

Appendix 1: Complete Responses of the Political Parties

Question 1

Are you committed to the principles of multiculturalism?

NSW GREENS: YES

NSW COALITION: YES

Multiculturalism across Australia is unique – and New South Wales provides a national example of the ‘great multicultural success story’.

The challenge is to reconcile diversity with unity in NSW. We must accept, celebrate and maintain our differences whilst promoting social cohesion. Australian citizenship is the basis on which to build a strong and unified society – where individuals learn from each other and together help forge a more inclusive and harmonious society.

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will work with the Community Relations Commission and the Anti-Discrimination Board to require that NSW departments and agencies are properly resourced to publically and substantively be accountable for compliance with the principles of multiculturalism as set out in the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals recognise that service delivery at a State level plays a central role in developing better relations, tolerance, cultural understanding and harmony between all the different cultures that make up the NSW community.

NSW LABOR: YES

The NSW Government is committed to supporting cultural diversity and the principles of multiculturalism which we have enshrined in law. Multiculturalism is one of our State’s greatest strengths – culturally, socially and economically.

That is why we recently reiterated our commitment to cultural diversity by strengthening the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* in 2010.

The Government has also strengthened the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*, enabling the Anti-Discrimination Board to investigate matters relating to discrimination or racial vilification referred by the Community Relations Commission and increasing the maximum amount of compensation available under the Act to \$100,000.

Question 2

Will you establish mechanisms that create cultural awareness and cultural competency through:

- a) the teaching of cultural awareness being compulsory throughout all years of Primary School, including exposure to cultural diversity with NSW; and
- b) The funding of accredited, online cultural competence training managed in partnership between a Registered Training Organisation and ECCNSW, such that cultural competency is given similar employer status as OH&S?

NSW GREENS: A) YES B) YES

**NSW COALITION: A) YES
B) NO CLEAR ANSWER**

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Acknowledge the value and importance of promoting and supporting multiculturalism in our schools. NSW is home to Australia's most culturally diverse community, with more than 1.3 million residents speaking a language other than English in their home, and more than one quarter of our population born overseas.

In the NSW Liberals & Nationals social policy framework *Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer*, we committed to the goal of delivering equity and excellence in education by ensuring all students receive a world-class education, regardless of where they were born or their socio-economic background. Further to this, we believe that supporting cultural awareness is absolutely essential to delivering a world-class education for our children.

In relation to funding accredited, online cultural competence training managed in partnership between a Registered Training Organisation and ECCNSW, to ensure that cultural competency is given a similar employer status as OH&S, a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will seek to improve and develop additional strategies to improving cross cultural capabilities for all public sector employees.

**NSW LABOR: A) YES
B) NO CLEAR ANSWER**

The NSW curriculum includes modules on cultural awareness for primary school children. The teaching of these modules is supported by the Education Department's

multicultural affairs consultants, who also promote anti-racism campaigns within the public school system.

TAFE NSW runs cultural competency courses and will work with ECCNSW to develop a further course if there is demand.

Question 3

Will you ensure that the teaching of languages at school and tertiary levels is fully resourced, bilingual workers are recognised as a valuable and useful resource, and employees are funded to undertake additional language studies?

NSW GREENS: YES

NSW COALITION: POSITIVE BUT NO SPECIFIC COMMITMENT

The NSW Liberals & National acknowledge that teaching languages is unique and requires unique staffing arrangements and resource provisions. We recognise that more needs to be done to foster our State's culturally and linguistically diverse background.

We believe that if we are to maximise the great potential of our children, we must act to ensure that our resources are going to the right places. Many of the advantages and abilities of our education system have not yet been fully exploited, mainly due to financial and resource limitations. It has taken a toll on our reputation, our quality of life and our opportunities.

NSW LABOR: YES

NSW Labor supports the inclusion of languages in the national curriculum. We will devote resources to ensure that once finalised, the languages curriculum can be implemented in full, including in primary schools. The NSW Government will continue to invest in the teaching of languages, including the ongoing professional development of language teachers. Professional development opportunities currently on offer include the possibility of subsidized in-country study for language teachers, funded under the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program.

The NSW Government has increased funding for Community Language Schools by \$8.1 million – the most generous package in Australia. Labor has doubled funding per student from \$60 to \$120, created a \$500,000 grants program for textbooks and materials and provided fully-subsidized training places for teachers in Community Language Schools to enhance their skills.

