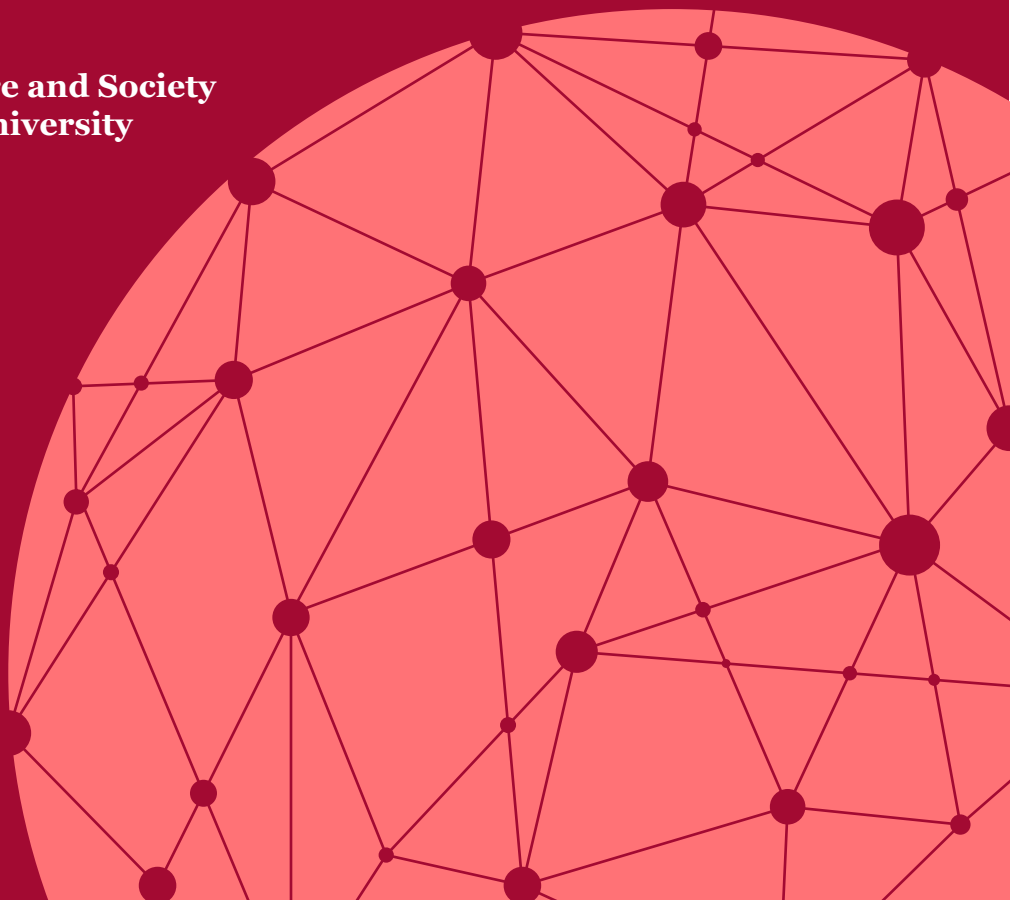
Cultural Intelligence for a Complex World Cross-Sector Symposium

Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

4 November 2015



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

Institute for Culture
and Society

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1 INTRODUCTION

SYMPOSIUM RATIONALE

Cultural complexity has long shaped Australian society – both through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and through the mix of migrants over many decades. However, the nature of Australia's cultural diversity is changing dramatically. Generational change, intermarriage and cultural adaptation alongside the widening cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of Australia's population have resulted in what some term 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2006). How this diversity is understood, how it shapes economic and political institutions, the relationship between multiculturalism and the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the context of an increasingly globalised and transnational world – raise complex issues for workplaces, social policy and service delivery. For example:

- Do workplaces reflect the changing diversity of Australian society?
- What competencies do employees now require to navigate this cultural complexity?
- Are managers suitably equipped to oversee the development of these capacities?
- What kind of organisational planning, training and policy reform is needed to address this complexity?
- How can research assist organisations to effect this change and the challenges it poses?

These questions provided the focus for a half-day symposium hosted by the Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) Western Sydney University, Parramatta Campus on Wednesday, 4 November with representatives from a range of government departments and non-government organisations interested in these issues.

Following introductory sessions from Professors Ien Ang and Greg Noble, the format of the day involved presentations from a number of representatives who provided an overview of their organisation's current policy, practice (such as training procedures etc.) and issues, followed by discussion. The symposium concluded with the identification of commonalities, differences and a recognition of the need to 'continue the conversation' in other events with the possibility of engaging in future research to address these issues.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEES

Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University

Professor Paul James, Director

Distinguished Professor Ien Ang

Professor Greg Noble

Associate Professor Megan Watkins

Dr Louise Crabtree

Dr Shanthi Robertson

Dr Timothy Neale

Helen Barcham

Neroli Colvin

Cecelia Cmielewski

Kate Naidu

Office of Equity and Diversity, Western Sydney University

Dr Sev Ozdowski, Director

Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Employment and Engagement, Western Sydney University

Melissa Williams, Director

Multicultural NSW

Hakan Harman, Chief Executive

NSW Department of Education

Nell Lynes, Manager, Equity Programs

Eveline Mouglalis, Multicultural and EAL/D Education Co-ordinator

Settlement Services International

Janet Irvine, Senior Project Officer, Business Development

Thanh Nguyen, Senior Project Manager, Business Development

NSW Rural Fire Services

Tony Jarrett, Coordinator, Community Engagement

Narelle Koteff, Volunteer Relations and Workforce Planning

NSW State Emergency Service

Jennifer Finlay, Diversity and Inclusion Officer

NSW Department of Family and Community Services

Echo Morgan, Manager, Multicultural Services Unit

Multicultural Health NSW

Cathy O'Callaghan, Learning and Workforce Development Program Manager

Western Sydney Local Health District

Marta Menendez, Senior Health Promotion Officer

Dipti Zachariah, Senior Health Education Officer

Waverley Council

Paula Masselos, Councillor

Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia

Pino Migliorino, Managing Director

OPENING THE SYMPOSIUM

Distinguished Professor Ien Ang
Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

First of all, I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Burramattagal clan of the Darug nation, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

This venue, the Female Orphan School, represents a particularly evocative site for us, because of its unique history as the first welfare institution to be established in New South Wales, built as an expression of the colonial government's policy of providing care for young 'orphaned' girls, including some Aboriginal children.

