs:** Aboriginal Affairs NSW regularly engages with the ACCOs sector during emergency events through its regional networks. While Aboriginal Affairs NSW has no formal remit in emergency response stages of the emergency management framework, it is now focusing its efforts on earlier stages of the framework to provide communities with prevention and preparedness support. This work has and will continue to be heavily focused on growing partnerships between ACCOs and emergency services to strengthen the confidence and capacity of local communities to prevent, prepare, respond, and recover more effectively from any crisis situation.
- **Fire and Rescue NSW – Learnings around recovery response to natural disasters:** Fire and Rescue NSW is currently engaging with many Aboriginal Land councils, Aboriginal community members and Aboriginal Affairs NSW to undertake learnings around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led, liaison strike teams ahead of natural disasters. This includes learnings around the recovery response to natural disasters in the Northern Rivers and Preparedness in regional areas such as Parkes. Fire and Rescue NSW is committed to strengthening ongoing partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and developing further communications targeting specific areas.
- **NSW Reconstruction Authority – Engagement with Aboriginal owned and operated media:** The NSW Reconstruction Authority notes that engagement with the Koori Mail throughout 2022 proved to be an effective avenue to provide information to disaster affected Aboriginal communities, and that ongoing engagement with specific Aboriginal owned and operated media will continue in future preparedness and recovery work the NSW Reconstruction Authority undertakes.
- **Department of Communities and Justice – Cultural competency training for evacuation centre services:** The Department of Communities and Justice's Disaster Welfare team notes it will seek to work alongside ACCOs to ensure that Evacuation Centre services are delivered in a culturally appropriate method. The Welfare Services Functional Area is exploring integrating cultural competency training into the training required by all staff to undertake a role within an evacuation centre and will be looking to work with ACCOs to seek input into the design and delivery of the training.
- **NSW State Emergency Service – Working with local communities:** NSW State Emergency Service works locally with identified at-risk (hazard) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

communities during responses to crises to deliver crisis communications relevant to that local community.

In addition to the above, the Department of Customer Service is currently leading, and working with Aboriginal Affairs NSW, in the development of an all-of-government approach to communications for emergency and crisis preparedness. The project leverages customer insights and research to identify communications gaps and opportunities on crisis preparedness, and to coordinate an integrated communications response across government. The Department of Customer Service also collaborates with Aboriginal Affairs NSW on engagement advertising via a range of channels including printed collateral, stakeholder engagement communication toolkits, press, and radio.

Recommendation 6 - That the NSW Government increases funding for community and multilingual broadcast media, to ensure that broadcasters are adequately resourced to provide crisis information to CALD communities.

Supported in principle.

The NSW Government acknowledges that community and multilingual broadcast media has been an important and trusted tool in disseminating crisis related information to CALD audiences. Under current NSW Government advertising policies, NSW Government agencies must spend at least 7.5% of an advertising campaign media budget on direct communications to multicultural and Aboriginal audiences. While spend may be on media or non-media communication activities, in general this spend is predominantly directed to multicultural media outlets, including independent media outlets, SBS and other community and multilingual broadcast media.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 74 multicultural media outlets across NSW received a share of \$2 million of NSW Government funding to support the delivery of vital health messages to the community, under the Multicultural Media Grants program administered by Multicultural NSW. The NSW Government supports Recommendation 6 in principle, noting its continuous commitment to working with the multicultural media sector to understand their future resource needs.

The NSW Government has a longstanding, collaborative relationship with the multicultural media sector, supporting CALD communities to have equal access to necessary and timely information. The NSW Government will continue fostering these relationships, to ensure these networks can be employed during situations of crisis. For example, the Department of Customer Service, in partnership with Multicultural NSW, have created a working group with the Independent Multicultural Media Association to explore opportunities for collaborating on media partnerships and community outreach. By working directly with the multicultural media sector, the Department of Customer Service will build opportunities to ensure all government communications will reach all CALD communities across NSW.

Recommendation 7 - That the NSW Government consults with CALD community organisations and community leaders on policies and strategies to prevent racism and discrimination during crises.

Supported.

NSW is one of the most culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse states in the world. The NSW Government recognises strength in this diversity and believes there is no place for hate, racism or discrimination in our multicultural state. The *Multicultural NSW Act 2000* ('the Act') enshrines the Multicultural Principles as the policy of the State in NSW. The Multicultural Principles, found in section 3 of the Act, lay the foundations for an inclusive, cohesive multicultural society.

In its Report, the Committee recognised how integral CALD community groups have been to many of the successful strategies employed to combat racism and discrimination. The NSW Government acknowledges the importance of consulting with CALD organisations to inform NSW Government measures that aim to combat racism and discrimination and that these consultations include different religious and cultural groups, languages, ages and abilities and lifestyles.

