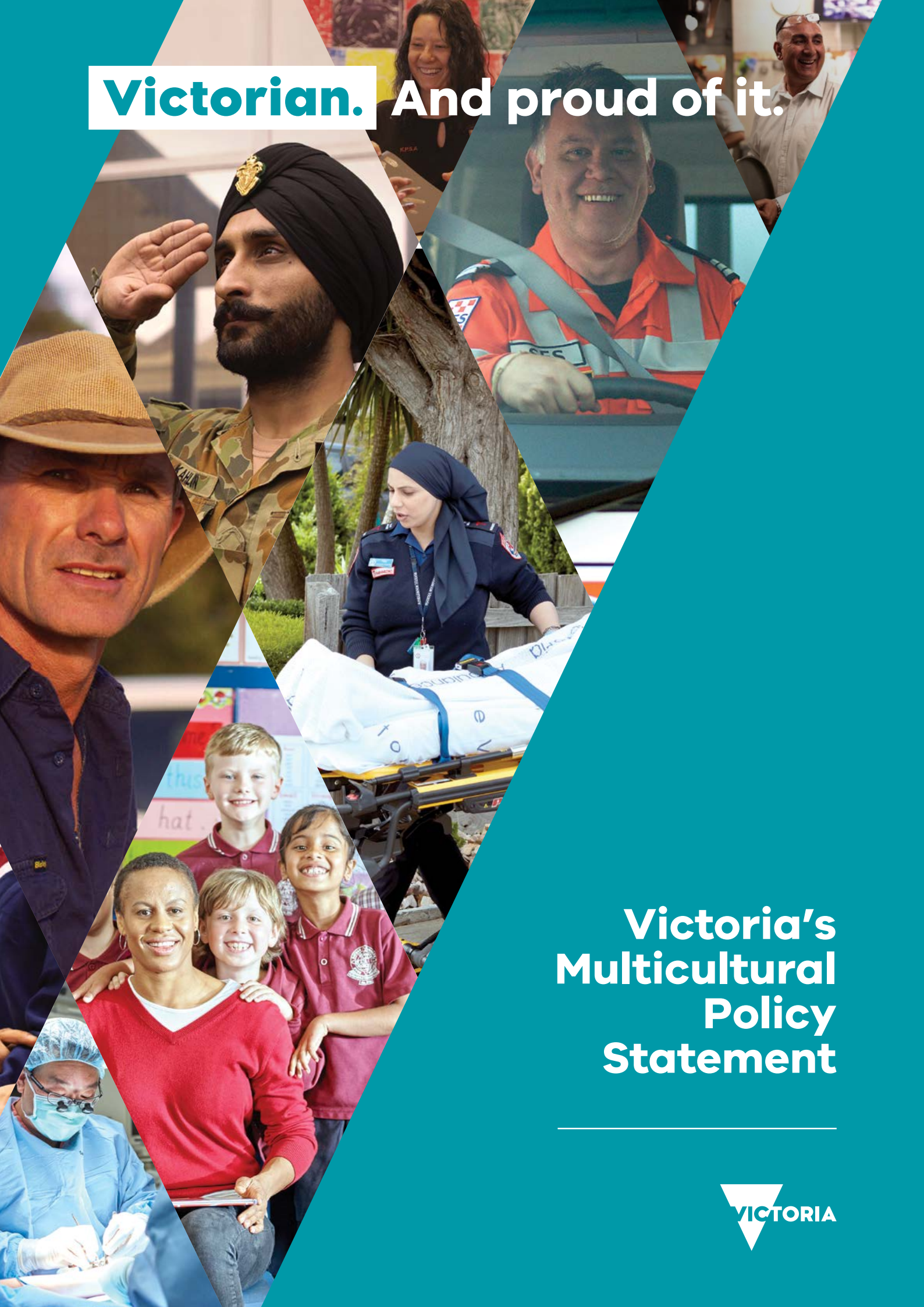


**Victorian.** And proud of it.



# Victoria's Multicultural Policy Statement





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## Foreword from the Premier

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Our state is home to something special.

Because no matter who you are, where you were born or the language you first spoke, here in Victoria you can belong. We don't just tolerate diversity – we embrace it. It's part of who we are.

But we can't afford to be complacent. We can't afford to lose sight of the values that have underpinned our success. Values like one law for all. A fair go for everyone. The freedom to be yourself, while affording others that same freedom.