Today, two centuries later, our topic 'Cultural Intelligence for a Complex World' is associated closely with this poignant history. The world in the 21st century is of course completely different from that of the 19th century. We now live in a world in which colonialism and imperialism are officially rejected; although the traces of this past are still with us.

But today we live in a hugely interconnected, globalised world in which millions of people from many different parts of the world have come to live here, and where living with cultural diversity is a fact of life.

We live in a country in which multiculturalism and recognition of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders is part of our national ethos. Yet we are here today because we all know that service provision – whether it is in the institutions of education, health care or social

work – is still struggling to come to terms with this diversity in a way that is inclusive and genuinely respectful of difference.

> It is one thing to be committed to the principle of cultural diversity, but it is quite a different challenge to put this principle into appropriate practice, not least because the nature of cultural diversity itself is changing so rapidly, and becoming more complex, multilayered and intricate all the time.

In this symposium we would like, first of all, to create a platform to exchange knowledge and experience on the practice of diversity management in an increasingly complex world.

We at the Institute for Culture and Society are very interested in engaging with various sectors to develop better modes of practice – in ways that go beyond older, perhaps too simplistic models of cultural awareness and intercultural competence. 'Cultural intelligence' is a term we have been hearing about a lot more of these days, generally understood as the capability to relate and work effectively across cultures. What I would like to add to this is that in the enormously complex world we live in today, where cultural diversity can't be easily pinned down as a fixed checklist of different cultures, 'cultural intelligence' must involve a serious capacity to navigate complexity. This is especially the case in a country such as Australia, which is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world.

And navigating complexity can never be a question of definitive or one size-size-fits-all 'solutions' for how to deal with diversity; there is always uncertainty involved, and always a need to continue to ask questions about how best to respond to new, unfamiliar, different people and circumstances.

> Cultural intelligence thus requires tolerance for ambiguity, agility, and creativity. It also grows through learning from experience, interpretive skill, and contextual knowledge.

So I hope this workshop will be a fruitful exploration of these difficult but important issues, and a productive exchange on how we can work together to enhance our cultural intelligence for a complex, diverse world.

2 DISCUSSION

THE CHANGING NATURE OF AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Professor Greg Noble
Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

I am going to raise some issues and pose some questions. My job is not to tell you what the answers to them are, but more to set up the basis for a discussion that we are going to have in relationship to your presentations.

I want to start with a picture of Australian cultural diversity. It's a picture that you know fairly well, a story that we are told over and over again in various versions, particularly over the past four decades as we have become more aware of dealing with these kinds of things.

Cultural Diversity in Australia

- Prior to colonisation, there were as many as 750 Australian and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) groups. There were a similar number of languages/dialects. Today, about 125 ATSI languages are in use, all but 20 are endangered.
- Since World War 2 over 7 million migrants have arrived in Australia.
- 48% of Australia's population was either born overseas (28%) or has at least one parent born overseas (20%).
- There are 250+ languages and 300 ancestries (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders).
- The largest migrant groups are from United Kingdom and New Zealand but the largest source countries in recent years are China and India.

This is a common picture of Australia, but diversity is much more complicated today than we often acknowledge. The point I want to stress is not simply that there is 'lots of diversity' – because there has been lots of diversity for some time. It is not something that has suddenly happened that we have to deal with. It has been the basis of the making of the place that we live in. The increasingly important point is that diversity changes and that we are becoming aware of the increasing complexity of that diversity. We are now having to look at that diversity in more nuanced ways because that complexity poses particular challenges for how we think about it, and how we manage and 'service' cultural diversity.

The Diversification of Diversity

There is now acknowledgement of:

- differentiation within 'cultures'
- an uneven spread of diversity across Australia
- high levels of intermarriage producing hybrid households and community networks
- many people mix and appropriate diverse cultural resources
- many people live transnational lives
- many individuals live 'hybrid lives' with hyphenated identities.

The first point is that we are increasingly aware of the differentiation within 'cultures'. The model of multiculturalism we have had for many years has been largely premised on the assumption that we have relatively discreet and identifiable communities and that is the way we have operated in terms of things like language services and so forth. Yet, now these communities may not be so discrete and identifiable … if they ever were. Take, for example, a category such as 'the Lebanese'. There is no such thing as a singular category of Lebanese in Australia. The Lebanese are internally differentiated not just in terms of religion, but in terms of the regions in Lebanon that they come from, whether they come from a rural or an urban environment, their politics, the languages that they speak, their forms of identification.

So we are increasingly aware of the differentiation with the things we call 'cultures'. We are also increasingly aware, and we have known this for a long time, that the nature of diversity in a place like Australia is very unevenly spread. The way culture and diversity is experienced in a place like Parramatta is quite different from the way it is experienced in Camden or Cronulla or indeed Darwin or Deniliquin.

Australia is an interesting place because it has one of the highest levels of intermarriage in the world so that the categories we use to talk about people are complicated by the fact that households comprise different cultural resources, and these are changing the kinds of social networks we inhabit.

We live in a world where people mix up the cultural resources that once defined the communities that they supposedly came from. Again, drawing on some previous research I have done with Lebanese boys into how they understood their 'Lebanese-ness', when we asked them many years ago what brought them together as a bunch of Lebanese boys in a friendship group, they said rugby league and hip-hop, not the things usually associated with being Lebanese! These boys pulled together and mixed up things from various places to help them identify themselves as Lebanese and/or Australian.

