



**Strategic Directions
for Policing with
Ethnic Communities**

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

Strategic Directions for Policing with Ethnic Communities

Queensland's culturally diverse community presents the Queensland Police Service with many challenges as we approach the 21st century. All people, regardless of their language or cultural background, should have equal access to services which are appropriate and non-discriminatory. The Queensland Police Service has already adopted a number of policies, strategies and practices which enhance the maintenance of law and order through the delivery of equitable policing services.

These services are enhanced by the development of partnerships with people, including the young, the aged and those living in isolated communities.

Police are involved in community liaison committees and in crime prevention programs. Such initiatives foster greater safety, help to eliminate barriers and promote trust.

This Strategic Directions document has been developed after state-wide consultations with ethnic communities and will provide direction in meeting the needs of our culturally diverse society.

J P O'SULLIVAN
COMMISSIONER

Guiding Principles

The Queensland Police Service Corporate Plan 1998 - 2001, the Multicultural Queensland Policy (August 1998) and the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau have guided the formulation of this Strategic Directions document for ethnic communities.

The Mission of the Queensland Police Service is to serve the people of Queensland by protecting life and property, preserving peace and safety, preventing crime and upholding the law in a manner which has regard for the public good and the rights of the individual. The environment in which the Queensland Police Service operates is a complex one and is influenced by a range of social, cultural, economic and political factors which affect people's lives.

The Queensland Government recognises that Queensland is and will remain a culturally diverse society and affirms multiculturalism as the best way to manage this cultural diversity.

The following core principles have been adopted by the Queensland Government in developing its multicultural strategies.

1. *Access:* All Queenslanders enjoy equitable access to services and programs.
2. *Participation:* All Queenslanders enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland.
3. *Cohesion:* All Queenslanders share responsibility for the continuing development of Queensland as a cohesive and harmonious society.

The National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau contributes to the development of co-ordinated approaches in the delivery of equitable and professional police services to a culturally diverse Australia by:

- recognising that adequately resourced and professionally delivered cross-cultural awareness training should be fully integrated in education and training courses for police;
- advancing communications between police jurisdictions and the community through education and information strategies, and using appropriately qualified and accredited interpreters and/or translators;
- encouraging police to utilise ethnic media and to take particular care in their interaction with all media, to ensure an accurate portrayal of Australian cultural diversity;
- promoting recruitment from ethnic communities, without compromising professional standards, and ensuring that all recruitment policies, practices and standards are equitable and free from any racial and/or cultural bias;
- advancing consultation and liaison with ethnic communities during the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs, in the area of police/ethnic relations; and

- rejecting all forms of racism, prejudice and bigotry, treating such behaviour as a breach of instructions, and promoting harmonious relations with all sections of the Australian culturally diverse community.

Introduction

Queensland has a population which includes people from 120 diverse ethnic backgrounds. Approximately seventeen per cent of the State's population has been born overseas. The distribution of these ethnic communities in the eight police regions of Queensland varies greatly.

To guide the planning and delivery of policing services in Queensland, a Strategic Directions Working Group was formed in early 1995 with representatives from the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland and other regional Ethnic Community Councils, Police Ethnic Advisory Group, Queensland Police Service and the Office of Ethnic and Multicultural Affairs.

The Working Group undertook a consultation process and researched similar policies adopted by other States. Input was also received from policy officers, police attending a Cross Cultural Liaison Officers Conference in Brisbane and eleven consultative workshops conducted with ethnic communities throughout Queensland.

A composite of all feedback and information received has guided the formulation of this Strategic Directions document. The strategies and key actions developed serve as best practice principles in guiding the delivery of equitable policing services to all Queenslanders. This document is only the beginning of a process which aims to contribute to the elimination of barriers for the mutual benefit of all people.