Knowing that discrimination is never acceptable. And understanding that each of us has a responsibility to contribute to our state.

*Victorian. And proud of it.* makes clear the importance of these values.

Even more than that, it provides a plan to strengthen our connected and cohesive state. To defy those who seek to divide us.

And to ensure that regardless of whether you were born here or you've chosen to make your home here, you are Victorian – and proud of it.



**The Hon Daniel Andrews MP**  
Premier



## Foreword from the Minister

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As Victorians we have much to be proud of.

People from all over the world have chosen to make their home here, bringing with them their experience, their heritage and their culture.

Our diversity brings with it new ideas and new opportunities, and has been integral in shaping the Victoria we have today.

But just as it brings a multitude of benefits, our diversity is not without its challenges.

If we are to remain strong and cohesive, we must work together to build genuine inclusion and acceptance.

*Victorian. And proud of it.* provides a way forward.

It reaffirms the foundational values – freedom, fairness, equality before the law and respect for all – that have shaped our success, and will underpin our future prosperity.

By ensuring everyone can contribute and belong, we can build a place that every Victorian can be proud of.



**Robin Scott MP**  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



# Executive Summary

**Victoria is renowned for its multiculturalism. It's a place where people from all over the world have come together to make their home. But we can't take our social cohesion for granted – we must continue our efforts to ensure that every Victorian can contribute and belong.**

This new multicultural policy statement, *Victorian. And proud of it.* sets out the Victorian Government's way forward. It begins with the Victorian Values Statement – the foundational values on which our success has been built: equality, freedom and shared responsibility. It also details the policies, programs and services that will extend this work, including:

- The **Rights and Responsibilities Program**, so every Victorian is aware of their rights and responsibilities under the law.
- **Right to Debate** initiatives to promote civil dialogue and build a network of people who can challenge all forms of extremism.
- The \$4 million **Multicultural Sports Fund**, so every Victorian has a chance to be a part of our sporting state.
- The **Digital Literacy and Digital Citizenship** program to help young people recognise when they are being manipulated online or confronted with online extremism.

It builds on the work being done across government, to make Victoria a fairer, better place, including:

- \$25 million to tackle all forms of **violent extremism and build community resilience.**
- \$15 million to assist **new arrivals to learn English** and find a job.
- **Recruit Smarter** to help address unconscious bias in the workplace.
- \$6 million to develop **targeted employment services** for people from multicultural communities as part of the **Jobs Victoria Employment Network.**

We want to make sure every Victorian has the opportunity to be part of our state's success.

# Multicultural Victoria

Victorian. And proud of it.



Through the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), our state's diverse communities have an active role in government decision-making. The VMC provides communities – particularly new and emerging ones – with a voice, crucial to successful settlement and participation within Victorian society.

## A multicultural Victoria

Victoria is a multicultural success story.

We acknowledge the heritage and culture of Victoria's First Peoples, and their continued connection to this land.

People from all over the world have chosen to make our state their home. They bring with them their experience, their culture and their traditions. Our citizens come from more than 200 countries, speak 260 languages and follow 135 different faiths.

Together, we have built a place where people from every corner of the world can live and work side by side – a place where everyone can belong.

This diversity enriches us all. It brings new people and new ideas. It extends our skills, attracts businesses and creates new jobs.

Our cultural diversity adds in the order of \$1 billion to the Victorian economy every year, through greater innovation and productivity<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, tourists visiting family and friends are estimated to generate another \$1.2 billion in economic activity<sup>2</sup>.

**In short, our diversity doesn't limit our opportunities – it grows them.**

1. *The Economic Benefits of Cultural Diversity*, Victoria University and Elgin Economics 2016.

2. *Ibid.*

## Victoria's diversity challenge

Victorians are proud of our diversity. But we must also acknowledge that our success takes continued commitment.

It is easy to support multiculturalism in good times, but much harder when times are tough.

Right now, some Victorians feel uncomfortable by the pace of our changing world. And while this is understandable, it is never excusable to promote divisions based on race or religion.

How we choose to respond to this challenge will define us as a state.

The easy – and misguided – path would be to blame those of a different faith or race. But as we've seen elsewhere in the world, this only leads to further division.

We cannot allow Victoria's success to be undermined by fears built on misinformation and misunderstanding.

