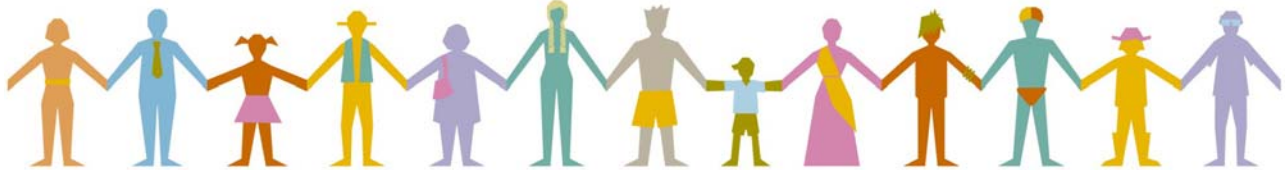




Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Citizenship**



Diverse Australia Program

Guidelines for Emerging Issues Funding

For further information on the Emerging Issues Funding program:

Multicultural Affairs Branch
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
PO Box 25
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Website: www.harmony.gov.au

Email: diverseaustraliagrants@immi.gov.au

Free call: 1800 782 002



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1. DIVERSE AUSTRALIA PROGRAM

1.1 GUIDELINE OBJECTIVES

These Guidelines detail the Diverse Australia Program objectives, criteria and project management requirements applicable to Emerging Issues Funding and the process for developing funding proposals.

1.2 DIVERSE AUSTRALIA PROGRAM

The Australian Government believes that communities are in the best position to recognise and address issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance. The Diverse Australia Program is designed to provide the additional resources often needed by not-for-profit community organisations to develop their own projects and find their own ways of helping all Australians to build stronger community relations through the promotion of respect, fairness and a sense of belonging for everyone.

The Government believes that strong social cohesion is best developed by projects that bring all Australians together and in particular create connections across the community.

The Diverse Australia Program consists of:

- Community Grants annual funding round
- Emerging Issues Funding
- a community engagement strategy for the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme, and
- a public information strategy, which includes the national celebration of Harmony Day on 21 March.

The National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security annual funding round is also administered through the Diverse Australia Program.

For more information on the Diverse Australia Program refer to www.harmony.gov.au

1.3 DIVERSE AUSTRALIA PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The central strategy of the Diverse Australia Program is to respond to issues of racism and intolerance and promote opportunities for people to participate in Australian life.

The Diverse Australia Program's key objectives are to combine public awareness with practical activities to promote:

- the importance of all Australians respecting one another regardless of cultural, racial or religious difference
- the fair treatment of all Australians, encouraging people to recognise that our interactions should be accepting of and responsive to people's backgrounds, circumstances, needs and preferences

- opportunities for people to participate in Australian society and to understand the rights and responsibilities that we share as part of that society
- a sense of belonging for everyone by helping communities work towards a peaceful, progressive and prosperous future
- increased community understanding and acceptance of diversity, and
- increased understanding across the broader community of Australia's changing demographics.

1.4 EMERGING ISSUES FUNDING

The Diverse Australia Program in the Department of Immigration and Citizenship is responsible for Emerging Issues Funding.

Emerging Issues Funding addresses significant community relations issues by funding regional and national projects involving community based activities. These activities positively influence attitudes towards racial, cultural and religious difference and strengthen social cohesion, community harmony and cross cultural understanding.

Emerging Issues Funding offers flexibility in promoting social cohesion through projects that:

- help people take advantage of the opportunities offered by living in Australia - particularly in the areas of education, employment and social engagement - so they develop a sense of belonging and commitment to the nation's future
- address barriers to social inclusion experienced by sectors of the community often difficult to reach
- facilitate interaction and engagement across the broad Australian community with a focus on those locations confronting significant demographic change

The Department monitors community relations through several mechanisms, including its Australia wide network of Community Liaison Officers, research, media reports and the Community Grants and National Action Plan annual funding rounds. Research is also used to identify priority geographic locations in which community harmony issues are prevalent, and to monitor the social impact of projects funded under the Diverse Australia Program.