We increasingly live transnational lives: through the media we consume; through elements of other cultures that we make use of; through having connections with different parts of the world, such as our ancestral homelands, and; through the communication technologies we use to keep in touch with family and friends and to develop new connections. Our family may also be spread around the world and not necessarily come from one homeland. Therefore, our understanding of what those entities are that we call 'culture' are very complicated because we live in a highly globalised world. This picture complicates our understandings of cultural diversity.

As a consequence of intermarriage and globalisation, we live in a world where people live hybrid lives and have hyphenated identities. Young people, in particular, increasingly have hyphenated identities, drawing on multiple sources for defining who they are. This was clear in the research Megan Watkins and I conducted as part of the Rethinking Multiculturalism/Reassessing Multicultural Education (RMRME) project, an Australian Research Council Linkage Project undertaken with the NSW Department of Education and the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES). I will just use a few examples from young people involved in the study as illustrative of these hybrid lives.

Narratives of Hybridity

I don't really know, I think I'm mixed. I've got quite a lot, well my mum is Chinese and Indian and my dad is Scottish, Sri Lankan, Portuguese and Indian. But I was born in Australia. [student]

I'm Australian but Chinese. I was born here and then I went back to China when I was three years old because my parents decided that it would be a good idea to actually learn Chinese so we don't lose our language. And then I came back here when I was in Year 6, ... I speak basically Cantonese at home but it seems to sort of like ... mix a bit with English because I've sort of forgot about some words. [student]

(Noble and Watkins, 2014, p. 13)

These senses of identity are complicated not just by mixed marriages but by complex histories. These students' Identities are best explained through the narratives they offer as it was very difficult for them to identify themselves using a single category. Sometimes, therefore, rather than fixed categories, we have to think about people's narratives as this is a better gauge as to how they actually live their lives. We have to think about how culture, then, is not the same as identity or cultural background or ancestry or ethnicity. All these terms are interrelated and connected and overlap but they are not the same thing. So, when somebody says "my culture is X" and they are a second-generation Lebanese background migrant living in South-Western Sydney who's into rugby league and hip hop, what they mean is not the same thing that their grandparents might have meant if they lived in a village in the North of Lebanon. If we think of culture in the anthropological sense as a way of life, that's not the same thing as the way people often use categories in Australia to talk about their histories, trajectories and identities.

I also want to illustrate the point about the uneven-ness of diversity by looking at the groups of students we spoke with when we went into schools for the RMRME project.

School 1	School 2	School 3
Australian.	I'm Tongan. [Born in Australia]	I'm Vietnamese and Australian. [Born in Australia]
Australian.	I'm Samoan. [Born in Australia]	I'm Anglo Saxon and Australian.
Australian.	I'm Egyptian. [Born in Australia]	I'm Chinese. [Born in China]
100% aussie.	I have Mauritian and half Russian. [Born in Australia]	I'm an Australian and New Zealand. [Born in Syria]
Australian.	I'm from Bangladesh but was born in New Zealand.	I'm Chinese, Cantonese and I converted to Australian citizen when I was 3 years old. [Born in China]
Australian.	I'm Bangladeshi. [Born in Australia]	I'm Lebanese and I'm Australian. [Born in Australia]

(Noble and Watkins, 2014, pp. 12-13)

If you look at this table you can see that the students in School 1 identified themselves as Australian. The second group identified themselves through categories of national ancestry, ie, 'where my family are from'. In the third group, the students talked about their identities as hybridised. Now the point here is not that some schools are very Anglo-Australian and some are not, but that the way that diversity is understood and experienced will vary from place to place – even if it looks like people have the same type of make-up in terms of their ancestral backgrounds. The diverse ways in which people want to identify complicates the way we have to live with, manage and deal with diversity in the world.

Terminology: Cultural Sensitivity, Competence, Intelligence...

We have a whole range of terms that we use to talk about the need for training or engaging with these things and I am sure you are all well aware of them. We worked with the idea of 'cultural sensitivity' for a long time or 'cultural competency', and these terms still circulate. Distinguished Professor Ien Ang gave some indication as to why we have moved onto the concept of 'cultural intelligence' at the beginning of this symposium (Ang, 2011). Now, I do not want to suggest this is the right term and all the others are wrong because the issue is not so much defining the right term and promoting and advocating for it and saying you must use this term. It is about thinking about what the term captures and what it does not capture; what kind of problems the term poses for us in thinking about the issues behind the terms. There are common problems in these terms including: the idea of culture itself; the kinds of diversity being foregrounded; what it is we are supposed to do with that 'intelligence', and; who we are talking about when we are talking about being 'competent'.

I will give you one illustration, once again from the RMRME project. We asked teachers what they thought 'intercultural understanding' might mean – this is important given that it is now a part of the Australian National Curriculum as a key capability to be taught in schools. It was clear that even teachers are not sure what they are expected to understand by the term, or how they address it in the classroom. Yet, they are professionals whose job it is to deliver content around these categories. The point here is not to criticise teachers, but to say that these terms are complicated and there is some confusion about them — confusion because people still have not worked out what they refer to.

The responses we received from teachers included seeing intercultural understanding as: knowledge of other cultures; understanding the cultural diversity of the society that you live in; interacting effectively with people from different cultures; and community harmony and responsiveness (see Watkins et al., 2013). These are all quite different things, and you might say that they should all be part of intercultural understanding but they all imply different sets of understandings and different possible school responses. Therefore, the point is, we have to think about what we are doing when we talk about 'intercultural understanding'. Similarly, 'cultural intelligence' can be seen to refer to a number of things.

What's Cultural Intelligence?