**Instead we must reaffirm our shared values and be unafraid to have difficult - yet necessary - conversations.**

***Victorian. And proud of it.* guides our approach.**



## Our response – The Victorian Values Statement

### At the heart of the policy is the Victorian Values Statement.

It clearly sets out the core values that unify us as a peaceful and prosperous society with a shared sense of belonging, respect, acceptance and contribution.

The Victorian Values Statement also affirms what we expect of ourselves, of each other, of our community and our state.

## A proven approach to multiculturalism

Around the world, multiculturalism is being challenged. Its opponents promote division over diversity.

The Victorian Government rejects this view.

Our alternative approach has two main elements:

- Assisting those with diverse backgrounds to successfully participate and contribute to our state.
- Encouraging the whole community to recognise that Victoria's diversity is our **greatest strength**.

It's an approach that requires partnership.

We will work with every Victorian, regardless of whether they were born here or chose our state as their home.

We'll make clear the benefits of multiculturalism and demonstrate that the real threat to our way of life is fear. These will be difficult discussions, but they are ones we can't shy away from.

Our approach will enable every Victorian to participate fully in society, remain connected to their culture, and ensure we all have equal rights, protections and opportunities.







## The outcomes we will pursue for every Victorian

We are articulating clear outcomes to help measure our progress:

- **A safe and secure Victoria** – So people can live free from abuse, violence and fear, and enjoy suitable and stable housing.
- **Good health and wellbeing** – Through equitable access to health and human services.
- **Full participation in society** – Through equal access to the education and training people need to contribute to our society.

- **Cultural connection** – Ensuring people can identify with their culture and be proud of their identity.
- **Genuine equality** – Helping people understand and exercise their equal rights under the law and live free from discrimination.

The Government is determined to give every Victorian the opportunity to be part of our state's success. To be Victorian – and proud of it.

# Victorian Values Statement



**The Victorian Values Statement is simple yet profound. It centres on respect, and as the world around us changes, it can remain the constant that keeps us together.**

Our discussions about diversity are underpinned by the understanding that every Victorian has:

- A duty to respect and uphold the laws and values of the state.
- A right to belong and contribute.
- A responsibility to let others live as they choose.

These values are what every Victorian should expect of each other.

Whether at home, at work, while volunteering or in the community, these are the values that make Victoria a great place to live – and a place we can all be proud of.

## 1. One law for all

Everyone is equal under the law. All Victorians have the same legal rights, responsibilities and protections. As Victorians, we all have rights and responsibilities under the law and towards each other. By respecting our mutual rights and responsibilities, we can ensure a safe and cohesive society.

# Victorian

# Values

# Statement

## 2. Freedom to be yourself

Everyone is free to be themselves and to feel safe in being true to themselves. The Government wants every Victorian to be able to celebrate their culture with pride and practice their traditions in peace. The freedom to be yourself includes freedom of speech, expressions of gender, sexuality and religion, and peaceful assembly; it does not allow people to break the law or to impinge on the safety or freedom of others.

## 3. Discrimination is never acceptable

We want to live in a society that promotes inclusion and participation and rejects exclusion, all forms of violence, and discrimination. A society free of discrimination is better able to tackle problems like economic and social disengagement and improve health and wellbeing for all.

## 4. A fair go for all

Everyone deserves a fair go in life. That means giving every Victorian – no matter where they live, their circumstances, or their background – the support they need to enjoy the Victorian way of life. These include quality education and healthcare, accessible transport, opportunities in employment and a safe place to live.

## 5. It is up to all of us to contribute to a Victoria we can be proud of

We all want similar things – the opportunity to thrive, for our successes to be recognised, and for our families and loved ones to be safe, secure and happy. That's why it's important for people to be able to belong and contribute to a society they are proud of.

# Our commitment to you



**Just as the Victorian Values Statement makes clear the rights and responsibilities we all share, the Government also has a role in building a fair and harmonious state - helping all Victorians express our shared values in our daily lives.**

A Victoria where everyone can belong, contribute, achieve and succeed. These objectives are outlined in the existing Whole of Government Multicultural Affairs Outcomes Framework and build on our existing whole-of-government approach to Multicultural Affairs.

The Victorian Values Statement also acknowledges that women and girls from diverse communities can face additional barriers to education, employment, safety and good health. These can result from factors including language barriers, prescriptive gender roles, discrimination, separation from family and other support networks, and insecure visa status. Migrant and refugee women are also over-represented in insecure and low paid work. Some of these issues are being addressed through Victoria's first ever Gender Equality Strategy.

