



# NSW Ombudsman Multicultural Plan

Financial Year 2024 - 2025

Pursuing fairness for  
the people of NSW.

 **Ombudsman**  
New South Wales

**NSW Ombudsman**

Level 24, 580 George Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9286 1000

Toll free (outside Sydney Metro Area): 1800 451 524

**Website:** [ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://ombo.nsw.gov.au)

**Email:** [info@ombo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@ombo.nsw.gov.au)

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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and pay our respects to all Elders past and present, and to the children of today who are the Elders of the future.

Artist: Jasmine Sarin, a proud Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman.

# Contents

- 1. Ombudsman’s message ..... 4
- 2. About the NSW Ombudsman ..... 5
- 3. Our work to date ..... 6
- 4. NSW Ombudsman’s focus on cultural diversity ..... 7
- 5. Our Staff Diversity ..... 10
- 6. 2024-25 Strategic Focus Areas ..... 12
- 7. Multicultural Action Plan ..... 13

# 1. Ombudsman's message



At the NSW Ombudsman's Office, we aim to be an employer whose workforce is diverse, highly engaged, capable, and bound together by shared values, purpose, and culture.

Our workforce is stronger because of its diversity and embracing of difference. Leveraging the contributions of people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives is critical to our success. We pursue fairness for all the people of NSW, and strive to have a workforce that can reflect the breadth and diversity of the people we serve.

In collaboration with our Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Forum we are implementing a range of initiatives to promote greater inclusion and support diversity. We are keen to ensure that people from culturally diverse communities understand our role, can access our services, and have trust and confidence that we will try to help.

The aim of this Multicultural Plan is to demonstrate our commitment and show the actions we are taking to improve our service delivery to culturally diverse communities across NSW and enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our workplace.

## 2. About the NSW Ombudsman

The NSW Ombudsman's office, led by the NSW Ombudsman, is an independent integrity agency that pursues fairness for the people of NSW.

Our vision is that everyone receives the right services and fair treatment from those we oversight. We spotlight where those entrusted with public power and resources fail to fulfil their responsibilities and treat everyone fairly.

Our scope is broad. We cover services for vulnerable families, including the delivery of community services funded by government; local councils; correctional and youth justice centres; education; environment protection and public transport – to name a few.

We work to help resolve problems at an individual level, as well as looking at the bigger picture to promote system improvements in public administration and in the delivery of government funded community services. We are confident in the knowledge that our work will give voice to the individual and bring fairness and balance to how the government delivers to the public it serves.

At the NSW Ombudsman, we are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace culture that embraces, values, and represents the many communities, places, and perspectives of the people we serve.

We are committed to driving inclusive work practices to foster a culture that celebrates diversity and creates a greater sense of belonging for people to be their authentic selves in the workplace.



### 3. Our work to date

NSW Ombudsman is committed to the multicultural principles outlined in s3 of the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*. Guided by previous Multicultural plans which align with these principles, our office has:

- Developed a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Framework that includes talent acquisition, training and development, and all other People & Culture initiatives that focuses on inclusion, e.g. Disability confident recruiter.
- Held information stalls and encouraged staff participation at community events that recognised cultural diversity.
- Ensured that all new staff complete Diversity and Inclusion training within 12 months of commencement of employment.
- Undertaken Community Awareness surveys to determine awareness of the NSW Ombudsman among people whose first language is not English.
- Improved analysis of our complaints data to ensure we better understood demographic variables – so we could focus our efforts to improve awareness with and service delivery to culturally diverse people and communities.
- Progressed upgrades to our website to ensure all people have equity of access, including the provision of NSW Ombudsman *Right to Complain and Complaint Information* factsheets in fifty languages and "How to make a complaint" and "complaint form" in Easy Read format.
- Participated in relevant interagency and community/service provider organisation meetings to build relationships, share information, and gain feedback.
- Supported religious diversity with access to prayer spaces in the building, accommodating dietary requirements at staff events, and communicating options for religious holiday leave.



