

# **ACT Ministerial Advisory Council for Multiculturalism (MACM)**

**Community Consultation Forum – 2 August 2025**

## **Forum Highlights and Community Feedback**

The ACT Ministerial Advisory Council for Multiculturalism (MACM) held a comprehensive community consultation forum on 2 August 2025 to better understand the lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations of multicultural communities across the ACT.

The forum was attended by 36 participants, including individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, community leaders, youth representatives, international students, and service providers. Discussions revealed ongoing barriers to inclusion, access, and participation—alongside valuable insights and opportunities for strengthening social cohesion and support systems.

**Key themes** identified during the consultation included:

- Transport and accessibility
- The need for affordable and inclusive community spaces
- Systemic barriers to employment and recognition of overseas qualifications
- Challenges faced by multicultural youth and international students
- Gaps in access to information and service delivery
- Issues of racism, cultural sensitivity, and trust in government engagement processes

Participants strongly emphasised the need for more inclusive, transparent, and responsive government-community interactions.

Based on forum discussions, the following opportunities were identified to address key concerns and promote a more equitable and supportive environment for multicultural communities in the ACT:

### **1. Establish Centralised Multicultural Specific Information Centres**

- Develop accessible and affordable multicultural specific community hubs that function as central points for information, referrals, and support services.
- Ensure these hubs include targeted outreach for youth, women, and newly arrived migrants.

- Complement physical hubs with a multilingual, user-friendly online portal offering up-to-date information on government programs, individual rights, and available services.
- Introduce rental discounts for facilities such as the Fitzroy Pavilion at EPIC and community centres in Molonglo Valley to ensure affordability.
- Distribute the Multiculturalism Act in simplified, plain English versions to ensure wider understanding and engagement.

## **2. Improve Recognition of Overseas Qualifications and Employment Pathways**

- Advocate for a nationally consistent, streamlined process to recognise overseas qualifications—particularly in critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and social services.
- Support the development of bridging programs to assist skilled migrants in transitioning into the local workforce.
- Expand targeted employment and skills development initiatives for multicultural youth and international students.
- Address international students’ concerns around high rental costs, racism, and limitations on work rights for dependents.

## **3. Strengthen Community Engagement, Cultural Awareness, and Anti-Discrimination Initiatives**

- Expand mandatory cultural awareness and anti-racism training across schools, public services, aged care, and other frontline sectors, with an emphasis on cultural sensitivity, empathy and mental wellbeing.
- Increase the frequency and depth of community consultations to ensure that diverse voices are genuinely included in policy and decision-making—moving beyond perceptions of “box-ticking” or “lip service.”
- Provide greater support for multicultural events, including:
  - Discounted stall fees for local vendors
  - Free information booths
  - More interactive, hands-on cultural workshops at events like the National Multicultural Festival

- Foster inter-community collaboration and leadership through knowledge-sharing initiatives among community leaders.

## **Conclusion**

The feedback and recommendations gathered through this consultation reflect the pressing need to address systemic barriers, improve service delivery, and foster a sense of belonging for all. By taking meaningful, community-driven action, the ACT can continue to build stronger, more connected, and inclusive communities where every individual is empowered to participate fully in society.

26 September 2025