# Whole of Government Multicultural Affairs Outcomes Framework



## Vision

To drive concrete improvements across government and ensure that every Victorian can belong, contribute, achieve and succeed.

## Domain

## Outcomes for Victorians

### Victorians are safe and secure

- Victorians live free from abuse, violence and fear.
- Victorians have suitable and stable housing.

### Victorians are healthy and well

- Victorians have good physical and mental health.
- Victorians have equitable access to health and human services.

### Victorians are able to participate fully

- Victorians participate in learning and education.
- Victorians participate in and contribute to the economy.
- Victorians have financial security.
- Victorians understand, are empowered by, and exercise their rights.
- Victorians have access to an environment that promotes liveability, sustainability and inclusion.

### Victorians are connected to culture and community

- Victorians are socially engaged and live in inclusive communities.
- Victorians can safely identify with and connect with their culture and identity.

### Victorians have equal rights and opportunities

- Victorians live free from discrimination.
- Opportunities to participate in the workforce that are available to all Victorians.

## A safe and secure Victoria

An open and inclusive society is founded on a strong sense of justice for all.

Every Victorian is subject to the laws of the state, and the laws are applied equally without fear or favour. The Government is investing more resources to fight crime, family violence and respond to new security threats.

The Government will target the causes of crime, ensure equality before the law, and fund the services that keep our community safe and supported.

### Maintaining law and order

The Government is investing in additional resources to target crime and keep our community safe. These include:

- **Building new police stations** and giving police the latest crime fighting capabilities, including a new helicopter fleet for the specialist Air Wing unit.
- **3,135 new police recruits over the next five years.** 415 of these recruits will be specialist family violence police officers who will transform our approach to Victoria's number one law and order challenge.
- **42 new youth specialist officers** who will target areas of high risk youth offending and work individually with at-risk young people, including in schools and residential care.
- **New grants to help communities target the underlying causes of crime** and address new and emerging crime trends.

### Keeping our community safe

The Government's first responsibility is to keep Victorians safe. That's why we will:

- Roll out the **Resilient Communities toolkit**, which will serve as a reference and a guide for frontline workers.

- Provide \$25 million in funding to **reinforce Victoria's social cohesion and community resilience, and to prevent radicalisation and extremism.**
- Provide an initial investment of \$460,000 to establish the **Victoria Police Social Cohesion Partnership**, to support engagement with vulnerable multicultural populations not currently actively connected with Victoria Police through local community led projects and activities.
- Improve online safety by delivering a **Digital Parenting Program** that includes online safety software and control tools for parents, and guidance on crucial issues such as spotting indicators of problematic online experiences, including grooming and radicalisation.

### Helping young people to challenge extremist and intolerant views

Long-term positive change can be achieved by giving young people the knowledge and support they need to challenge extremist and intolerant attitudes. Our initiatives include:

- Launching a **Digital Literacy and Digital Citizenship** program to give young people the ability to recognise when they are being manipulated or coerced online or confronted with online extremism and hate speech.
- Implementing **Right to Debate** initiatives to **empower communities to engage in civil dialogue on contemporary issues.** The program will focus on creating a safe environment for those who feel they don't have a voice. Providing the tools to challenge divisive views with tolerance and respect, the Government will work alongside universities, councils, social media companies and others to create a safe space to have these difficult conversations. This will include a student-oriented communications campaign to raise awareness and promote informed discussions.

### Responding to family violence

The Government is implementing every single recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence, including a Ten Year Plan to build a new system that protects families and punishes perpetrators.

While family violence affects every community, we know that women from diverse backgrounds can be at greater risk. To ensure their safety, the Government will:

- Develop strategies to **engage with isolated women** of culturally diverse backgrounds on gender equality and family violence.
- Respond to recommendations by the Royal Commission into Family Violence through the development of a range of **family violence prevention and response initiatives with culturally diverse communities**, including:
  - \$6.3 million to better meet the needs of victims and survivors in **family violence services**, and \$2 million to support women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who have faced or are vulnerable to family violence.
  - Strengthening the capacity of specialist **multicultural family violence service providers and universal services** to engage with victims and survivors from diverse cultural, linguistic and faith backgrounds.
  - \$168 million to **help new mums care for their babies, give child and adult family violence survivors support to recover, and transform the residential care system** into a clinical treatment model.
  - Developing a **primary prevention strategy** to stop family violence from happening in the first place, taking into account considerations for culturally diverse

communities, and working with them to develop prevention solutions specific to their needs.

