Agency Multicultural Plan

2013-2015

14 June 2013
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Background
This Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP) covers the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER).

About the ACCC and AER
The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is an independent Commonwealth statutory authority whose role is to enforce the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and a range of additional legislation, promoting competition, fair trading and regulating national infrastructure for the benefit of all Australians.

The AER is also an independent Commonwealth statutory authority and Australia’s national energy market regulator. The AER has an independent Board, with its staff, resources and facilities being provided by the ACCC.

The ACCC makes markets work by:
- protecting consumers and ensuring fair markets by enforcing the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and the Australian Consumer Law
- collecting information from consumers and businesses to help us understand what issues cause the most harm to Australian businesses and consumers and where best to use our resources
- reviewing and assessing company mergers and asset acquisitions, authorisation and notification applications in Australia
- promoting competition in the communications, bulk water, postal, and transport industries.

The AER makes markets work by:
- setting the prices charged for using energy networks (electricity poles and wires and gas pipelines) to transport energy to customers
- monitoring wholesale electricity and gas markets to ensure suppliers comply with the legislation and rules, and taking enforcement action where necessary
- publishing information on energy markets, including the annual State of the energy market report and more detailed market and compliance reporting, to assist participants and the wider community
- assisting the ACCC with energy-related issues arising under the Competition and Consumer Act, including enforcement, mergers and authorisations.

Corporate Plan Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Purpose</th>
<th>Our Goals</th>
<th>Our Strategies</th>
<th>Our Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our purpose statement reflects the continuing aspirations of the organisation and our statutory roles and obligations.</td>
<td>Our goals are what we intend to do to deliver real benefits for Australian consumers from the expert use of our legislative powers and influence.</td>
<td>Our strategies are how we will go about achieving our goals.</td>
<td>We will take a number of specific actions to implement our strategies and achieve our goals. In addition to these actions, we carry out a wide range of work to meet our legislative responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our purpose
Making markets work for consumers, now and in the future.

Competitive markets increase the prosperity and welfare of Australian consumers. Our role is to protect, strengthen and supplement the way competition works in Australian markets and industries to improve the efficiency of the economy and to increase the welfare of Australians.

This means we will take action where this improves consumer welfare, protects competition or stops conduct that is anti-competitive or harmful to consumers, and promotes the proper functioning of Australian markets.
Our values
How we work is underpinned by our values.

We appreciate and uphold the APS Values of Impartial, Committed to Service, Accountable, Respectful and Ethical (ICARE), and hold these additional complementary values as unique and meaningful to our work.

**Independent**: We pursue the interests of the Australian community, objectively and transparently.

**Expert**: We make timely decisions based on evidence and rigorous analysis.

**Strategic**: We make best use of our resources by taking considered and targeted action.

**Trustworthy**: We communicate honestly and directly and act respectfully.

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Our goals, strategies and actions

One of the key goals in the ACCC/AER corporate plan that is most relevant to the AMP, is to increase our engagement with the broad range of groups affected by what we do, including CALD groups.

Our current strategies and actions around this are to:

1. **Implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure effective communication with our diverse audiences that supports our goals**
   
   Develop and implement an organisation wide communications strategy incorporating the outcomes of the corporate identity and market research projects to reach out more effectively to consumers, business and others who have an interest in or are affected by our work.

2. **Undertake an active program of stronger and managed partnerships with a broad range of organisations that can assist us deliver outcomes that impact favourably on consumer welfare**
   
   Develop our engagement with key consumer and industry groups and public and private sector organisations to increase our ability to target action that improves consumer and small business welfare and effectively functioning markets and industries.

   Increase our engagement and partnerships with competition authority colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region.

   More detailed information about the ACCC/AER’s goals, strategies and actions are outlined in its corporate plan which can be found on the ACCC website at [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au).