- A person's capability to adapt as s/he interacts with others from different cultural regions. (Earley and Ang, 2003)
- The capability to function effectively in situations characterised by cultural diversity. (van Dyne, Ang and Koh, 2008)
- The ability to cross divides and thrive in multiple cultures. (Middleton, 2015)

These three definitions of cultural intelligence actually mean slightly different things, and again, you might say 'just lump them together', but there is an issue here about the need to unpack what is going on. We need to ask what we are talking about exactly. Is cultural diversity in Australia the same as diversity across the world? Who and where are we talking about? What is expected of me in relation to this diversity? How am I supposed to operate? And, of course, a really crucial question is, what's the 'culture' in all of this? Everything hangs off the idea of 'culture' – I'm not going to give you one of those academic lectures about the history of the meaning of culture but it is an interesting word. The cultural theorist, Raymond Williams (1976), referred to it as one of the most complicated words that we have and we know there are quite substantial differences in the way people use the word.

The interesting thing is when you actually ask people what culture means – and this is what we did in the RMRME project when we spoke to parents, teachers and students – you hear a whole range of answers. I want to highlight two of these:

What is culture?

Culture as difference:

'Culture means from a different culture, like their background is a different culture than our background.' [student]

Culture as container:

'My parents brought [Greek culture] out here, the put it in a bottle, they put the lid on it and it stayed the same. In Greece it changed, yet my parents still live in that culture.' [teacher]

But, culture is more complicated than these ideas. When we use the term 'culture', we lump and we split (Zerubavel, 1996). We put people together in groups and then we put divides between those groups. It is a crucial way of thinking about the world – lumping and splitting – and culture is crucial to that even if it does not actually correspond to the

complexity of the world. But, once we lump and split, we do things with culture; we use it to explain the world. A famous scholar, Rogers Brubaker (2002), talks about how arguments about culture and ethnicity fall into the trap of 'groupism', treating people as though they are representatives of and live their lives in groups, and believing those groups can be defined by categorises such as 'Lebanese', 'Muslim', 'Aboriginal', or 'Asian' etc.

The problem with this kind of groupism, aside from the fact that it does not capture all of the differentiations I mentioned earlier, is that we often use it to explain people's behaviour, and we explain it in such a way that we can reduce that behaviour to a very small number of characteristics. And so, we are left with comments like: 'with the Asians, work ethic is built into their culture' and 'Asians do well at school because it's part of their cultural DNA', or 'if you leave Pacific Islanders to their own devices they will be off because they are not by nature good students' – all comments we received from teachers in our research.

These are the kind of commonsense understandings around categories of culture and ethnicity that circulate in the wider world – they are not unique to teachers! Again, I am not criticising the people who make these comments; these are very common understandings. However, the problem is if these understandings then form the basis of social policy and particular kinds of organisational practice as though people can be defined by simple explanations of their culture.

There are other problems as well. The following excerpt came from research I conducted with the Human Rights Commission some years ago where I interviewed Arabic-speaking Muslim Australians about their experiences of racial vilification:

The Burden of Culture

'The racism that I pick up is more subtle. It happens in the work place...with the political events we've experienced [since 2001]...or conflicts that have erupted in Israel and Palestine, people put me on the spotlight as a spokesperson for Middle Eastern affairs. [I'm not] able to escape that category...There's one person at work...he gets me to try and comment on things. I can see that he's trying to figure out where I'm coming from, but I find it really frustrating...I don't want to live in a country where people are put in the spotlight because there's some kind of culture connection...I'm just a person, why should I have to be a spokesperson...you have to defend Middle Eastern history and culture, living in Australia.'

(Noble, 2009, p. 883)

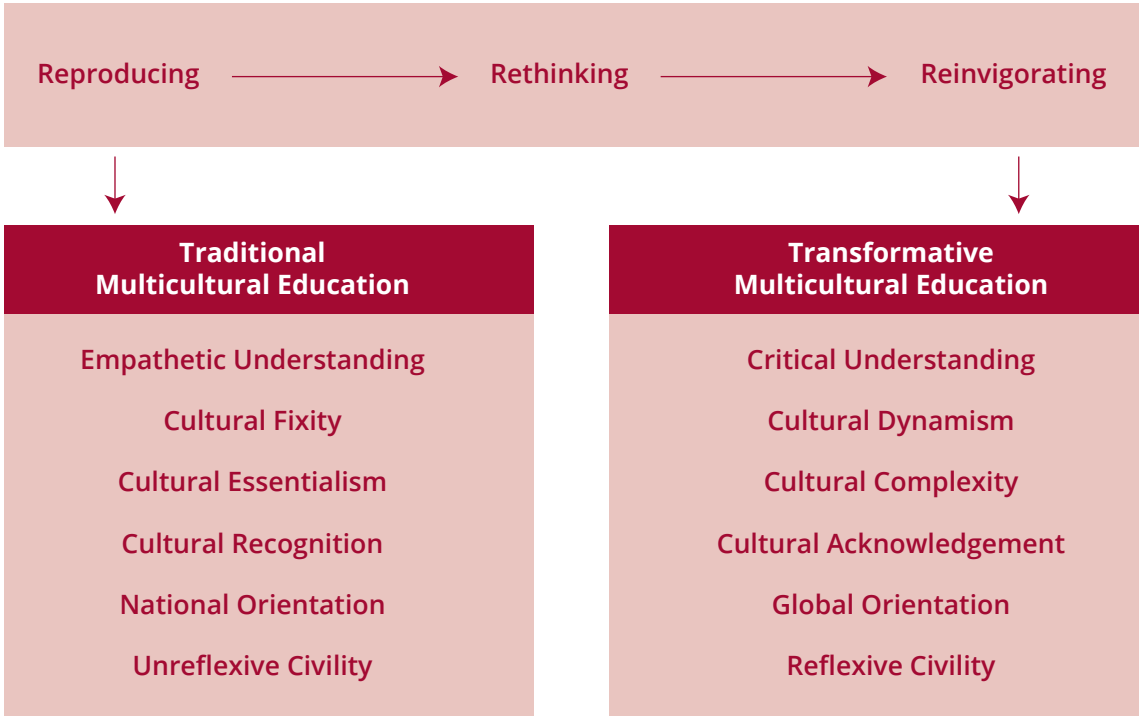
I use this quote because this man talks about how people at his work are trying to include him in a post-9-11 world but he resists it, in fact he finds it racist. What he finds problematic is the pressure of being a 'spokesman' for Middle Eastern politics and Middle Eastern culture. So, we have here an experience of being put into a category, even if the colleagues mean well. Your background is this – Palestinian – so therefore you must have a view on these issues. You must be able to speak competently. You must be able to educate me. Not everybody wants to carry that burden, not everybody wants to be that category. So it comes back to the question of, what is it that we need to know when we talk about cultural intelligence? What is it we think we want to know? Is it going up to a colleague and saying 'tell me about Palestine and Israel and I'll understand you?'... I think not.

