

Optus' Cultural & Linguistic Diversity Policy

Background

Optus' Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Policy was developed in consultation with the Diversity Sub-Committee of the Optus Consumer Liaison Forum (CLF).

The Policy originally took the form of a 'Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Plan', developed by a CLF working party and involving input from additional peak consumer groups representing people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Initial consultation with consumer representatives was conducted in July 2001. Representatives from the Optus CLF formed the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Plan Working Group and provided valuable input into the direction and approach of the Plan.

The Working Group then identified the key issues to be addressed by the Plan and the strategies to implement the plan. Consultation with Optus staff, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (now known as the Australian Human Rights Commission) and other organisations was then carried out to ensure these strategies were achievable and consistent with external benchmarks.

The Diversity Plan was formally reviewed 12 months after its implementation, with a comprehensive review scheduled for 2007 at the five year anniversary of the Plan's introduction.

As part of the five year review, Optus re-instated the CLF Diversity Sub Committee to assist with the review. It was identified that a formal 'Plan' was no longer required, and that Optus could achieve the same aims by providing information on its website that details our general approach and commitment to diversity issues, the key activities we have undertaken and any future areas of priority. The website content was then developed with input from the CLF Diversity Sub Committee.

In addition, a register of current items has been developed to capture specific action items that Optus will be addressing, and allow for progress against each item to be traced. This register is an internal document, and is intended to be fluid and provide the flexibility to add and update work items regularly, not just when a formal review of the Diversity Policy occurs.

The themes and items on the register will be determined by consultation between Optus and the CLF Diversity Sub-Committee members.

Optus' Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Policy

Optus is diverse along many dimensions. Optus' customer base encompasses differences in culture, linguistic and national backgrounds. Optus' recognises the importance of reflecting the diversity of our customers and offers a variety of products and services to accommodate this diversity.

Optus also recognises its talented and diverse workforce as a key competitive advantage. We recognise that each employee brings their own unique capabilities, experiences and characteristics to their work and we value this diversity at all levels of the company.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that approximately 22% of the population (4.4 million Australians) were born overseas. Many more people also had a least one parent born overseas. In

2006 census, the figures showed that 3.1 million people spoke a language other than English at home.

The result for telecommunications companies such as Optus is an increasing proportion of customers, potential customers and staff come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In removing communication barriers for people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, benefits for many others are also achieved. Providing written communications in plain and simple English, for example, will assist those for whom English is not their first language, and will also assist those people who may have lower literacy levels. Ensuring that recruitment processes take into account diverse cultural requirements will enable Optus to benefit from the broad range of knowledge and experience that people from diverse cultures bring to the company.

Optus is committed to ensuring equitable access to its products and services by customers and potential customers, and equitable access to employment by prospective and existing staff members regardless of their race, national or ethnic origin, or whether English is their first language.

Optus shares the vision, core purpose and values of the SingTel Group - to be Asia Pacific's best communications group. Our vision is measured by delivering sustainable shareholder value, maximising customer satisfaction and being an employer of choice. Providing for the needs of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds is consistent with Optus' vision and mission.

Optus' Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Policy has been developed having regard to and consistent with our vision and mission as well as corporate policies such as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and anti discrimination laws.

We are committed to the minimisation and where possible, elimination of discrimination. This commitment covers all areas of the company's operators, notably:

- Corporate culture
- Marketing activities
- Employment practices: and
- Interaction with the community.

Our policy has been developed using the following guiding principles:

- In implementing the policy, Optus will focus on achieving accessibility;
- In implementing strategies in accordance with the policy, we will strive to achieve integration of the needs of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds with current Optus employment and business objectives;
- In implementing and reviewing this policy, we will commit to a process of ongoing consultation especially with our Consumer Liaison Forum Members; and
- When updating current practices/products we will adopt a culturally and linguistically inclusive focus.