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Our Service Charter

How we provide our services is very important to us. Our Service Charter sets out the standard of service our stakeholders can expect to receive from us. In upholding our values we will:

- be accessible, transparent, independent and fair in our dealings with the community including consumers, business and governments
- performing our role in a timely, effective, efficient and consistent manner
- respond to the needs of all people regardless of their personal attributes or circumstances
- provide our stakeholders with a courteous, professional, and quality service
- welcomes feedback, including complaints, compliments and suggestions.
- identify ourselves when our stakeholders contact us and speak to them in plain English.

Interaction with the community

Interacting with the community is integral to achieving what we do. This includes CALD communities. We interact with the community and industry through:

- accessible websites and social media
- Infocentre (contact centre)
- publications including publications in languages other than English
- targeted media releases including for CALD communities where appropriate
• Information and education campaigns which may target CALD communities
• Our Compliance & Outreach Programs including the Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Consumer Program
• taking enforcement action
• issues papers and discussion papers.


Previous initiatives

Prior to this plan, the ACCC/AER committed to a number of initiatives in order to improve access to its information and provide more equitable servicing to CALD communities. Some of the key initiatives include:

Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Consumers Program (DVCP)

Following consultation with the ACCC’s Consumer Consultative Committee (CCC), the ACCC launched an ongoing program aimed at identifying and responding to commercial and business practices that target or exploit vulnerable consumers including CALD groups where language barriers may exist. The program has continued for a number of years. Broadly the program seeks to:

• raise awareness of the consumer protection role of the ACCC by developing and disseminating education and information initiatives
• consider the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable consumers in general communication strategies;
• encourage the referral of complaints and concerns from D&V consumers
• build and maintain relationships with key consumer groups to gather intelligence about emerging issues, monitor trends, facilitate complaint referral
• provide guidance to businesses for dealing with disadvantaged and vulnerable consumers
• closely monitor complaints and inquiries from or on behalf of disadvantaged or vulnerable consumers to identify areas of market activity where targeted compliance and enforcement activity is required.

Simple English and LOTE communications

With CALD communities in mind, the ACCC and AER strive to communicate through a variety of mechanisms in simple English and in languages other than English where it may be necessary. This initiative has continued for many years. Some key activities include:

• In early 2013, the ACCC and AER launched new websites which are designed to be more accessible, easier to navigate and provide information in plain English. The ACCC website includes information regarding specific campaigns in up to 14 other languages.
• The ACCC/AER’s contact centre is its Infocentre. This is a telephone and email information and complaints service for consumers and businesses. Infocentre staff are trained to provide information in plain English and the centre is equipped with translating and interpreting services for assistance in languages other than English.

Compliance and outreach programs

The ACCC/AER is active in providing outreach services in communities, including remote communities, targeting both consumers and small business. This includes engagement with CALD communities. Some key activities includes:

• In 2011, a brochure entitled 'Don't take advantage of disadvantage' was released as part of the DVCP to assist businesses in dealing with disadvantaged and vulnerable consumers.
• Campaigns which target specific groups are translated into other languages. For example an important campaign informing consumers of their consumer guarantee rights has been translated in Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, Greek, Italian, and other languages.
• ACCC’s scam monitoring and education website Scamwatch, provides alerts in languages other than English, where appropriate.
Enforcement

In enforcing the Competition and Consumer Act, the ACCC and AER endeavour to ensure that businesses that have broken the law provide notices to the community in other languages, where diverse communities may have been affected. For example, a business with misleading advertising targeted at the Chinese community was required to print a notice in Chinese publications.

Our vision for 2013-2015

The ACCC and AER provide services to the whole of the Australian population and our Corporate Plan acknowledges our commitment to engage with diverse communities. Our AMP will enhance this commitment (including the previous initiatives outlined above) and provide strategies to improve access to and equity in the provision of its information and services to CALD communities.