- The introduction of **Support and Safety hubs** across metropolitan and regional Victoria to provide a single, area-based entry point into local specialist family violence services.

### Rehabilitation and reducing re-offending

We need to ensure that justice is served to those who break our laws. Therefore, the Government will:

- Build on **existing adult and youth justice programs** by:
  - Ensuring over-represented cultural groups are identified.
  - Involving cultural community leaders to stop re-offending.
  - Delivering cultural education programs to prevent offending happening in the first place.

## Good health and wellbeing

The health of Victorians is fundamental. But evidence shows that women and girls who were born overseas are likely to have significantly poorer health than women born in Australia<sup>3</sup>. To ensure everyone has access to high quality healthcare, the Government will make sure services are able to respond to diverse needs.

### Investing in our health system

Accessible healthcare is a basic right for every Victorian. It's why we're improving our hospitals and health services' capacity to meet the needs of diverse communities. That includes overcoming cultural and language barriers and improving the accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services. Our commitments include:

- A **record investment** in health, to ensure that every Victorian – regardless of their background – has access to good quality healthcare.
- **Improving access by building cultural competence in our health services and promoting health literacy** in ways that acknowledge the different understandings of what good health means in different cultures. Extra targeted assistance for refugees and asylum seekers will address the inequalities particular communities face.
- Providing effective, trauma-informed responses for people from refugee backgrounds, including asylum seekers, and enhancing the capability of frontline mental health workers.
- Continuing to break down the barriers people with disability face, through the 2017-2020 State Disability Plan priorities.
- Providing **enhanced health information in languages other than English** as part of the redevelopment of the Better Health Channel and the Health Translations Directory.

- **Increasing the number of people from diverse communities participating in cancer screening.**
- Modernising the ways we communicate health information to parents via the Maternal and Child Health Service to **ensure families have access to resources and information in their home language** and appropriate communication tools to improve parental engagement.
- Supporting the rollout of the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** across Victoria, which will see more Victorians accessing the disability services they need.
- Implementing **Hepatitis B and C strategies** that involve affected culturally and linguistically diverse communities to alleviate the burden of the disease and reduce stigma and discrimination.
- Identifying **how access to reproductive health services can be improved for all Victorians** in collaboration with women's health services, primary care networks, community health services and local governments.

<sup>3</sup>. Jean Hailes for Women's Health, Submission to the Victorian Government Gender Equality Strategy Consultation Paper, 2016.



## Participating fully

### Being a Victorian means contributing to our state

Victoria is stronger when everyone can be part of our economic and social life. The Government will focus on community initiatives that foster inclusion, participation and equality of opportunity. It will also redesign services to respond to the needs of diverse communities and remove barriers to participation.

### Employment and economic growth

Victoria's reputation as an open, vibrant multicultural society is of immense economic importance, helping attract business, tourism, students, skills and investment. It also provides Victoria with a strong base of cultural knowledge necessary for engaging with the global market.

The economic benefits of migration and cultural diversity are substantial, providing an additional \$1 billion per annum in economic activity and increasing skills and workforce participation. Victoria's tourism industry saw \$1.2 billion in expenditure in 2015-16 from international visitors who have friends and relatives living in Victoria<sup>4</sup>.

The Government will boost Victoria's future employment and growth prospects by:

