



**Minister for Local Government; Heritage;
Citizenship and Multicultural Interests**

Your Ref: EH303
Our Ref: 38-07775



Dr J M Woollard MLA
Chairperson
Education and Health Standing Committee
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Dr Woollard

Thank you for your correspondence dated 16 November 2011 requesting a written response on the progress of the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) to recommendations made in the report, *Healthy Child – Healthy State: Improving Western Australia's Child Health Screening Programs*. I note that you have requested as much information as possible on each matter, and the location in the Government's budget where new initiatives, which flowed from the Committee's report, appear.

OMI provided comment on recommendations 6 and 7. Comments were directed at policy and program development within the Department of Health and the then Department of Education and Training. OMI does not have a specific role in progressing the recommendations. OMI has, however, established some initiatives that are relevant to these recommendations and these are detailed in the attached matrix.

Thank you for your invitation to attend a hearing to discuss the Government's responses to the Committee report. The date of Wednesday, 16 March 2011 is preferred. Ms Jennifer Mathews, Director General, Department of Local Government and Ms Maria Osman, Executive Director, Office of Multicultural Interests will also attend. Please note, however, that as Parliament will be sitting, I may be required to submit my apologies.

Yours sincerely

G M (John) Castrilli MLA

**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT; HERITAGE;
CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**

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Healthy Child – Healthy State: Improving Western Australia's Child Health Screening Programs

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ISSUE	OMI COMMENT	OMI ACTIONS
<p>Recommendation 6: Additional community migrant health nurses and greater access to child development and language services should be provided in those Western Australian communities with high concentrations of refugees and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) members. Children who are suspected of having language difficulties in Year 1 should be able to access Department of Health speech and language services. Government services should also be available to address the needs of CaLD children with language difficulties detected beyond Year 1.</p>	<p>Department of Health</p>	<p>Child health screening programs need to be adapted to community needs. Increased resources and improved partnerships are required to allow better access to services.</p>	<p>It is recommended that policy and program development by the Department of Health (DoH) and Department of Education and Training (DET) in response to the recommendations take into consideration the needs of CaLD communities, particularly humanitarian entrants with low English language and literacy levels and include these groups in consultation and service delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Commonwealth funded settlement service providers of the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy and Settlement Grants Program to successfully transfer clients from Commonwealth managed programs to State services. • Additional community migrant health nurses with bi-lingual skills and/or who are from CaLD backgrounds, specifically new and emerging communities. • Coordinate monitoring and assessment of screening results for CaLD families, as a group. • Referral to additional community based literacy and language support programs. • Greater use of interpreters, translated materials and community leaders to identify needs. • Cultural competence training of community migrant health nurses and staff working with CaLD communities. • Linking the DET and DoH programs for CaLD communities. 	<p>Inter-agency Settlement Group In 2009, OMI established an Inter-agency Settlement Group (ISG) to improve co-ordination between the Commonwealth and the State in the provision of settlement services to humanitarian entrants. The ISG is chaired by the Director General of the Department of Local Government, Ms Jennifer Mathews. Agencies currently represented on the ISG include the State Departments of Health; Housing; Education; Training and Workforce Development; and Child Protection and the Federal Departments of Immigration and Citizenship; Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Health and Ageing; and Centrelink.</p> <p>Language Services Publications OMI developed two brochures and a WA Interpreter Card for the community and State Government agencies, providing key information about the <i>Language Services Policy 2008</i>. The on-line version of the community brochure was translated into ten languages (Arabic, Karen, Chinese, Dari, Dinka, Italian, Polish, Serbian, Swahili and Vietnamese.)</p> <p>Cultural Competency Training OMI is developing a cultural competency training package for use by public sector agencies.</p> <p>Integrated Services Centres (ISCs) In March 2007, in response to the complex needs of African humanitarian entrants and based on recommendations made in 2005 by an Across-Government Working Party on Settlement Issues for African Humanitarian</p>

				<p>Entrants, OMI initiated an integrated model of service delivery in partnership with the Departments of Health and Education. The ISCs are a one stop shop addressing the most critical needs of humanitarian entrants. They are located at Parkwood and Koondoola Primary Schools and provide services to students who attend the schools' Intensive English Centres (IECs) and to their parents and siblings.</p> <p>The target group for the project is humanitarian entrants, including adults, young people and children who are beyond the six-month eligibility period for access to the Commonwealth Government's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).</p> <p>Services are provided by a mix of government and non-government agencies and include mental health specialists, Multicultural Community Liaison Workers and Community Health Nurses. Services to humanitarian entrant children are enhanced through the integrated model, access to school psychologists and the ability to address the needs of children within the context of the family group. The Department of Health's Infant Child Adolescent and Youth Mental Health Service (ICAYMHS) took carriage of the mental health program for both ISCs from October 2009.</p> <p>Administrative responsibility for the ISCs was transferred from OMI to the Department of Health in March 2010.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ISSUE	OMI COMMENT	OMI ACTIONS
<p>Recommendation 7: That the Government increase the funding for the torture and trauma counselling services for children and young people provided by the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS).</p>		<p>Lack of services to provide torture and trauma counselling for children aged 5-12 years.</p>	<p>It is recommended that policy and program development by DoH and DET in response to the recommendations take into consideration the needs of CALD communities, particularly humanitarian entrants with low English language and literacy levels and include these groups in consultation and service delivery.</p> <p>At present there are four major multicultural mental health services within the community sector funded by DoH. These are: Association of Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors, Fremantle Multicultural Centre, Ishar Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and Transcultural Mental Health Service. The recommendation is for funding to be increased to one organisation, however a greater portion of community members would benefit if any funding increases were distributed across all four organisations.</p>	<p>OMI is not responsible for the funding of torture and trauma counselling services.</p> <p>In its submission to the WA Mental Health Commission's <i>WA Mental Health Towards 2020: Consultation Paper</i> in September 2010, OMI recommended establishment of a dedicated service for CALD children and young people, especially those who have experienced torture and trauma.</p> <p>In its submission to the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Inquiry into the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in October 2010, OMI highlighted the impact of war, torture and trauma on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people from refugee backgrounds. OMI suggested that the Commissioner recommends that the Mental Health Commission specifically reviews the adequacy of mental health services for children, adolescents and youth from CALD backgrounds (especially those who have experienced torture and trauma), with a view to establishing a dedicated mental health service for children.</p> <p>The Inter-agency Settlement Group has identified that a dedicated children specific psychology service represents a current gap in service delivery. It was noted at the meeting of 30 March 2010 that psychological services for refugee children in WA need further review.</p>