What issues arise with concepts such as cultural competency and intelligence? First, we seem to think it is about an individual's attributes and characteristics: 'I'm culturally intelligent and culturally competent', but in fact it might be more useful in a workplace context to think about it in terms of the capacities of organisations to muster certain types of information.

Second, am I a culturally competent person if I engage in 'multicultural manners'; checklists of do's and don'ts that might say, for example, that you have to nod to the Japanese and not look some people in the eye. Are such things to be turned into a series of rules that should be followed and to then think I have the 'cultural' answers. The world is not like that, people aren't like that. Having a kind of checklist for multicultural manners does not work. In fact, people can be offended by it. Instead, I use the phrase 'openness to otherness'. It's a vague phrase, and a common phrase in academic literature. But, it's an interesting thing to think with, indicating a stance where I don't make assumptions about this or that.

Rethinking Multiculturalism

Megan Watkins and I developed an argument in the RMRME project where we talk about the need to move from a traditional kind of multiculturalism to thinking about what we call transformative multicultural education. I do not want to talk about multicultural education per se, as I think the issues we are dealing with here are about cultural diversity more broadly, including engagement with both Indigenous and migrant cultures, but this model gave us a way of thinking about how we need to move our thinking about cultural diversity.



(Watkins and Noble, 2014, p.75)

So, are we talking simply about servicing a diverse client base or managing a diverse labour force? I think these are necessary questions but they are limited ones because they tend to treat the issues as a problem, a problem of others that can be dealt with

simply through a series of simple techniques. Whereas, what we have suggested is that we might need to open up the questions and think about how we are ourselves located in this cultural complexity. It is not just the difference of others that counts; it is our place in that complexity, whether that is a colonial past or a migrant history, we need to recognise ourselves as part of that not just something that has happened to somebody else.

It is interesting to ask, for example:

- What do we really know about the public we serve?
- What do we really know about the staff we work with?
- How do our staff members understand the needs of a really culturally complex society?
- Where do we sit in all this complexity as a person who is not just managing it, but immersed in it?

I think it is important to think about what is at the heart of these issues, moving away from treating people as a representative of a category to thinking about how people wish to be treated? Not everybody wants to be treated as the category that they are recognised as. Now, the thing is, that makes our job much harder. There aren't simple answers to the question of how we do this, so we can only engage in a discussion of what it might mean and what it might not mean. I don't offer you ready-made answers; I just make it messy as a way of thinking about our professional capacities, and I have suggested that we need to turn to engaged research to help us make better sense of these issues.

OVERVIEW OF POLICY, PRACTICE, AND ISSUES ACROSS SECTORS

NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Nell Lynes, Manager, Equity Programs

The NSW Department of Education thinks of public schools as the centre of the community. Public schools reflect the cultural diversity of the broader community with one in three students from a public school in NSW coming from a language background other than English. Cultural intelligence then, is a messy and complex issue for the Department to navigate and needs to be taken very seriously as it directly affects people's lives.

The Department is committed to ensuring its planning, training and policy is evidenced-based and so it collects information about the diversity of its students via demographic data, student learning outcomes and an annual English as an additional language/dialect (EALD) survey which looks at the needs of those students learning English as a second language. While this information does not mirror the complexity of the classroom, it is used by the Department to plan and allocate resources to meet our culturally diverse schools. This information is also used to inform policy frameworks and professional learning at a departmental level.

Additionally, research is an area that provides a huge input into how to respond and assist the Department in making good decisions. The Department has previously collaborated with the Institute for Culture and Society (Western Sydney University) on the Rethinking Multiculturalism/Reassessing Multicultural Education Australian Research Council (ARC)

Linkage research project as well as other government and community organisations. It is open to further research collaborations that bring together knowledge, skills and understandings.

The Department has three key policies that assist in addressing cultural intelligence:

- *The Multicultural Education Policy*

  The Multicultural Education Policy commits public schools to providing opportunities that enable all students to have equitable learning and social outcomes.

- *The Anti-Racism Policy*

  The Anti-Racism Policy commits the Department to the elimination of all forms of racism. Every public school in NSW is mandated to have an Anti-Racism contact officer who is responsible for helping the school deal with complaints of racism on the ground.

- *The Workforce Diversity Policy*

  The Workforce Diversity Policy aims to attract and retain people with diverse skills and backgrounds.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

Janet Irvine, Senior Project Officer, Business Development

Cultural intelligence is an important focus for Settlement Services International (SSI) both in terms of workforce development and service delivery. SSI has extensive on-the-ground experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, having provided services to 11,880 humanitarian and asylum seekers in 2014 alone. Through this experience, SSI is aware of the barriers that CALD people encounter in accessing services. One of the key ways SSI has addressed access is to advertise positions across various programs that are linguistically marked i.e. Arabic-speaking positions. More generally, all of SSI's position descriptions encourage people with second language competencies to apply.