- Investing \$60 million in **LaunchVic** to help create a community for entrepreneurs to develop and grow early-stage businesses and help culturally diverse groups take advantage of the opportunities offered by start-up and entrepreneurial enterprises. Grants will be offered to support initiatives that aim to build start-up infrastructure in potential growth areas, such as regional Victoria, and culturally diverse communities.
- Encouraging **increased migrant settlement in regional areas through regional-area partnerships**. This work will build on existing research<sup>5</sup> that analyses the policy levers that drive settlement patterns.
- Investigating options for **encouraging increased migrant settlement** in regional areas, by funding a research study into its economic costs and benefits.
- Investing in the key drivers of population growth in regional Victoria through the **Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund**, which will invest in local communities and help regional Victorians, including those from diverse backgrounds, find a job.
- Identifying opportunities to leverage programs and projects funded through the **Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund** that support multiculturalism.
- Investing \$30 billion in **major transport infrastructure** planned for the whole community including:
  - \$6 billion for the removal of 50 of Victoria's most dangerous level crossings.
  - \$10.9 billion to build the Metro Tunnel.
  - Billions in metropolitan and regional public transport.
  - \$7 billion for the most important road projects.
- Allocating \$53 million to the **Jobs Victoria Employment Network** to help disadvantaged Victorians find a job. This includes \$6 million to develop targeted employment services for people from multicultural communities, particularly young people.
- Developing training and **Skills Recognition Programs** that are more accessible to migrants, refugees and Victorians from culturally diverse backgrounds to improve access to jobs and increase economic growth. A range of initiatives – including **the Overseas Qualifications Unit, targeted Small Business Programs and Regional Settlement Programs** – will be used to ensure Victorians from all backgrounds have access to appropriate skills recognition, training and employment programs.
- Delivering a pilot **Small Business** training and mentoring program to migrants seeking to explore self-employment opportunities or to start a new business.

4. *The Economic Benefits of Cultural Diversity*, Victoria University and Elgin Economics, 2016.

5. *Regional retention of migrants: critical success factors*, conducted by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in 2014





### Refugee and Asylum Seeker Action Plan

The Government will ensure a successful settlement experience for refugees and asylum seekers. This is both a moral obligation and a smart investment that will reduce long-term settlement costs and help newcomers contribute to our economy faster. Initiatives will include:

- **\$10.9 million over four years in additional funding to support the Commonwealth Government's increased Syrian and Iraqi refugee settlement program** in Victoria. The focus of those services will be on early health and community services orientation, triage and assessment, immunisation, mental health and psychosocial support, casework for unaccompanied minors, and language services.
- Expanding the **Refugee and Education Support Program** – a partnership with Foundation House and the Centre for Multicultural Youth that helps schools create strategies to engage and assist students from refugee backgrounds.
- \$15 million to assist new arrivals to improve English language and other skills through the **Asylum Seeker VET program**. Training will help them find a job and allow them to actively contribute to their community.

### Cultural diversity in the workplace and on government boards

Research shows that an applicant's name can significantly affect their chances of getting a job interview, regardless of their qualifications and experience. People from diverse backgrounds are also under-represented on board appointments. This hurts the economy by narrowing our talent pool.

The Government will lead the way in eliminating employment discrimination and broadening the representation of all Victorians on public boards by:

- Partnering with a cross section of the public, private and community sectors to pilot **Recruit Smarter** – a program to address unconscious bias in employment.
- Increasing the representation of culturally diverse communities on government boards and committees.

- **Increasing the participation of women from culturally diverse communities in the Victorian Government's Women's Governance Scholarship Program**, which invests in the skills of Victorian women and creates a pathway to participation on boards.

### Education

As the Education State, our education services are designed to equip all Victorians with the skills and knowledge they need to participate fully in society. Early childhood services and schools should also build acceptance of diversity, and understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

Our curriculum will guide the development of cultural capability, help young people to learn about other cultures, and promote the principles of inclusion and respect. Our efforts will include:

- Funding bilingual workers to support the participation of children from culturally diverse backgrounds in **supported playgroups and kindergartens**.
- Ensuring more than 70,000 Victorian students have regular access to the healthcare they need through the Doctors in Secondary Schools Program.
- Providing **free eye tests and glasses** for Prep to Grade 3 students in 250 disadvantaged schools, removing the significant barrier that undiagnosed eye problems pose to school participation and achievement.
- \$4 million in additional funding to 170 community organisations to support the provision of **out-of-school-hours language programs** to over 35,000 young Victorians.
- \$35.6 million to support newly arrived migrants to access an intensive **full-time program to learn English at school**.
- \$148.3 million **Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund** so that every student – regardless of their background – gets the chance to go on camps and excursions with their friends and learn more about the world.

### International Students

Education is Victoria's largest services export, and in 2015 Melbourne was ranked as the world's second best student city, with around 175,000 international students from more than 160 countries<sup>6</sup>.