## 4. NSW Ombudsman’s focus on cultural diversity

NSW is one of the most culturally diverse states in the world. Against that background the NSW Ombudsman’s commitment to “pursue fairness for the people of NSW” requires particular focus on ensuring we understand the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of the people we serve and ensure consistently high levels of awareness across all multicultural groups and thereby equity of access.

While there is no single definition of culturally diverse people and communities, factors used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other agencies to capture data on cultural diversity include country of birth, main language other than English spoken at home and proficiency in English language. Other relevant indicators are ancestry, religious affiliation, year of arrival in Australia, first language spoken and country of birth of parents. We recognise that these variables may impact a person’s ability to understand administrative laws and government processes, access information and services, and resolve issues and complaints.

### The community we serve:

- 3.4% of the NSW population are First Nations people
- 29.3% of the NSW population were born overseas
- 39.4% of the NSW population reported both parents born overseas
- People in NSW have more than 310 ancestries and speak more than 283 languages at home
- The number of people who used a language other than English at home has increased by 0.9%, or nearly 250,000, from 2016 to over 2 million people in 2021
- Of this group, over 361,000 reported that they do not speak English well or at all.<sup>1</sup>

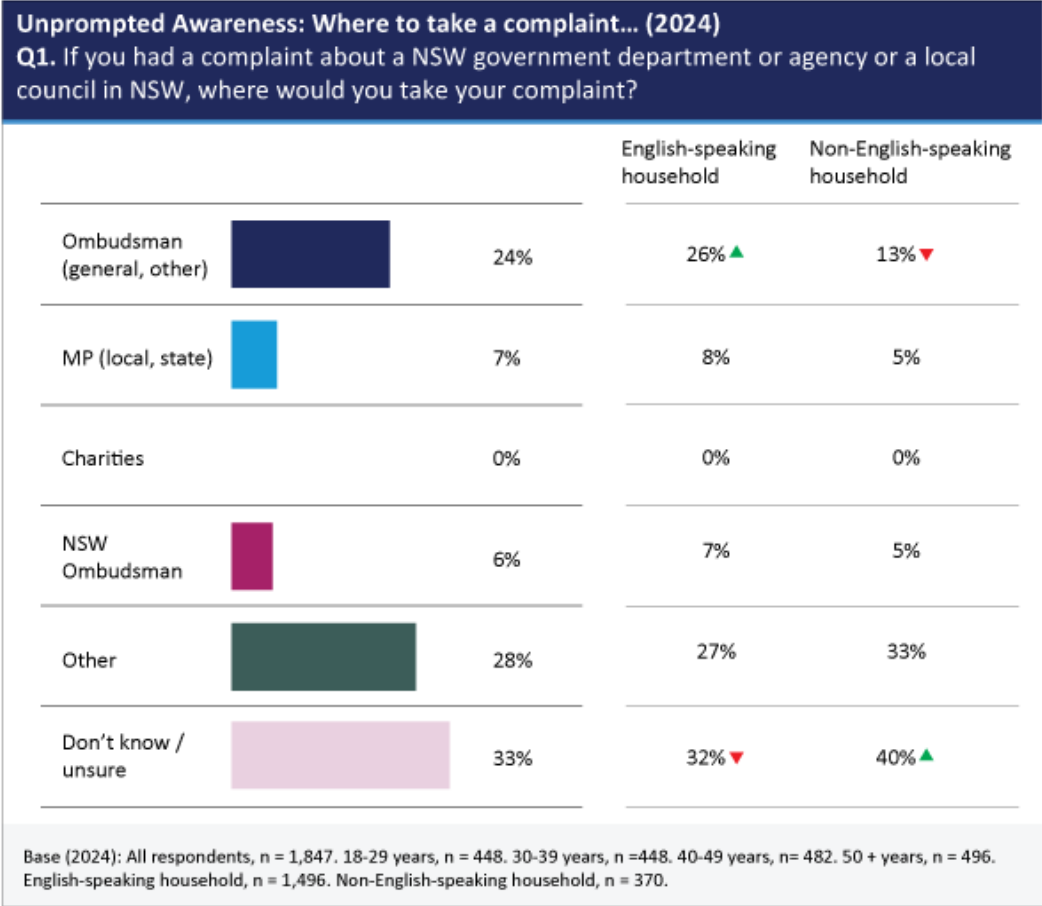


NSW Ombudsman community outreach at Africultures Festival, Sep 2023

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2021 Census data

The 2023 NSW Ombudsman Community Awareness survey indicated that non-English speaking households had lower awareness of ombudsman generally and of the NSW Ombudsman specifically compared to English-speaking households.