Consequently, SSI has a very diverse workforce with 83 languages spoken by their employees and 75% of their volunteers coming from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Managing this diversity presents tremendous opportunities as well as bringing some challenges such as:

- supporting staff working in one's own community and managing professional boundaries amidst cultural obligations, gender and/or family pressures.
- working with a client-base that has experienced trauma (i.e. refugee trauma) means staff are at risk of vicarious trauma.

To manage these challenges, SSI has established a clinical practice unit which sees its team support staff in critically reflecting on the issues that are occurring in their casework within their communities; developing strategies for balancing pressures and establishing boundaries where needed and developing strategies for self-care. On a broader organisational level, SSI has a 'Be Well' strength-based program providing professional development support to staff in relation to work-life balance, stress management, mindfulness, diet, exercise etc.

Culturally responsive service delivery is one of the exciting opportunities a diverse workforce presents for SSI. While it is easy to assume that this is assured through the organisation having a diverse workforce, SSI recognises that cultural diversity does not guarantee cultural responsiveness, and that cultural responsiveness capabilities need to be nurtured and developed both on an individual and institutional level. In saying that, the cultural experience and knowledge held by staff that can be harnessed through developing culturally responsive capabilities creates opportunities for more innovative service development and delivery.

SSI has developed five core cultural responsiveness capabilities from Queensland Health Cultural Competency Framework that will inform mandatory training for all staff in 2016:

1. Cultural self-reflection – being aware of one's own culture and value systems to avoid biases and assumptions.
2. Cultural understanding – reflecting on someone else's culture and understanding that different behaviours may be influenced by culture.
3. Context – the ability to reflect on the individual context of a person and understand that it may not be culture alone driving a certain behaviour but that it may be a combination of socio-historical factors and personal experiences e.g. poverty, migration, refugee experiences.
4. Communication – the capacity to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers in order to achieve a shared understanding and to convey information
5. Collaboration – the ability to build relationships, trust and develop networks.

NSW DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Echo Morgan, Manager, Multicultural Services Unit

The NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) is governed by the Childcare Protection Act, which stipulates that a child that comes into the care of the Department must be connected with their culture.

Over the years, FACS has moved from operating as a removal party to focusing on connecting children with their families, recognising that kinship care and extended families are equally important to a child's life.

The Department's practice framework includes a principle that provides culturally responsive services to culturally and linguistically diverse families, children and young people. FACS also has a broad, three-year cultural diversity strategic plan which oversees all 15 of its districts, though each district also has its own localised plan.

The Department has 60 multicultural caseworkers that work in metropolitan regions, with a small presence in rural and regional areas. These caseworkers carryout standard casework as well as providing cultural consultations to other caseworkers dealing with refugee children, or children from new and emerging communities.

FACS experiences the following challenges in regards to managing cultural complexity:

- The work of FACS is broad, with disability and housing also falling under the Department's remit. Competing priorities, then, is a key challenge.
- The Department is segmented into 15 districts, all of which have different needs, issues and target groups. Districts make localised decisions as to how to best carry out their work.
- Capturing workforce data is a challenge for the Department because it is not compulsory for staff to disclose this information.
- Including each target group, not just as an 'add-on' is another challenge for the Department.

The Department reports to Multicultural NSW.

WESTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

Dipti Zachariah, Senior Health Education Officer

The overarching strategies on the ground for Western Sydney Health include the NSW Health Policy and Implementation Plan for Healthy Culturally Diverse Communities 2012-2016 and the Western Sydney Local Health District Strategic Plan 2013-2016.

Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) through its Multicultural Health teams works with communities and health professionals to ensure that all services and programs within WSLHD are culturally appropriate and accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

The Women's Health at Work Program is one such program that is a state-wide service that works in partnership with women from CALD backgrounds, their employers and other key stakeholders to improve women's health and wellbeing. The Program aims to build the capacity of women, employers and service providers to gain better health outcomes and focuses on social and preventative health education, community development and the promotion of workplace rights and occupational health and safety. These outcomes are directed and executed by WSLHD's Senior Health Education Officers whose areas of work include:

1. maintaining and continuing to improve the capacity of the WSLHD system, to identify and meet the specific needs of culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities;
2. identifying and effectively addressing the high prevalence of behavioural risk factors and disease amongst specific ethnic groups;
3. identifying factors contributing to increasing vulnerability in some groups to bring health outcomes to (at least) the level of their own communities and then to an optimal standard.

One of the toughest challenges in this role is deciding which communities are the neediest. For example, while data indicates that the number of refugees and migrants coming from vulnerable situations is comparatively small, one has to decide whether resource allocation is determined by the number of people in need versus who has the greatest need. Another key challenge for WSLHD is how to standardise protocols when there are competing goals at the organisation level.

NSW Health builds trust, credibility and rapport between employees and target groups through programs such as the Bilingual Community Health Education and Community Development Program[1]. These programs work in close partnership with community members and bilingual health educators who provide information and education on health related topics in languages other than English. These services empower communities to make informed decisions about their own health and adopt healthier lifestyles.

1 The Bilingual Community Health Education and Community Development Program partners with individuals from the local community to reach out and provide information to the broader community.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Narelle Koteff, Manager, Volunteer Relations And Workforce Planning

The overall strategic direction of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) is set by the *Corporate Plan 2014-2021*, which includes objectives to improve organisational diversity through inclusive and flexible membership. At the second tier, RFS has workforce plans—such as the *Multicultural Plan* and *Aboriginal Services Plan*, which promote increased cultural and gender diversity within the organisation.

RFS' principle policy approach to volunteer membership is 'The Flexible Membership Model' which aims to make membership flexible, adaptive and sustainable in a bid to attract and retain a wider variety of valuable members. This model also encourages the brigades to view the community as a resource or asset because ultimately the more they engage with the community, the better they are able to serve and protect them.