The Government will redouble efforts to ensure international students feel safe, welcomed and included, with \$31.9 million to strengthen Victoria's position as the leading destination for international students. This will involve:

- Ensuring the **wellbeing of international students** studying in Victoria through a comprehensive suite of initiatives including:
  - The continuation of the Study Melbourne Student Centre, which provides comprehensive free information and support to all international students
  - Providing \$4 million to the International Student Welfare Grants program to support new approaches and partnerships to protect student welfare and improve students' experiences.
- **Retaining talent with advanced knowledge, skills and experience in priority occupations via state nominations for skilled migration visas**, including nomination of any student who completes a PhD at a Victorian university.
- Creating a new platform for international and domestic students to **Lead, Intern, Volunteer and Experience (LIVE)** – building the social connectedness of international students during their stay.

6. QS Best Student Cities 2015.



## Connected to culture and community

Victoria's multiculturalism means people maintain links to their traditional culture and community as they participate in and contribute to our wider society. The Government will continue to help all our communities celebrate and share their culture with pride and respect.

### Social cohesion and inclusion

Victoria leads Australia in multiculturalism and social cohesion. But we can't afford to be complacent. No one must be left out or marginalised, and everyone must be given the opportunities they need to succeed. In pursuit of this the Government is:

- Bolstering the multicultural affairs and social cohesion portfolio, through the following funding commitments:
  - \$18 million to provide refugees with improved access to education and employment, and to encourage the use of sporting, artistic, cultural and community services to foster a greater sense of belonging.
  - \$13.2 million to enhance community capacity and participation for people from diverse backgrounds, with specific initiatives to support newly arrived migrants and refugees as well as seniors, women and young people.
  - \$11 million to maintain or build community infrastructure and to enhance cultural precincts.
  - \$25 million over four years to strengthen social cohesion and community resilience.

### Accessible services and support

The Government wants all Victorians to have access to the services they need. We will ensure that language and culture are not barriers to accessing government services by:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of **government procurement arrangements for language services** in providing access to professional interpreters and translators.
- Increasing awareness of and access to **language services** to support individuals and families during critical times, such as their arrival in Victoria, parenthood, starting school, using health services and seeking training and employment.
- Assisting the 'legacy caseload' of more than 11,000 asylum seekers living in Victoria to **access legal assistance to have their claims for protection assessed lawfully and fairly** through Victoria Legal Aid.
- Delivering a pilot project aimed at disadvantaged culturally diverse communities to facilitate **better understanding of the rental market**. This will also include working with relevant community groups to develop information tailored to the needs of those communities, publish the information in relevant community languages, and develop effective methods of distributing the information.
- Developing and implementing comprehensive and effective **Cultural Diversity Plans (CDPs)** across all Government departments to continuously improve access and responsiveness for diverse cultural, linguistic and faith communities.
- Connecting with, understanding and improving the safety and resilience of every community before, during and after emergencies – under the **Emergency Management Diversity and Inclusion Framework**.

### Engage and work with communities

The Government will listen to diverse communities about the issues that are important to them. In response, we will:

- Convene the **Ministerial Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs** to bring together senior stakeholders from government, industry, unions, sporting, academia and philanthropic organisations to examine how to create new opportunities for Victorians from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Establish seven new **Regional Engagement and Community** hubs in partnership with the Scanlon Foundation and key regional stakeholders. These hubs will build on the strategic regional partnership program, creating a platform for community-wide engagement and supporting more sustainable regional settlement.
- Establish the \$4 million **Multicultural Sports Fund**. A partnership between government, the Australian Football League, Cricket Australia, Football Federation Victoria, Tennis Victoria and other sporting bodies, this program will help local sporting clubs boost participation among women and culturally diverse groups by identifying and addressing barriers to access and participation, including the costs of registration and equipment.
- Engage people from diverse backgrounds to give voice to their issues through the **social impact initiative**, outlined in the Government's new Creative Industries strategy, *Creative State*.
- **Engage with local councils** on the important role they play in promoting and supporting multiculturalism in Victoria and fostering social inclusion.
- Develop the **Victoria Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee** to promote and maintain harmonious relations between police and multicultural communities, based on mutual understanding, respect and trust.
- Develop the **Victoria Police Multi-Faith Council** to strengthen the partnerships between Victoria Police, the Victorian Multicultural

Commission, faith based organisations and multicultural agencies.

- With support from the Victorian Government, the Victorian Multicultural Commission will establish a **Multicultural Ambassadors Program**. The Multicultural Ambassadors will champion multiculturalism and its benefits, while countering negative stereotypes. The Ambassadors will be drawn from across the community, and will include multicultural community leaders and high profile Victorians from the academic, media, sports, arts, corporate, philanthropic and community sectors.