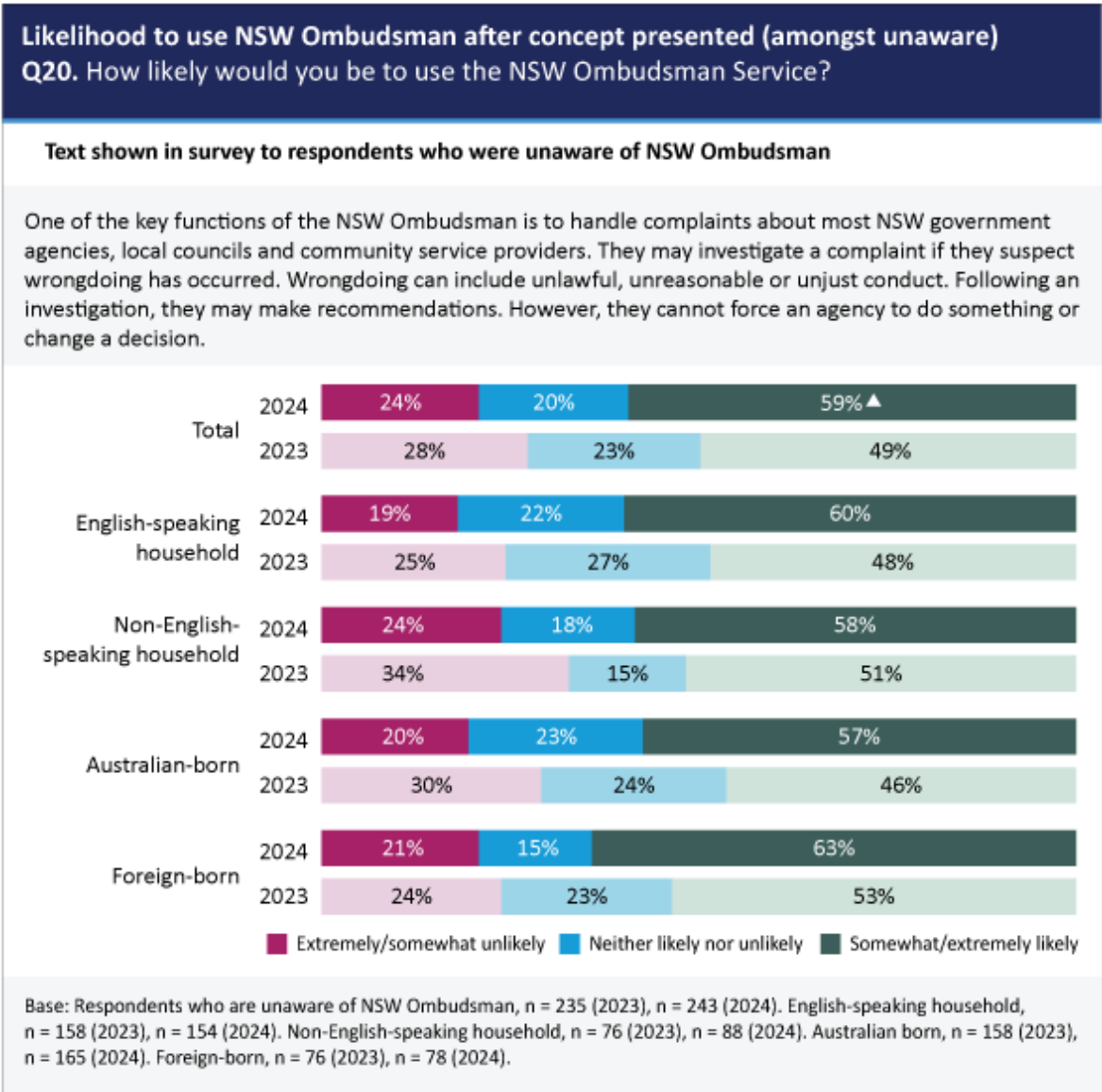
Once provided with an explanation of the Ombudsman’s function a greater percentage of foreign-born residents and non-English speaking households indicated they would use the NSW Ombudsman compared to English-speaking households, reinforcing the importance of raising awareness of the NSW Ombudsman with culturally diverse people and communities.





