

**Submission  
No 31**

**IMPROVING CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TO CULTURALLY AND  
LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

**Organisation:** Canterbury-Bankstown Multicultural Interagency

**Date Received:** 4 July 2022



## Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities

That the Committee on Community Services inquire into and report on improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, with particular reference to:

Response from the Canterbury Bankstown Multicultural Interagency (CBMIA)

### a) use of multicultural and CALD community groups and networks to distribute in-language information

- information fatigue – volume of information set to organisations was a lot – information changed quickly – there needed to be a more streamlined information process – hub to create single sources of information including translations
- what was the single source of truth? – difficult to work out what information is right – so many places to get information on covid – the different health districts, NSW health, Services NSW, Services Australia, local services, etc.
- there needed to be a place online where all translation covid 19 material could be located and updated when required
- much of the translations depended on written information - which may not work all the time - some people are not literate in their first language – more aural vocal records – translations need to be simple and professional
- community organisations small unfunded/religious groups community leaders feeling pressure to be the voice of government and health – not easy to mobilise a small group – too much pressure – unexpected demands
- a lot of pressure on language specific groups to get information out to their networks/community even if the organisation was unfunded or religious group – not fair to make small groups responsible to get information out without support and proper funding
- connect more with schools, neighbourhood centre, community centres to get information out to community – specific target groups.
- More social media content on issues that is easy to upload – multilingual

## **b) ways to improve channels of communication with CALD communities**

- government and health providers should take more of a coordinated lead - taskforce to distribute information and coordinate distribution – remove boundaries for services
- multicultural health services in the health districts to be more active in the distribution of information and point of contact for the local communities – e.g. employ more people in times of crisis and pandemics to provide that information and support
- health services and essential services to be more flexible and agile to meet the community needs and give information
- social media training – how to use videos and get information out on social media – government to have funds easily accessible and used quickly
- whose role is it to distribute information and support the community – large community organisations – ethnos specific group etc.??
- decentralisation of services and health provision – bought trust and opportunity to ask question and get information
- more funding for capacity building and community cohesion support for small orgs or religious ethnos specific groups to employ a worker to communicate with their community
- improving channels of communication with the health emergency plan – is the CALD community part of this plan??
- Information to specific focus on women who have families and young people
- Lack of support for women who were home schooling
- Multicultural communities watch news and get their information from overseas news sources etc.

## **c) addressing racism and discrimination related to crisis communications.**

- Terminology needs to be more thoughtful – ‘LGA of concern’ or ‘hotspot’ – is a negative message
- Additional Police and the Defence Forces brought on to address and manage people. Not a great look – scared the community – made them feel like they had done something wrong
- Triggered the Trauma and Torture of some community members - with all the Police and the Defence Forces in some of south western sydney – the sound of the helicopters and the army around the streets reminded people of war and conflict.
- Need more control and monitoring and hold the public media to account on how they report on situations – e.g., the African women travelled to Melbourne and back to QLD – they were ridiculed and the southwest sydney removalist – the way the media addressing the situation harassing the mother of the removalists etc.
- Ongoing discussion with government leaders and in regular times can be strengthened in times of crisis – government leaders’ politician should have regular discussions with leaders be seen in the community – even in good times – build trust and relationship with leaders

### **Please note:**

Canterbury Bankstown is a LGA and the LGA has two different health districts – there needed to be a consistent coordinated approach in addressing and disseminating information in times of crisis – there were different information and different programs being set out – there needs to be consistent approach along LGA boundaries.