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MEDIA RELEASE

Ensuring we reach our diverse community during crises

Recent events have shown the importance of ensuring that everyone in our community has access to crisis-related communications. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people born outside Australia and people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were more vulnerable to serious illness and death. This underscores the need for crisis communications that are accessible for all members of our community.

The Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services has released a report on improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The report contains 8 recommendations and 3 findings that aim to improve communication with CALD communities during crises.

The report highlights the role of CALD community groups and networks, and community leaders, in distributing in-language information during crises.

"CALD community groups were a trusted source of public health information during the COVID-19 pandemic. Government agencies and CALD community groups and leaders worked together to disseminate in-language information and provide practical support to community members. This work was invaluable in giving CALD communities access to accurate information", said Committee Chair, the Hon Melinda Pavey MP.

The Committee's report looks at the elements of effective crisis communications for CALD audiences, including the importance of making information available in multiple formats delivered through a range of channels. Involving CALD communities in developing and designing tailored crisis messaging can also help to reach more members of the community.

"Crisis messaging should be co-designed with CALD communities to ensure that it meets their specific needs. We've also recommended that a dedicated, culturally appropriate communications strategy be developed for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community," said Mrs Pavey.

The Committee found that racism and discrimination increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has recommended that the NSW Government works with CALD community organisations and leaders to develop strategies and policies to prevent racism and discrimination during crises.

"There's no place for racism and discrimination in our multicultural state. Promoting community harmony and cohesion will ensure that everyone in our diverse community feels safe and supported during crises."

The Committee received 33 submissions and heard from 22 witnesses during two days of hearings.

The report can be found on the inquiry [webpage](#).

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