Some \$1.2 million is allocated annually for Emerging Issues Funding.

Amounts of up to \$200 000 are provided for individual projects which are normally completed within two years.

1.5 EMERGING ISSUES FUNDING PRIORITIES

The people and groups considered a priority in 2009-10 include:

- young people (10 to 25 years), including Indigenous youth, Muslim youth and international students
- new and emerging communities, including the Sudanese, Somali, Karen, Chaldean, Assyrian, Afghani and Iranian communities
- vulnerable and isolated individuals and groups, particularly those from migrant groups at risk of being marginalised and disengaged through lack of access to education and employment pathways, and
- the broad Australian community.

The project priorities for 2009-10 include:

- activities to reduce isolation and marginalisation, including pathways that lead to school retention and employment
- mainstream cultural, sporting and artistic activities targeting young people
- projects that support and encourage interaction in areas confronting demographic change and composition due to population increase and settlement
- projects that promote acceptance of diversity and opportunities for interaction across the Australian community

Organisations considering project proposals that impact on a priority group, but are outside the current project priorities, should contact the Diverse Australia Program to discuss their proposal.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE EMERGING ISSUES FUNDING PROCESS

Generally, a five tiered approach is taken to funding Emerging Issues projects:

1. an emerging issue, or the potential for an emerging issue is identified (see 3.1 for how projects can be initiated)
2. the applicant provides an initial Expression of Interest outlining the issue and their proposed response
3. if the Expression of Interest addresses a significant emerging issue in a priority location and is consistent with these guidelines, the Department assists the applicant in the development of a more detailed project proposal. During this stage the Department may assist in identifying possible stakeholders or partners such as government agencies, community organisations and service providers
4. a formal assessment of the project proposal is conducted, and

5. the Department makes a recommendation to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services on the project proposal and its funding.

The Department acknowledges receipt of an initial Expression of Interest within five working days. The applicant will be given regular updates on the status of their Expression of Interest.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR EMERGING ISSUES FUNDING

2.1 MEETING THE CRITERIA

Funding applications will be assessed against the following criteria and the organisation's ability to comply with the project management requirements set out in the Department's standard Funding Agreement (refer section 4.2).

2.2 ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

Emerging Issues Funding usually will be allocated to incorporated, not-for-profit organisations or local government authorities. For the purposes of the Diverse Australia Program, a not-for-profit organisation is an organisation which is not operated for profit or for the individual gain of its members or promoters. Incorporated organisations must be incorporated under the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation in the legislative jurisdiction in which the organisation has been established.

Not-for-profit organisations may apply for funding in partnership with for-profit organisations. However, funding only will be allocated for the activities of the not-for-profit organisation.

Groups such as schools, vocational and tertiary institutions, non-profit foundations, religious organisations, service clubs, sporting bodies, Indigenous groups, ethnic communities and youth organisations and other sections of the general community may also be eligible for funding. These groups may also participate in projects by implementing project activities on behalf of a funded organisation through sub-contracting arrangements.

Where more than one organisation is involved in a project, the Department will usually enter into a contract (by way of a Funding Agreement) with one organisation as the lead agency for the project.

2.3 INELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

Emerging Issues Funding will not be provided to individuals, political organisations, unincorporated organisations (with the exception of government schools) or for-profit organisations. Auspiced organisations are not eligible for funding.

2.4 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS & PRIORITY AREAS

Projects must respond to a significant issue likely to impact on social cohesion and harmony.

Such issues may be in a localised area, region or in a specific sector of the community. Any Expression of Interest that identifies an emerging issue, or potential emerging issue, must have the capacity to deliver tangible outcomes and must be supported by appropriate evidence of the issue or potential issue, for example, media reports and/or formal research.

Projects must only involve activities taking place entirely within Australia and will usually be funded for a period of up to 24 months.

Project proposals must directly address the Diverse Australia Program's objectives set out in section 1.3 and at least one of the priority areas identified in section 1.5.

