

Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council (MQAC)

Meeting communique

The second meeting of the third MQAC was held on 11 and 12 July 2023 in Mount Isa, chaired by the Honourable Leanne Linard MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Following a Welcome to Country from Kalkadoon traditional owners on day 1, MQAC members met with local community members and leaders, Good Shepherd Parish staff and volunteers and service providers to identify barriers facing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living in Queensland's regional, rural and remote areas. The dialogue focused on how to foster enhanced inclusion and shape initiatives to combat issues impacting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in regional areas.

Topics included: the need for diversity and inclusion in leadership; the need for First Nations cultural competence training for new arrivals; lack of public transport; housing; lack of English language programs in the regions; the role of educators in ensuring welcome and inclusion; employment; inclusion of young people's voices in decision making; English language testing requirements as a barrier to professional registration and employment pathways; and the need for opportunities for young people to encourage them to remain in Mount Isa.

MQAC members participated in a consultation with Queensland Health on the development of a Queensland Health Multicultural Health Action Plan, where they provided feedback on priorities for health reform to improve access, equity and quality of services for Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

On Day 2, MQAC held discussions with local First Nations elders and leaders to hear views on respectful engagement between people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and First Nations peoples, including any opportunities for intersectional interests. The dialogue included discussions on the Path to Treaty and Voice to Parliament; the importance of truth telling; the impact of colonisation and past policies; the need for First Nations' history to be more widely taught and shared, including at a local level with new migrants; the need to recognise the contributions and successes of First Nations peoples and culture; the need for First Nations' representation on bodies such as MQAC; and opportunities for First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities to join together through events such as NAIDOC week, multicultural festivals and reconciliation initiatives.

Mount Isa City Council representatives then presented on their work with Welcoming Australia to build welcome and inclusion in the local area, followed by a presentation from the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts on Queensland's Path to Treaty and discussion about opportunities for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to support and participate in this significant work.

In concluding the two-day MQAC meeting Multicultural Affairs Queensland presented on its ongoing work, including Multicultural Queensland Month, work to advocate and improve workforce outcomes for skilled migrants, seasonal workers, people on spousal visas, international students and humanitarian entrants under the Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032, and work towards a target for representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds on Queensland Government boards. MQAC also reaffirmed their forward work plan priorities for 2023 and 2024.

The next meeting is scheduled for 18-19 October 2023 in Brisbane.