Achievements to Date

Since the establishment of the Cultural Advisory Unit (formerly Cross Cultural Support Services) in August 1990, as recommended in the Fitzgerald Inquiry Report, significant progress has been made towards enhancing relationships and achieving equity and access to policing services. The major achievements have been:

- establishment of the Police Ethnic Advisory Group comprising representatives of the Queensland Police Service, other government and non-government departments and community organisations;
- transfer of the Cultural Advisory Unit to the Office of the Commissioner;
- appointment of a Senior Cultural Adviser to the Commissioner of Police;
- appointment and/or nomination of full-time/part-time Cross Cultural Liaison Officers to police regions;
- formulation of a Cross Cultural Liaison Officers Guide to assist police in their role;
- integration into the Corporate Plan, Human Resource Management Manual and Operational Procedures Manual of existing government policies relating to access, equity and the needs of women from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- commencement of conferences for Cross Cultural Liaison Officers to enhance networking, communication, problem solving and training;

- introduction of Police Liaison Officers on a regional needs basis;
- adoption of a police recruitment program and targeted advertising aimed at people from different ethnic community groups;
- appointment of a Student Support Officer at the Queensland Police Academy;
- introduction of bridging courses at selected Technical and Further Education Colleges to assist non-English speaking background people in meeting the police entry standards;
- inclusion of representation from ethnic communities on Recruit Selection Panels;
- design and integration of an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan into management and operational functions;
- production of a Queensland Police Service Non-Discriminatory Language Guide after broad community consultation;
- production and translation into thirteen languages of nineteen information sheets titled, "You, the Law and Society" relating to various issues on the law and living in Australia;
- a revised version of this information package was launched in consultation with the Australian Red Cross on 13 October 1998, and printed in English, Arabic, Farsi and languages from the former Yugoslavia. Accompanying videos in English, Arabic, Farsi and Bosnian have also been produced. This information package has been specifically designed to meet the needs of persons settling in Queensland and of new arrivals with refugee and humanitarian status;
- the Queensland Police Service's Language Services Strategy was launched in 1997 to provide professional, accessible and equitable services in response to the communication requirements of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Deaf and those with hearing impairments;
- incorporation of cross cultural issues into pre-service and in-service training programs at the Queensland Police Academy and the Competency Acquisition Program available to police by distance education;
- consultation with communities when developing policies and procedures which impact on them.

The Future

The **goal** of this Strategic Directions document is to ensure the provision of professional and equitable policing services to ethnic communities in Queensland through advice, support and co-ordination.

To achieve this, **five major strategies** have been identified. These are:

- 1. Ensure that Queensland Police Service policy and program development is responsive to the needs of ethnic communities.**

2. **Provide appropriate education for police to increase their knowledge and interpersonal skills in policing a multicultural society.**
3. **Provide ongoing specialist support for the provision of equitable service delivery to ethnic communities throughout Queensland.**
4. **Provide open, effective and visible communication with all ethnic communities and organisations.**
5. **Implement culturally sensitive human resource management and equal employment opportunity principles and practices.**

Key Actions

A number of **key actions** have been identified to support the implementation of the five strategies.

1. **Ensure that Queensland Police Service policy and program development is responsive to the needs of ethnic communities:**
 - ensure open communication within the Queensland Police Service;
 - establish and maintain close co-operation with other police jurisdictions, government and non-government organisations throughout Australia and all regions in the Service, to exchange ideas on innovative approaches to policing a multicultural society;
 - actively liaise with ethnic communities to address strategic needs;
 - co-ordinate and support the role of the Police Ethnic Advisory Group and provide state-wide access by establishing and resourcing regular Community Consultative Groups in all regions;
 - develop consultation through forums, seminars and workshops at State, regional and local levels;
 - assess the effectiveness of initiatives by proactive monitoring and client surveys.
2. **Provide appropriate education for police to increase their knowledge and interpersonal skills in policing a multicultural society:**
 - develop cross cultural communication and mediation skills, understanding of difference, awareness of special needs including gender issues, and cultural protocols;
 - actively promote the integration of cross cultural education and training at all levels of the Queensland Police Service;
 - ensure that training curricula, procedural manuals and the complaints mechanisms are culturally sensitive, appropriate and free from racial or religious prejudice;
 - encourage the participation of ethnic community members with an intimate knowledge of their community and culture in police programs to

provide members with an understanding of the cultural differences which impact on policing;

- actively promote the use of appropriate descriptors in compliance with the Non-Discriminatory Language Guide and Media Guide for Queensland Police Service Employees;
- provide training on working effectively with interpreters and translators.