The funding of tertiary studies is the domain of the Federal Government. However, we are working with universities to enhance the supply of qualified language teachers for NSW public schools.

Question 4

Will you see that the ethnic tags of the NSW Police organised crime squads are removed: namely the Middle Eastern Organised Crime Squad and Asian Crime Squad, so that the terms ‘Middle Eastern’ and ‘Asian’ are no longer equated with the other crime squad names: ‘Gangs’ and ‘Drugs’?

NSW GREENS: YES

NSW COALITION: NO

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Recognise the importance of ensuring public policy does not lead to prejudice towards sectors of our community.

We appreciate the ECCNSW raising concerns about the naming of these two specialist policing squads.

The NSW Police Force, along with all government departments, has the autonomy to make operational decisions, including the naming of Squads, operations and task forces.

NSW LABOR: NO

The Asian and Middle Eastern Crime Squads were established to investigate major and organised crime which impacts on members of the Asian and Middle Eastern communities in New South Wales.

Sydney has a significant Asian and Middle Eastern population, and there is nothing to suggest that these communities are over-represented in relation to any one type of crime. However, members of these communities are more likely to be victimised by members of their own community – which is why the roles of the Middle Eastern and Asian Crime Squads remain important.

Both Squads provide invaluable support to individual Local Area Commands in their efforts to break down barriers and solve crimes which impact on members of the various Asian and Middle Eastern communities in NSW.

Members of the Asian and Middle Eastern Crime Squad bring cultural expertise and language skills which are invaluable to other commands. They also set up hotlines for Asian communities to report crime, and advertise in Asian community newspapers to explain the role of the squad and break down barriers.

Question 5

Will you provide equity in access and information by:

- (a) ensuring that fee-free interpreters are provided to improve access to health, community and legal services for people from multicultural communities; and
- (b) ensuring all government agencies make basic information about the agency available in a range of community languages (role of the agency, contact details, interpreters) across the established and newly arrived communities including audio visual media?

NSW GREENS: YES

**NSW COALITION: A) YES
B) NO CLEAR ANSWER**

The NSW Liberals & Nationals support equity in access and information. We support the current arrangements for fee-free interpreters in order for individuals to access services they require. It is important to allow multicultural communities easy and equal access and information to all government services and processes.

In relation to ensuring all government agencies make basic information about the agency available in a range of community languages, a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will be diligent in that all major decisions of government and Parliament are communicated across multicultural media, including in audio visual media.

**NSW LABOR: A) YES
B) NO CLEAR ANSWER**

The NSW Government, through the Community Relations Commission, operates a professional interpreting and translation service of international quality. It demonstrates the NSW Government's State Plan commitment to strong, inclusive communities where every citizen has the opportunity to realise their potential and participate in the life of this State.

The interpreting service is free for any person who requests it when dealing with a NSW government agency, police or the courts. The Commission also provides free interpreters to clients of Community Legal Centres for matters relating to NSW State Government activities. And we are always looking for new ways to make people aware of this important service we provide.

Question 6

Will you release sufficient Crown Land for cemeteries to ensure culturally appropriate burial practices can continue?

NSW GREENS: UNABLE TO ANSWER

NSW COALITION: YES

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are conscious of the need to ensure there is sufficient Crown Land for cemeteries in NSW – as we understand the need and importance of culturally appropriate burial practices.

Please rest assured a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will make certain these practices can and will continue.

NSW LABOR: YES

The Government is committed to ensuring burial options remain accessible and affordable.

We're aware of the ongoing need for new burial space for members of various religious communities, and are constantly working with those communities to ensure that sufficient burial space is available.

For example, in 2010 the Government announced an additional 800 burial spaces for the Muslim community.

Question 7

Will you fund programs and projects, such as ECCNSW's former project 'Operation Bluetongue', to inform newly arrived immigrants about Australian native plants and animals, unique natural assets and dangers such as wilderness and surf, and environmental sustainability such as water and energy use?

NSW GREENS: YES

NSW COALITION: YES

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will continue to fund programs and projects to inform and support newly arrived immigrants to NSW in order for them to settle into the Australian environment, as well as to find employment and educational pathways.

