



Anti-Discrimination NSW Submission to the Inquiry into Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities

1. Introduction

1.1 Anti-Discrimination NSW (**ADNSW**) thanks the NSW Parliament for the opportunity to provide a submission into its inquiry into improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse (**CaLD**) communities.

2. About ADNSW

2.1 ADNSW administers the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (**ADA**) which makes it unlawful to discriminate in specified areas of public life against a person on grounds which include their sex, race, age, disability, homosexuality, marital or domestic status, transgender status and carer's responsibilities. ADNSW strives to eliminate discrimination in NSW by responding to enquiries, conducting conciliation, and undertaking community engagement.

2.2 ADNSW's Community Engagement team raises awareness about discrimination and its impacts in NSW and engages with the diverse multicultural communities across NSW. ADNSW has dedicated staff who educate and empower communities to exercise their rights under the ADA if they experience race discrimination. ADNSW also conducts consultations with community organisations to understand the major themes affecting multicultural communities in NSW.

3. NSW government communication during the COVID-19 pandemic

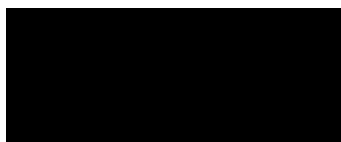
3.3 During the NSW government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and as part of ADNSW's ongoing program of community engagement, ADNSW received anecdotal reports from multicultural communities which relate to Part C of the government's inquiry - *addressing racism and discrimination related to crisis communications*.

3.4 ADNSW regularly consults with the Southwest Sydney Leaders Forum, the Refugee Communities in Cultural Transition Forum, the Fairfield and Blacktown Multicultural Interagency, the Fairfield Emerging Communities Action Partnership, the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan (**COMPLAN**) Committee, the NSW Anti-Racism working group and the NSW Local Government Multicultural Network (**LGMN**). Through this engagement ADNSW received the following reports:

- 3.4.1 Some multicultural communities reported that the NSW government imposed harsher stay-at-home restrictions in Southwest and Western Sydney (compared with other parts of Sydney), and this was perceived as discriminatory and racist.
- 3.4.2 Community leaders raised that the NSW police had a heavy presence in the Southwest and Western Sydney areas under stay-at-home orders. Some communities felt targeted and criminalised by the NSW government's response, rather than a relationship built on trust and support. This exacerbated the fear held in refugee and multicultural communities and led to mental health concerns.
- 3.4.3 Some COVID-19 government resources that were translated into community languages were difficult to understand, did not suit the intended audience and did not reach some communities. The LGMN's CALD COVID Summit report – July 2020¹ provides an overview of the barriers experienced by CaLD communities receiving information and best practice in multicultural health communications.

ADNSW thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make this submission and hopes that these reports are helpful in understanding community reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Kind regards,



Helen McKenzie
President
Anti-Discrimination NSW

¹ [CALD COVID Summit Report](#), July 2020, accessed 16 May 2022.