Our commitments for 2013-2015

Over the 2013-2015 period we seek to establish a strong governance and reporting framework in order to strengthen the ACCC/AER’s current CALD initiatives and identify new opportunities for improved service delivery to CALD communities. The ACCC/AER will establish a progressive framework to build on our commitments each year as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Appoint a Senior Executive sponsor&lt;br&gt; ● Establish a governance framework/Committee&lt;br&gt; ● Undertake research, audit and reflection&lt;br&gt; ● Continue to strengthen current initiatives</td>
<td>● Improve cultural awareness for staff through training&lt;br&gt; ● Identify any specific CALD community gaps&lt;br&gt; ● Introduce new CALD delivery program</td>
<td>● Reflect on progress and achievements of CALD program&lt;br&gt; ● Continue CALD program delivery and monitoring&lt;br&gt; ● Plan for 2015 – 2017 AMP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our plan for 2013-2015

In line with our values, the ACCC/AER will strengthen its approach to provide CALD communities with increasingly accessible and equitable services and information. We will reappoint a specific Senior Executive to sponsor our AMP and establish a governance structure to promote and oversee the progress of the AMP.

Our plan will focus on six key areas:

1. Leadership
2. Engagement
3. Performance
4. Capability
5. Responsiveness
6. Openness
1. Leadership

The ACCC/AER recognises that leadership is vital to the success of our goals, strategies and drive our purpose of enhancing the welfare of the Australian community by fostering competitive, efficient, fair and informed markets. We acknowledge our leadership commitment in our Corporate Plan and Service Charter and regard it as vital attribute in responding to the needs of all Australians, regardless of their personal attributes, cultural background or circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Success Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Executive accountability</td>
<td>Endorsement and support for the AMP.</td>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>August 2013 Obtain sponsorship from a Senior Executive Officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMP actions and targets integrated into relevant ACCC/AER business plans and other documents.</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>July 2014 and 2015</td>
<td>Multicultural access and equity actions reflected in business plans and other documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Agency commitment</td>
<td>Relevant sponsoring Senior Executive Officer and senior management to establish Governance Committee to oversee the AMP.</td>
<td>Senior Executive Officer</td>
<td>August-September 2013 Establishment of Governance Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise staff awareness of the AMP and our need to improve our access and equity for CALD communities in what we do.</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
<td>Identify culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) stakeholders. Staff understand and are committed to the implementation of the AMP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2. Engagement

We do what we do for all Australian consumers. In light of this the ACCC/AER Corporate Plan outlines a specific goal to increase our engagement with the broad range of groups within the community (including CALD communities). We are committed to implementing comprehensive strategies to ensure effective communications with consumers, business and others who have an interest in or are affected by our work.

### Action | Responsibility | Timeline | Success Measure
--- | --- | --- | ---
### 2.1 Stakeholder engagement  
Upon review and reflection, strengthen current initiatives and develop new strategies on engagement with CALD stakeholders.  
Review the level of engagement by ACCC/AER with key CALD stakeholder groups (such as peak bodies) and engage with others identified as high need. | Governance Committee | March 2014 | Governance Committee produces a report on current initiatives and a plan on potential improvements/new initiatives.  
Governance Committee | March 2014, July 2015 | Governance Committee to include in report/plan.  
Improvements/new initiatives implemented as recommended. |
### 2.2 Language and communication  
Develop a language and communication plan to identify ACCC/AER’s CALD communities, including the languages spoken and cultural attributes, and outline specific strategies.  
Review and add to the ACCC’s language register (which lists staff who can speak/write in LOTE). | Governance Committee | August 2014 | Deliver cultural competency training.  
Deliver consistent communication and information services to CALD communities.  
Corporate Services | July 2014, July 2015 | Register up to date. |
### 2.3 Accessibility  
Review and implement strategies to assist in identifying better communication mechanisms and means to assist CALD stakeholders. E.g. translation services, documents in more than one language etc including on the ACCC/AER websites. | Governance Committee | March 2014, July 2015 | Strategies outlined in a report produced by the Governance Committee.  
Improvements / new initiatives implemented as recommended. |
### 2.4 Celebrating cultural diversity  
Celebrate CALD cultural diversity through the ACCC/AER Multicultural Day and potentially some community engagement. | ACCC/AER Social Club | Annually | Hold an event which reflects ACCC/AER’s CALD community. |
The ACCC/AER is committed to improving its performance in dealing with CALD communities. Through a Governance Committee we will utilise effective feedback and reporting mechanisms in order to improve access and equity policies in servicing CALD communities.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.1 Performance indicators and reporting</strong></td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Governance Committee to report on KPI measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop measurable and objective KPIs to ensure that ACCC is responsive to the needs of CALD stakeholders. E.g. making sure documents are written in simple English, where possible and appropriate the document is translated into other languages etc.</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Governance Committee to report on KPI measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.2 Feedback</strong></td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>A feedback mechanism is established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up with CALD stakeholders and develop a mechanism through which they can provide feedback to the ACCC. Measure the KPIs against the feedback obtained to measure success of the program and strengthen where necessary.</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Governance Committee is able to meaningfully report on the effectiveness of the AMP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3 Review</strong></td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>December 2014 (for end of 2015 period)</td>
<td>Review process established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish regular review process for AMP.</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>December 2014 (for end of 2015 period)</td>
<td>Review process established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Capability

