

Multicultural Communities Position Statement

Policy Principles

This Position Statement relates to the following Policy Principles of LGNSW:

- (7) Local government is committed to the principles of:*
- a. Equity – fair distribution of resources*
 - b. Rights – equality for all people*
 - c. Access – to services essential to quality of life*
 - d. Participation – of all people in their community*
 - e. Recognition – of the unique place of Aboriginal people in NSW and the right of Aboriginal people to be involved in all decisions affecting Aboriginal communities.*

Background

NSW Councils undertake a range of activities that support multicultural communities and promote social cohesion, including assisting culturally and linguistically diverse communities to participate in their local community; refugee resettlement and services for newly arrived migrants; participating in and supporting Harmony Day; holding citizenship ceremonies and cultural events; and facilitating peer support. NSW councils share information, knowledge, and resources through the Local Government Multicultural Network.

There is currently little support from the NSW Government to assist councils in performing their roles in building harmonious inclusive communities and supporting new migrants and refugees to settle into the community. There is a lack of data available to support local government to plan for intakes of new refugees through Humanitarian/Refugee settlement programs.

The Commonwealth Government places the majority of refugees in locations close to family members and in established ethnic communities so settlement is concentrated in limited areas, while other communities seek to host refugee resettlement in their areas.

Our Position

LGNSW advocates for the State and Commonwealth Governments to:

- Develop a broader Humanitarian Resettlement Strategy to encourage and support distribution of resettlement across NSW and Australia; and support councils and communities in NSW to become refugee welcome zones.
- Provide support to areas where concentrated resettlement occurs to address the social and economic impact gaps. These include: housing affordability, antisocial behaviour, employment, infrastructure and services.
- Fund councils' roles and responsibilities for activities that support multicultural communities and promote social cohesion, including refugee resettlement.

Local government calls on:

- The State and Commonwealth Governments to provide targeted funding to support council activities that promote multicultural communities, facilitate refugee resettlement, and build social cohesion.
- Relevant agencies to provide up to date and accurate data to councils to support forward planning. This includes information on humanitarian arrivals and planned arrivals, types of visas issued, and data on secondary settlement areas.

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