

ethnic affairs in the NSW public sector

During the year 2000, the Ethnic Affairs Commission continued to work, on request, with the over 200 NSW public sector agencies, to assist them in developing strategies and initiatives to respond to the needs and aspirations of the ethnic communities. This activity of the Commission is known as the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement or EAPS program.

In the initial years of the EAPS program, attention was concentrated on advising and assisting agencies in the development of their forward plans for addressing ethnic affairs issues as part of their overall corporate planning. In the last two years, however, the focus has been more on reporting and evaluating the outcomes achieved by agencies, particularly those agencies identified as having a substantial role in programs and service delivery affecting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The EAPS Standards Framework

The reporting and evaluation process followed by the Commission centres upon the EAPS Standards Framework. This framework was developed, in consultation with key agencies in 1998, by the Ethnic Affairs Commission as a tool for benchmarking agency progress in implementing ethnic affairs.

Initially, policy direction for the standards framework was laid down and monitored by the EAPS Council of the Commission, but in the last year the framework has been oversighted and finely tuned by the Ethnic Affairs Commission as a whole.

The framework can be used by agencies to identify:

- , areas for improvement in each of five activity areas – planning and evaluation, program and service delivery, staffing, communication and funded services
- , levels of organisational performance in each of the five activity areas
- , relevant outcomes that can be applied at each level of organisational activity.

A copy of the EAPS Standards Framework is contained at Appendix 2 of this report.

Compliance with Legislation and Policy

All agencies are required to report annually on their Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements (EAPS).

This requirement is contained in the regulations applying to the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) and (Departments) Amendment (Ethnic Affairs) Regulation 1997* which applies to the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) 1984 and Annual Reports (Departments) 1985* Acts. These Acts apply to all agencies which report to Parliament under the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (schedules 2 and 3).

The requirement provides one mechanism by which agencies are publicly accountable for their EAPS programs. Appendix 1 lists agency compliance in meeting this reporting requirement in 2000.

In evaluating and advising agencies on their EAPS, the Ethnic Affairs Commission is also guided by policy directions which are issued from time to time by the government. Examples of such directions are Premier's Memorandum 98-22 regarding the provision of language services to public sector clients, and Premier's Memoranda 95-47, 98-06 and 98-17 regarding public sector advertising in ethnic media.

Evaluating the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000

Under the *White Paper, Building on Our Cultural Diversity: Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000*, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Action Plan is required in 2001.

The Plan has provided the foundation for government activity in ethnic affairs, and is based on delivering outcomes in three key result areas:

- , social justice
- , community harmony
- , economic and cultural opportunities.

In 2001 the new Community Relations Commission will report on the effectiveness of the Ethnic Affairs Action Plan, in terms of the outcomes achieved under the three key result areas, and on the monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The evaluation, and the development of future directions in ethnic affairs will be informed by the requirements of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*, and the deliberations of the Community Relations Forum which will be held in March 2001.