The ACCC/AER encourages education and learning for all staff. In order to effectively implement the AMP, the ACCC/AER are committed to providing effective training to ensure that staff are capable of meeting the needs of CALD communities.

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<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1 Cultural competency</strong></td>
<td>Governance Committee/relevant work areas.</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
<td>Initiatives implemented to improve AMP awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that staff are aware of the AMP policy and KPIs in order to utilise them in their work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide cultural competency training for staff in relevant areas of the ACCC/AER.</td>
<td>Corporate Services</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>Cultural competency training developed and implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Research and data</strong></td>
<td>All line areas coordinated by Governance Committee</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Establishment of a mechanism to record information about ACCC/AER CALD communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review current data collection methods and identify areas for improvement/further collection. Collect and review data and include in report to further inform improvements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan to be provided by Governance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3 Development Programs</strong></td>
<td>Corporate Services</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Implementation of the development program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate cultural awareness of CALD communities into relevant leadership programs, including unconscious bias training.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate awareness of the AMP into inductions.</td>
<td>Corporate Services</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>AMP provided for in relevant inductions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Responsiveness

The ACCC/AER is committed to ensuring that we are responsive to the needs of all our stakeholders. The ACCC/AER will continue to ensure that our response mechanisms incorporate access and equity policies for CALD communities and that we are responsive to their needs as much as possible.

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<th>Success measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Standards</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governance Committee to report on adequacy and implementation of the AMP in a whole-of-government context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.2 Policy, program and service delivery</strong></td>
<td>Governance Committee to coordinate, relevant Senior Executives / work areas</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governance Committee to address in its report and provide recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Outsourced services</td>
<td>Corporate Services</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Provisions evident in relevant contracts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Openness

As an agency of the Australian Government, the ACCC/AER is held to account for its activities by a variety of external bodies and the public more broadly. Each year the ACCC reports on its achievements to ensure the organisation is transparent about its activities. The ACCC/AER will take the same approach regarding its plans and achievements concerning the AMP.

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Publishing</td>
<td>Corporate Services</td>
<td>1 July 2013</td>
<td>Publication of AMP on the ACCC/AER websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly identify that the ACCC/AER has a plan to improve access and equity to its services for CALD communities.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ACCC/AER AMP will be made available to the public on our websites.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish information on progress of the AMP and relevant KPIs in the ACCC/AER Annual Reports.</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>2014 2015</td>
<td>Publication on the progress of the AMP in Annual Reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish a review on the AMP outcomes at the end of the two-year period.</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>Publication of review report on the 2013-2015 outcomes of the ACCC/AER’s AMP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Data</td>
<td>Governance Committee</td>
<td>2014 2015</td>
<td>Establish mechanism for and identify appropriate CALD diversity data to share with other agencies and the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ACCC/AER will ensure CALD data is available to other agencies and the public, where appropriate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>