Recommendation 7 is consistent with COMPLAN which details a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to preventing and managing risks to community harmony. Notably:

- the arrangements established under COMPLAN are available to support NSW State emergency management arrangements if an emergency, disaster or crisis (natural or human-generated) presents risks to, or consequences for, community harmony, including the risk of racism and discrimination.
- COMPLAN promotes consultation with all relevant or affected communities, government and non-government agencies in meeting plan objectives.

Further to the above, there are also various initiatives that place an importance on community to promote harmony, such as:

- **Multicultural NSW – Remove Hate from the Debate** Multicultural NSW increased the promotion of the *Remove Hate From The Debate* online campaign to empower young people with the tools and resources to speak out against online hate and promote community harmony during the pandemic. *Remove Hate From the Debate* is an online initiative that aims to amplify and empower positive voices for change. The project gives young people the resources and advice to stay safe online and to 'flip the script' on online hate. Young people are encouraged to go to the project website and take the pledge to Remove Hate From the Debate. *Remove Hate From the Debate* is a unique partnership between Multicultural NSW, digital industry partners and the campaign's Fearless Ambassadors.
- **Multicultural NSW – Crisis Points project:** Multicultural NSW's Crisis Points project, which is a new research partnership with Deakin University's Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies that is examining how social capital and community capacity can be enhanced to address racist and extremist exploitation of crisis and disasters.
- **Multicultural NSW – COMPACT Alliance:** The Multicultural NSW COMPACT Alliance is a state-wide community resilience network comprised of over 80 grassroots community organisations, peak non-government organisations and charities, private sector partners, schools, universities, government agencies and police. In addition to delivering funded partnership projects, COMPACT partners come together under a joint program of activities designed to strengthen the COMPACT Alliance as a community or practice and as a collaborative, responsive community resilience network that can support communities in times of need.

Other department and agencies also recognise the importance of consulting with community. For example:

- Aboriginal Affairs NSW supports this Recommendation 7 also applying to Aboriginal communities during a crisis.
- The Department of Communities and Justice notes it was evident that the COVID 19 response became more effective in connecting with CALD communities due to the cooperation of community organisations and trusted community leaders.
- The Public Service Commission notes that the NSW Government is committed to address racism in the Closing the Gap Priority for government transformation and there are strong links with the Public Service Commission's program of work in the refreshed Aboriginal Employment Strategy to lead the NSW public sector in anti-racism interventions and increasing CALD representation in leadership for public sector employees. The Public Service Commission will also work closely with Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations on this work.

Recommendation 8 - That the NSW Government reviews current pathways for reporting or making complaints of discrimination and racism, with a view to improving these avenues and preventing racism and discrimination in society.

Supported.

The NSW Government recognises that there is no place for racism and discrimination in our state.

Anti-Discrimination NSW believes that providing community members with different avenues to report racism is important, as making formal discrimination complaints is not appropriate or necessary in all situations. Anti-Discrimination NSW would welcome the opportunity to explore and broaden current pathways through online/digital tools such as chatbots or the ADNSW community reporting tool, so that community issues can be collected and analysed and emerging trends identified.

Various other NSW Government agencies are also considering how to improve reporting and review complaints-handling:

- **Public Service Commission – Program of work:** The Public Service Commission work in leading the NSW public sector in anti-racism interventions. The program of work will consist of tools and resources for public sector employees to improve the reporting and prevention of racism in the workplace.
- **Public Service Commission – People Matter Employee Survey:** The annual People Matter Employee Survey led by the Public Service Commission captures data on experiences of racism, discrimination and the complaints process in the NSW public sector. The Public Service Commission track, monitor and report in annual Public Service Commission reports.
- **NSW State Emergency Service – Review of its conduct -based complaints management processes:** The NSW State Emergency Service recently conducted a review of its conduct -based complaints management processes. In line with this review, the NSW State Emergency Service will consider the establishment of a continuous improvement program that will also review current mechanisms for complaints (including those relating to discrimination and racism) to improve them and reduce instances of such complaints across the agency.
- **Department of Communities and Justice – Complaint processes relating to conduct of their contracted service providers:** The Department of Communities and Justice has already embedded complaints processes relating to conduct of their contracted service providers, which may include complaints about discrimination and racism. The Department of Communities and Justice are ensuring continuous improvement of their DCJ Contract Management Framework, which incorporates handling of complaints raised about the conduct of contracted service providers. The Department of Communities and Justice' approach to complaints handling is based on the NSW Ombudsman best practice guidelines.