**Our Community Awareness survey data suggests we focus our efforts on:**






- 1. **Accessible Services** – improving multicultural community awareness of and accessibility to our services; and
- 2. **Effective Engagement and Communication** – ensuring all forms of communication from awareness raising regarding our function to delivery of our services are tailored to meet the needs of multicultural communities.





# 5. Our Staff Diversity

To achieve our strategic outcomes and to enable greater inclusion and belonging, we need to foster an organisational culture where inclusion is embedded in everything we do. Our Diversity and Inclusion Framework supports our commitment to growing an inclusive workplace.

Within the Ombudsman’s Office, our staff diversity (as at June 2024) is represented by:

 <b>Gender</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 76.9% Female</li><li>• 21.8% Male</li><li>• 0.4% Intermediate/unspecified/Intersex</li><li>• 0.8% Prefer not to answer</li></ul>	 <b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</b> 5.3%
 <b>Person with a Disability</b> 9.9%	 <b>Other Language first spoken as a child other than English</b> 26.7%
 <b>Highest Level of Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 48.1% Bachelor’s degree</li><li>• 8.2% Graduate diploma</li><li>• 25.9% Master’s degree</li><li>• 17.7% Others</li></ul>	

 <b>Part time staff</b> 12.8%	
 <b>AGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 21.6% 34 years old and under</li><li>• 61.4% 35-54 years old</li><li>• 17.8% 55 years and over</li> <li>• Average age is 43 years old</li><li>• Youngest is 22 years old</li><li>• Oldest is 71 years old</li></ul>	



To foster inclusive cultural competency, NSW Ombudsman offers a wide range of programs to staff including training workshops, events, and eLearning modules. We celebrate significant Diversity and Inclusion events by hosting guest speakers and conducting awareness-raising sessions. Our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan outlines activities and initiatives aimed at enhancing staff capabilities, including Aboriginal Cultural Awareness, Working with People with Disability, LGBTQIA+ and training focused on engaging with other diverse groups.





The office is currently developing our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This process, including contributions from staff across the office, will culminate in the creation of the office's initial Reflect RAP.

We continue our efforts to support our staff and promote disability inclusion throughout the employee lifecycle. Recently, we achieved the status of Disability Confident Recruiter through the Australian Disability Network.

We have continued our diversity-focused organisational memberships including ACON, Pride in Diversity, Australian Disability Network, and The Inclusion Circle, as well as participating in cross-agency diversity and inclusion events.

# 6. 2024-25 Strategic Focus Areas

The Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) is the mechanism Multicultural NSW has prescribed for agencies to show how they are planning effectively for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to report on progress.

2024-25 Multicultural Strategic Focus Areas	
<b>We have identified the following areas for high-level strategic focus during the 2024-25 financial year:</b>	
 <p><b>Service delivery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to our services by people in multicultural communities.</li> <li>• Raise awareness within multicultural communities of their right to fair treatment and to complain to the NSW Ombudsman where treatment is unfair.</li> <li>• Enhance translation of our online resources and availability of interpreting services.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan more strategically based on a better understanding of multicultural communities – built through engaging with multicultural community representatives to better understand their community’s challenges and the best approach to strengthening awareness of our services.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the multicultural awareness and cultural understanding of our staff – with a view to better service delivery, specifically related to our engagement and communication with members of multicultural communities.</li> <li>• Drive enhanced language diversity in our outreach via our digital channels.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance leadership team awareness of the need to continuously improve our service delivery to culturally diverse communities across NSW and enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our workplace.</li> </ul>

These areas of high-level strategic focus are supported by initiatives identified in the Multicultural Action Plan (see Section 7). Each initiative aligns with our Strategic Plan and supports specific strategic outcomes.

