Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights

Equality without exception

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights on the recommendations of the Victorian Multicultural Review

18 September, 2025

The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR) acknowledges the findings of the Victorian Multicultural Review. We are encouraged by the initial response from the Victorian Government, and stress that continued and sustained efforts are necessary to support multicultural communities in Victoria. We are, however, concerned about the Social Cohesion Commitment and call on the Victorian Government to reconsider its introduction.

We commend the Victorian Government on the establishment of Multicultural Victoria and on its whole of government approach to implementing a multicultural strategy and addressing the remaining recommendations of the review. We urge the Victorian Government to increase investment in Victoria's anti-racism strategy and in multicultural organisations, beyond capital and infrastructure, so that community-led supports and services can be strengthened. Additionally, it is critical that counsel and contributions are sought from a diverse cross-section of women within our multicultural communities in the design and implementation of these strategies.

Multicultural community needs must be considered across all government portfolios and policy areas to achieve inclusion and equity in services, particularly for women and young people. It is the Government's responsibility to ensure communities can access necessary services, and that these services are safe, supportive, and respectful of all individuals.

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Of significant concern is the Victorian Government's intention to introduce and pilot a Social Cohesion Commitment tied to multicultural grants and broader funding agreements. We reject the notion that multicultural communities must uphold social cohesion, when it is instead our multicultural communities that are often the targets of divisive and discriminatory rhetoric.

Language such as "Social Cohesion" makes assumptions about one form of acceptable civic engagement and denies multiculturalism itself by favouring a dominant cultural perspective under the guise of inclusivity.

As leaders of a multicultural state, the Victorian Government, not multicultural services, must lead to uphold values of inclusion, access, and equity to ensure that all people are valued, welcomed, and have the opportunity to thrive.

We are also concerned about the potential for the Social Cohesion Commitment to be used to silence voices critical of the Government or influential lobby groups, and as a tool to erase voices of resistance, restrict protest and undermine accountability.

We therefore strongly urge the Victorian Government to reconsider the introduction of a Social Cohesion Commitment.

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