The RFS has a *Respectful and Inclusive Workplace Policy* which covers bullying, harassment, vilification and sexual harassment for both staff and volunteers. An online training program to support the policy is currently in development, the training will cover what is and isn't acceptable behaviour; how to report an issue; how issues are dealt with and what to do if you are a bystander.

In 2014 RFS was identified as a designated agency under Multicultural NSW's Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP), requiring a new multicultural plan and increased responsibilities and reporting requirements. A sub-set of this partnership has also been to establish a steering committee within the organisation to ensure that the plans are met.

RFS has procedures for using interpreters and Auslan services during bushfires. It has also recently started collecting demographic data on diversity from volunteers.

The key challenges for RFS include:

- While brigades work within the policy framework, they are decentralised entities who largely manage their own memberships, and ultimately make their own decisions. Rolling out programs consistently, and finding out about local initiatives becomes an issue.
- Programs and communications must take into account the competing demands for volunteers' time.
- Challenging traditional brigade structures and culture to attract a more diverse membership.
- Retaining volunteers by ensuring a respectful and welcoming environment.

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Melissa Williams, Director, Office Of Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Employment And Engagement

The Federal Government National Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People report in 2012 highlighted the University as an exemplar and lead practice in the following areas for other Universities to adopt:

- Building professional pathways and responding to community need (section 11.3.3 University of Western Sydney (now Western Sydney University) Indigenous Graduate Attribute);
- Research, research training and university workforce (13.6.3 University of Western Sydney (now Western Sydney University) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Strategy); and
- University culture and governance (14.1.3 Office of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement).

The recommendations are available at:

www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/IndigenousHigherEducation/ReviewOfIndigenousHigherEducation/Pages/default.aspx

The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement (OATISEE) was also named as the winner of the Fons Trompenaars Award for Diversity and Cross Cultural Management in 2010. The University recognises that having dynamic, purposeful and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a key building block of success. It underpins our institutional philosophy, which is 'Securing Success'. The OATSIEE team works to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent at the University. We want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to choose Western Sydney University as a place to work, study, stay and further their careers.

The University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment policies and Action Plans were developed and authored at a grass roots level in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement Advisory Board which includes Elders on Campus and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy Consultative Committee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in a bid to ensure cultural congruence.

http://www.uws.edu.au/oatsiee/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_employment_and_engagement/about_us/advisory_board

http://www.uws.edu.au/oatsiee/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_employment_and_engagement/elders_on_campus

OATSIEE developed and launched the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement Action Plan 2014 - 2017 as an organisational framework to achieve current and future strategies. Six objectives have been set in place to achieve the University-wide implementation of the plan, starting with an equal seat at the table in terms of governance, to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and

success is embedded in all levels and various communities across the University. The Plan has also seen the formation of various committees, programs and initiatives across the university.

http://www.uws.edu.au/oatsiee/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_employment_and_engagement/action_plan_2014-17

A number of initiatives have been developed and launched to celebrate Western Sydney as a University for the people and the community we live and operate in. By emphasising the knowledge, skills, histories, traditions and cultures of First Peoples and fostering an environment that embraces and values people's individual differences, the University actively develops and supports initiatives which: embrace equity in employment and diversity in the workplace; promote it as a responsive partner with which to engage in a range of enterprises.

'Generations of Knowledge' is an extensive, multifaceted project, the heart of which is to acknowledge the role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, leaders and achievers past and present have had in terms of their influence on the development of Western Sydney University as a significant institution in Greater Western Sydney. The project was conceived by Elders on Campus and an imprimatur given to the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement to execute the project with their ongoing guidance. Western Sydney University as a learning institution, cognizant of the wrongs committed against Australia's First Peoples, are committed to proper acknowledgement of the cultural knowledge and intellectual property contributed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to this and other projects undertaken by the University.

https://issuu.com/uwspublications/docs/ext5218_yarramundi_lecture_gok_book?e=3800682/10388401

Are we engaging in mutually respectful partnerships? What is understood by each party in the research process?

Some of the key challenges for the University are:

- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workplace Relations
  - For instance, in the Western context, some staff agreements include a leave policy to care for immediate family. In an Aboriginal context, extended family such as a father's brother may also be considered a father and a mother's sister may also be considered a mother, and so there is cross-cultural tension between the Aboriginal construct of family and existing Anglo-centric policy.
- Aboriginal language is not universal. This diversification needs to be considered in the written word and legitimate voices in text.
- Every clan has its own culture, heritage and protocols. Hierarchies also need to be understood when negotiating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Some of the knowledge gaps that need addressing to navigate and improve cultural awareness or understanding include:
  - How do we understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives? How are these being adopted in key policies, frameworks and strategies?

  - How are we doing research? What are our ethics and protocols in terms of gaining an Aboriginal perspective in research and how is knowledge constructed?
  - What and whose terminology are we using? Offensive terminology can alienate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Language and terminology used in content which is not co-created nor endorsed by First Peoples.
- First Peoples' society is different from Western Society – what is legitimate research practice?
- Are we engaging in mutually respectful partnerships? What is understood by each party in the research process?

MULTICULTURAL NSW

Hakan Harman, Chief Executive Officer

Multicultural NSW is the lead agency for implementing the policy and legislative framework to support cultural diversity and the Multicultural Principles in NSW.

NSW was the first state in Australia and the second in the world to introduce a deliberate policy that welcomes cultural and linguistic diversity as a social and economic advantage.

The work of Multicultural NSW can be categorised into five different groups:

1. Providing interpreter and translation services in over 100 languages and dialects, with the biggest client being the Department of Justice.
2. Supporting partnerships, programs and projects that enhance our social cohesion and community harmony, and connect culturally, linguistically, multi-faith and multicultural groups via our Multicultural NSW Grants Program.
3. Administering the Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP), a framework which requires that all NSW Public Sector Agencies develop Cultural Diversity plans and incorporate the Multicultural Principles in the activities of their organisations.
4. Facilitating structured community engagement activities including a formalised regional advisory council structure to enable participation in decision making and engaging with a broad cross section of society.
5. Celebrating cultural diversity through various events such as our annual *Australian Multicultural Marketing Awards Program* and *The NSW Premier's* annual *Harmony Dinner*, which brings together all sections of our society to acknowledge the contribution of migration and settlement to the Australian identity.