## 7. Multicultural Action Plan

The NSW Ombudsman will pursue the following initiatives – mapped to the MPSP Focus Areas:

Initiative	Action(s)	MPSP Focus Area	Ombudsman Strategic Plan KPI*
1. Promote our Multicultural Action Plan to community members and staff.	Publish the NSW Ombudsman Multicultural Plan on our website and intranet and promote the Plan through internal communications and social media channels.	Leadership	1A.1 1A.2 1A.3
2. Effective monitoring of the Multicultural Plan delivery.	NSW Ombudsman Executive periodically monitor the delivery of our Multicultural Action Plan.	Leadership; Service Delivery	1A.1 1A.3
3. Enhance the diversity of staff in our workplace.	Informed by data regarding our staff's cultural backgrounds, develop a workforce strategy that incorporates diversity and inclusion initiatives, supported by a recruitment and selection guide to promote inclusive hiring practices.  Develop inclusive leadership capabilities and invest in our people to drive cultural and linguistic diversity across the leadership team.	Leadership	1B.1 1B.3
4. Build cultural capability of employees to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively engage with culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities.	Ensure that all new staff complete Diversity and Inclusion training program within 90 days of commencement of employment.  Promote Diversity and Inclusion initiatives through events, workshops and awareness programs aiming to develop culturally competent employees.	Leadership	1B.1 1B.3 1C.1

Initiative	Action(s)	MPSP Focus Area	Ombudsman Strategic Plan KPI*
5. Use existing demographic datasets to inform our outreach activities and better tailor them to the needs of specific communities.	Ensure that our new systems include capability to undertake richer multicultural analysis and inform not less than three annual visits to regions/communities where there are high populations of new migrant arrivals or multicultural communities.	Planning; Engagement	1A.1 1A.4
6. Ensure the delivery of effective and efficient language services to ensure we are accessible for people who prefer or need to communicate in a language other than English.	<p>Continue providing translated factsheets in ~50 languages and expand the range of information available based on demographic insights and community consultation.</p> <p>Launch a whole-of-website language translation function that allows for the instant translation of the NSW Ombudsman’s webpages and associated information into one hundred languages.</p> <p>Ensure translation services are available and actively promoted to multicultural complainants, and usage is tracked.</p>	Leadership; Planning; Service Delivery	1A.1 1A.4
7. Ensure people from culturally diverse backgrounds are aware of our services and of their right to make a complaint.	<p>Develop and distribute, through community and stakeholder representative groups, “digital toolkits” that contain relevant information for multicultural stakeholders in easy read and relevant languages and can be readily re-distributed in different formats.</p> <p>Develop targeted social media campaigns to inform people from culturally diverse backgrounds of our role, our functions, and how to make complaints.</p>	Service Delivery; Engagement	1A.1 1A.2 1A.3 1A.4

Initiative	Action(s)	MPSP Focus Area	Ombudsman Strategic Plan KPI*
<p>8. Continue to build and strengthen relationships and relevance between the NSW Ombudsman and peak bodies, and local agencies and communities that support people from culturally diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>Engage in periodic consultation with external groups that represent or support people from culturally diverse backgrounds in order to better understand need and preference for information and support.</p> <p>Promote our role and functions to multicultural audiences via community and faith leaders, interagency meetings, and other key/peak body stakeholders.</p>	<p>Planning; Engagement; Service Delivery</p>	<p>1A.1 1A.2 1A.3 1A.4  1C.1</p>

\* [The NSW Ombudsman Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#)