3. Provide ongoing specialist support for the provision of equitable service delivery to ethnic communities throughout Queensland:

- maintain and develop the role and relevance of the Cultural Advisory Unit and co-ordinate the state-wide network of Cross Cultural Liaison Officers in accordance with Service policies and community needs;
- maintain adequate resources for the effective functioning of the Cultural Advisory Unit and network of Cross Cultural Liaison Officers in accordance with the Strategic Directions;
- contribute to the special needs of people including the aged, youth, women and isolated communities;
- ensure that services such as Police Beat Shopfronts, Adopt-A-Cop, Police Youth Clubs, Neighbourhood Watch, Safety House, Property Identification/Engraving and other programs are appropriate and accessible to non-English speaking background people;
- facilitate the efficient functioning of the investigative and complaints mechanisms by provision of sensitive and culturally appropriate support, guidance, and timely feedback, to victims and witnesses;
- co-ordinate, plan and monitor policy and program development of the Police Liaison Officer Scheme to provide a consistent, appropriate, and professional service throughout Queensland;
- actively participate in issues relating to domestic violence and violence within the home, racist violence/vilification and other issues relevant to migrant settlement in Queensland;
- assist and promote the effectiveness of working with interpreters and translators;
- assess service delivery to ethnic communities.

4. Provide open, effective and visible communication with all ethnic communities and organisations:

- disseminate plain English information in an unambiguous and culturally appropriate way;
- provide information by working with appropriate interpreters and translators where English cannot effectively convey the meaning;
- disseminate information utilising existing structures including State Government agencies (e.g. Multicultural Affairs Queensland), key migrant

service agencies (e.g. Migrant Resource Centres and Ethnic Communities Councils), other ethnic community organisations, community meetings, the ethnic media (where available) and community newsletters;

- facilitate the effective provision of information including the role and powers of police, how to report an offence, use of complaints mechanisms, the investigative process, criminal justice system, citizens' rights and obligations, legal interpreters and translators and crime prevention material;
- provide culturally appropriate information to non-English speaking background tourists and recent migrants, particularly those who may have experienced torture and trauma;
- clearly define and actively market the role of the Police Liaison Officer Scheme, Cultural Advisory Unit, Police Ethnic Advisory Group, regional Cross Cultural Liaison Officers and community consultative groups;
- support special collaborative events (social/cultural functions) with ethnic communities.

5. Implement culturally sensitive human resource management and equal employment opportunity principles and practices:

- develop and market the roles and functions of the Cultural Advisory Unit, Cross Cultural Liaison Officers and Police Liaison Officers;
- develop position descriptions for full-time Cross Cultural Liaison Officers;
- instigate succession planning for the Cultural Advisory Unit and Cross Cultural Liaison Officers;
- develop and maintain a comprehensive operational guide for Cross Cultural Liaison Officers;
- provide professional training for Cross Cultural Liaison Officers to enhance specialist skills, increase knowledge, and maintain the relevance and credibility of positions;
- consult with local communities to develop "community profiles" including identification of suitable community/police support people to assist operational police;
- develop appropriate recruitment strategies targeting people from different ethnic communities to increase cultural diversity in accordance with Equal Employment Opportunity and Queensland Ethnic Affairs Program policies and giving recognition to qualifications/skills acquired in other countries;
- facilitate development of appropriate bridging courses and further support mechanisms for non-English speaking background people;
- identify and give recognition to cultural and linguistic competencies of Queensland Police Service members and encourage their further development;
- issue media releases on positive cultural issues and establish guidelines to ensure that information released to the general community is appropriate and sensitive.