NSW LABOR: YES

The Labor Government supports programs coordinated by the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW through funding from a number of Government agencies including Ageing, Disability & Home Care and Environment, Climate Change and Water. Over \$1.13 million in funding has been provided in recent years for the Ethnic Communities Sustainable Living Project; the Waterless Wok Stoves in Asian Restaurants Project; Operation Bluetongue; and for the employment of an Aged Care & Disabilities Officer. We're always looking at new programs, such as those proposed by the Ethnic Communities Council, to assist newly arrived immigrants.

Question 8

Many migrants operate small businesses and are subject to violent robberies. However as victims and witnesses they continue to receive little or no follow up and protection from the investigating Police, leading to lack of confidence in the Australian system of justice.

Will you commit the NSW Police Force to providing a guaranteed level of customer service to victims and witnesses of violent crime?

NSW GREENS: YES

NSW COALITION: NO CLEAR ANSWER

The NSW Liberals & Nationals understand that small business is the backbone of the NSW economy. We also understand that to make NSW number one again, small business need to have the confidence to invest, grow and employ more people.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals have launched the following positive and practical action plan:

- 1) Giving small business a voice by establishing a Small Business Commissioner with a mandate to advocate for small business in NSW.
- 2) Cutting red tape with the introduction of a 'One On, Two Off' rule for new regulations and a commitment to a 20 per cent reduction in red tape within our first term;
- 3) Reforming business licensing with improved online access to licence applications and renewals;
- 4) Reducing legislative risk by subjecting all new regulations to a risk analysis that specifically outlines their impact, including cost, on small business;
- 5) Regular consultation between small business and government; and ensuring NSW Government agencies pay bills within 30 days.

Based on the highly successful Victorian model, our Small Business Commissioner will have real power, advocate on behalf of small and medium enterprises and help resolve disputes between SMEs and government agencies.

The Small Business Commissioner will also work with and between NSW departments and agencies, such as the NSW Police Force, to ensure issues affecting small business, such as violent crime and robberies, are resolved and business confidence is maintained.

NSW LABOR: YES

We are working to ensure the NSW Police Force provides the community with responsive and meaningful customer service. It is what the entire community deserves and expects.

A customer service charter has been developed to explain, in clear and simple terms, the standard of service members of the community can expect in their dealings with the NSW Police Force.

This service includes:

- being accessible
- being professional and helpful
- taking appropriate action to resolve issues or enquiries and
- keeping people informed.

Customer Service training was also delivered to support all NSW Police Force employees in service delivery over the 2009/2010 training year.

Following the introduction of the charter and the training, customer service related complaints fell by more than 18% in the 12 months to August 2010.

But there is more to do and we will continue to work with the police to ensure the community receives the prompt response they deserve.

Question 9

Will you actively promote the overwhelming benefits that multiculturalism has brought to the cultural, social and economic life of NSW, including promoting the rich culture, colour, entertainment and vibrant nature within local communities, especially in multicultural retail hubs, acknowledging that in doing so NSW tourism is enhanced, local business, employment and the State economy are stimulated and the wider community engagement with multiculturalism is encouraged?

NSW GREENS: YES

NSW COALITION: YES

The NSW Liberals & Nationals share the ECCNSW views that multiculturalism has brought benefits of cultural, social and economic life of NSW, including promoting the rich culture, colour, entertainment and vibrant nature within local communities, especially in multicultural retail hubs.

This support includes promoting a healthy multilingual economy by encouraging businesses to use our multicultural workforce to capture new markets, build new relationships and give businesses an international outlook; highlight the benefits and accessibility of higher education learning opportunities; and expanding the range of groups receiving grants, especially in special grants for youth programs, to promote cultural and linguistic diversity for greater engagement and harmony in our local communities.

NSW LABOR: YES

We're always taking steps to promote the benefits of multiculturalism, and will always look at new ways to strengthen the wider community engagement with multiculturalism. Some of the initiatives that we've implemented in recent years to promote multiculturalism include:

- strengthening the principles of multiculturalism that we enshrined in law;
- the Community Development Grants Program;
- the endorsement of the NSW State Migration Plan;
- funding for community groups under the Community Building Partnership;
- the Multicultural Policies and Services Program; and
- the National Multicultural Marketing Awards.