### Engage youth to support meaningful participation

Nearly half of Victoria's one million young people were born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas. We must make sure they feel fully included and are given every opportunity to thrive in school, work and community. The Government will:

- Implement its new youth policy, **Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria**, to give young people input into the government services, policies and programs that are important to them.
- Support students from all backgrounds to meaningfully participate in decision-making that affects their school communities through the **Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC)**.
- Partner with the Centre for Multicultural Youth to create opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to advise the Government on critical issues and help newly-arrived young people get involved through the **Regional Presence Project**.



### Leading the nation

At the forefront of multicultural affairs and social cohesion, Victoria is well equipped to lead the national conversation. Victoria will lead the national debate on emerging risks and challenges to maintaining a cohesive and successful multicultural society by:

- Hosting a multicultural summit.
- Convening a ministerial round table.
- Conducting a research-informed engagement program.
- Developing an economic benefits of cultural diversity framework.

### Community events and celebrations

Community festivals and sports create bridges between cultures that enable people to share their cultural and religious heritage, while building understanding, trust and respect. They also provide economic benefits with cultural festivals alone contributing an estimated \$44 million to Gross State Product to Victoria per year<sup>7</sup>. The Government will increase this activity through:

- The **Multicultural Festivals and Events Program** to encourage Victorians to celebrate and embrace our vibrant diversity and foster cross-cultural understanding.
- A **\$20 million Regional Events Fund**, which supports regional community celebrations and festivals, including those that celebrate cultural diversity, promote inclusion and attract tourism.
- Providing \$2.4 million per annum to support **community events and celebrations of culture**.
- Supporting isolated older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through the annual **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Seniors Participation grant program** for community-based organisations.

<sup>7</sup> The Economic Benefits of Cultural Diversity, Victoria University and Elgin Economics, 2016.

## Equal rights and opportunities

### Freedom from discrimination

Every Victorian should have the freedom to belong and contribute.

The Government will stamp out discrimination wherever it occurs through robust legislation, education and support programs. The Government will:

- Deliver an **Anti-Racism Action Plan** that includes:
  - Ensuring every Victorian has the same legal protections under the law.
  - Empowering members of the community to respond to racism – with a focus on women, bystanders, young people and children.
  - Developing school and early childhood curriculum materials to tackle discrimination.
  - Working with public transport providers to ensure all commuters can safely use public transport free from discrimination.
  - Targeting race-based discrimination in rental and other accommodation.
  - Reporting racism – through a comprehensive review of how racism is reported and recorded.
  - Develop new curriculum materials for **Respectful Relationships education** that focuses on mutual respect and challenging negative attitudes, prejudice, discrimination and harassment.

### Rights and responsibilities

We all have the same rights and responsibilities under law, regardless of our background or circumstances. The Government will promote these rights and responsibilities to all Victorians by:

- Investing \$2.3 million to implement the **Rights and Responsibilities Program**. This education program will promote the Victorian Values Statement and make sure Victorians are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the law.

### Ensuring gender equality for all Victorians

Women and girls from diverse backgrounds often experience more discrimination than others. Advancing gender equality for all women will lead to measurable benefits for our whole society. To ensure women from culturally diverse backgrounds enjoy the same rights as everyone else, the Government will:

- Continue to deliver on reform as part of the **Victorian Gender Equality Strategy**, including specific recommendations for women and girls from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Redesign the **Multicultural Community Grants** program to include a focus on funding for services related to gender equity, family violence prevention and service access to women from culturally diverse backgrounds.

### Diversity of gender, sex and sexuality

The discrimination practiced against LGBTI people can be highly damaging, leading in many cases to poorer health and wellbeing. The Government will implement a number of initiatives to provide additional support and protection of rights, including:

- Allocating \$500,000 over four years through the **LGBTI Multicultural Grants program** to enable LGBTI, faith based and culturally diverse organisations to provide inclusive services and programs.

# Next steps



**We believe in a truly open and welcoming society, where the values of a fair go and equality prosper.**

After all, these values have helped make Victoria the multicultural success it is. But we won't be complacent. We'll keep working to ensure Victoria is even stronger and fairer.

**A place where we can all be Victorian and proud of it.**

**VICTORIA**

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