For selected projects, focus group testing will be organised to assess the impact of Emerging Issues Funding activities on community attitudes. In addition, the Department will continue to monitor reports of community disharmony to help determine if Emerging Issues Funding projects are impacting on particular geographic locations.

2.5 INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects may include some elements of the following activities, but funding will not be allocated for projects that comprise solely of:

- continuation of existing activities or current functions of an organisation
- retrospective or deficit funding for projects already under way or completed
- subsidy of general ongoing administrative costs of an organisation, for example electricity or rent
- capital expenditure, for example on buildings, motor vehicles, computers, office furniture
- projects which are essentially about health, welfare or the provision of settlement-services
- festivals or cultural activities of a single ethnic, religious or racial group
- academic research or teacher development projects
- translation or reprinting of existing materials or publication of manuscripts, and
- travel and other expenses for conferences or short training programs.

3. DEVELOPING AN EMERGING ISSUES FUNDING PROPOSAL

3.1 INITIATING A PROPOSAL

Emerging Issues Funding proposals can be initiated in a number of ways:

- by the Department approaching an organisation or group of organisations
- by an organisation or group of organisations approaching the Department, and

- from proposals received through the Diverse Australia Program's annual funding rounds.

The following information outlines the general process in developing an Emerging Issues Funding project.

3.2 INITIAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Before approaching the Department, an organisation should:

- familiarise itself with the priorities set out in section 1
- satisfy itself that it has the ability to comply with the criteria set out in section 2
- understand the requirements set out in the Department's standard Funding Agreement (refer section 4.2)

An initial written Expression of Interest (no more than 2 pages) is required which sets out:

- the nature and extent of the emerging issue, or potential emerging issue, together with supporting evidence
- a general description of the proposed project, including the funding amount sought, project timeframe and the probable number of community participants
- how the project addresses one or more of the priorities identified by the Department in section 1.5, and
- the support of key community stakeholders and/or strategic partners for the project.

3.3 DEVELOPING PROJECT PROPOSALS

Where an Expression of Interest is seen as having the potential to meet Emerging Issues Funding criteria, the Diverse Australia Program will contact the organisation to discuss the development of a more comprehensive project proposal. If required, the Department will work with the organisation in the development of the project proposal.

3.4 CONTENT OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

The project proposal should include:

- a realistic project approach that will successfully address the identified issue
- an effective strategy to engage key community groups
- clearly identified risks and strategies for managing those risks
- an appropriate evaluation plan of the project's impact on the identified issue
- an outline of major budget items, such as salary, administrative costs, promotional and travel costs, and

- a strategy for sustaining the Diverse Australia Program’s key objectives after the project has been completed.

The budget must be well considered, reasonable and appropriate to achieving the project’s objectives.

‘Value for money’ is the underlying principle that will be applied in the assessment of all project proposals for Emerging Issues Funding.

3.5 PROJECT ASSESSMENT AND FUNDING DECISION

Project proposals will be formally assessed by the Department in line with Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) requirements. If a project proposal is deemed eligible for Emerging Issues Funding through this assessment process, a submission will be prepared by the Department for the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services and the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

While the Department may make recommendations in relation to project proposals, all funding decisions are made by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

4.1 COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Department is required to administer grants funding in compliance with ANAO guidelines.

Organisations must be able to demonstrate sound administrative and financial practices and project management capacity and must be able to comply with the Department’s reporting and financial accountability requirements.

4.2 FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Where an organisation is allocated Emerging Issues Funding for a project, the Diverse Australia Program is required to negotiate and enter into a formal Funding Agreement (contract) with the funded organisation.

Funding Agreements will be based on the project proposal and will set out in detail the requirements associated with the funding and the key milestones and timeframes for completion of project activities.

Funding Agreements contain project management documentation templates, which the organisation must complete as part of the Department’s project management and reporting requirements.

A copy of the Department’s standard Funding Agreement is available for reference at www.harmony.gov.au