One of the biggest challenges for Multicultural NSW is the objective to embrace all three elements that combine to make our contemporary Australian identity and leverage this substantial asset base to continue to promote and build on our cohesive harmonious way of life; our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, our colonial past and the waves of migration from all over the world that have produced our culturally diverse and inclusive society.

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SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DISCUSSION: COMMON ISSUES AND 'KNOWLEDGE GAPS'

Chair: Dr Shanthi Robertson
Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

This session was an open discussion about the presentations given by Nell Lynes, Janet Irvine, Echo Morgan, Dipti Zacharian, Narelle Koteff, Melissa Williams and Hakan Harman about the policies, practices and complexities around cultural diversity. Three common issues were identified in the presentations:

Data capture

Capturing demographic data on clients and employees is important for organisations, enabling them to tailor their service deliveries and improve reporting metrics. Capturing workforce data is a challenge for organisations because it is not compulsory for staff to disclose this information. Staff and clients may be reluctant to self-identify for various reasons including a fear of facing discrimination or appearing racist. Differences in how people self-identify, and the political nature of how data is collected such as which questions are asked and are not asked, can also contribute to data gaps.

Ethnic categories may also limit and fail to account for the complex nature of an individual's identity. Hyphenated and multiple descriptors go some way towards capturing this complexity but they foreground ethnicity over other dimensions of an individual's identity. While it was recognised that data sharing across the sector would contribute to closing data gaps, many organisations said that they do not data share because of privacy considerations. Echo Morgan said that FACS refrains from sharing data on children and

abuse for fear that the data would be misconstrued by outside organisations, resulting in harmful misconceptions about certain communities. Data capture is complex and requires engagement with these issues.

Evaluation of activities

While it was recognised that moving away from simplistic, 'checklist'-like models of cultural intelligence in the workplace is important for developing nuanced policy and practice, the need to measure and evaluate work that is being done around diversity was simultaneously recognised. Ensuring that this work is regularly assessed and localised is a common way in which organisations ensure compliance is not diminishing the legitimacy of their work.

Regular evaluations of activities are also important because it allows organisations to keep abreast of the latest terms and thinking in this space. Ensuring that partnerships with clients are based on two-way interaction and exchange with follow-up consultations allows clients to see value in an organisation's work, which gives them an impetus to continue working with the organisation.

Mainstream vs. target groups with specific needs

Mobilisation, and the way in which individuals and communities change across space and time means that we must continually evaluate our clientele. How do we make decisions about who belongs to specific groups? How do we target what we are doing towards a group that we consider to be mainstream compared to groups that have specific needs? And how do we manage to balance that without falling into the trap of essentialising or drawing boxes around categories? were seen as the key issues.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES, RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

Associate Professor Megan Watkins
Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

The Institute for Culture and Society has long been concerned with the need to develop 'cultural intelligence' – ways of thinking and doing that go beyond older, simplistic models of cultural awareness or intercultural competence – and undertaking engaged research with key organisations to explore what these ways of thinking and doing might mean in practice. Here I just want to provide an overview of some of the research projects that ICS members have been involved in that are of relevance to the topic of cultural intelligence, together with the various methodologies they employ.

Some of the work that the ICS has carried out around cultural diversity includes:

- Rethinking Multiculturalism/Reassessing Multicultural Education
- Housing and Employment for Social Cohesion in Multicultural Neighbourhoods 'in transition': Building Local Best Practice
- Community Land Trusts and Indigenous Housing
- Staggered Pathways: Temporality, Mobility and Asian Temporary Migrants
- Living Diversity/Constructing Diversity
- Sydney's Chinatown: A Global Crossroads in the Asian Century
- Smart Engagement with Asia
- Cultural Practices and Learning
- Teaching and Learning for a Culturally Diverse Community.

A full list of past and current ICS projects are available on the ICS website: www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/research/projects.

ICS researchers have extensive experience in the following quantitative and qualitative research methodologies:

- surveys: large scale electronic and telephone surveys, face to face, various languages
- Australian Bureau of Statistics data analysis
- focus groups: range of ages, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, professional groupings
- interviews: semi-structured, narrative
- ethnographic observations in a range of settings: workplaces, schools, homes
- geo-temporal digital mapping
- action research and practitioner-led enquiry
- case studies

The various projects conducted by ICS researchers have resulted in the following products/outcomes:

- Stakeholder Reports (books, journal articles)
- Professional Learning and Training Modules
- Manuals and Media Kits
- Websites: repositories for resources, discussion boards, fact sheets
- Policy Change
- Program Development
- Conferences and Symposia
- TV programs, Media Releases

In addition to conducting engaged research, ICS researchers act in the following roles:

- guest speakers
- expert panel members
- educators and trainers
- policy advisors
- advisory committee members

CLOSING REMARKS

Professor Paul James
Director, Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

Western Sydney University confronts the same world and the same set of issues and complexities that have been discussed by the presenters and their respective organisations today. These issues can be summarised into the following three themes:

1. **Internal tensions in relation to data collection:**
   - How can we collect data about specific groups without succumbing to damaging cultural-group profiling?
   - Avoiding **hardened cultural categories**: how can we collect data about specific groups without setting it into a series of hardened cultural categories? While cultural categories are integral to research in that they allow us to make claims, hardened cultural categories can dismember multiculturalism into fragmented multiculturalism.
   - **Public/individual and local area privacy**: how do we get people to do 'good' data collection, which recognises the individual or locality specificity of the data without infringing upon the privacy of the individual or the locality? These are cultural issues that often turn into power and political issues, and so we need to develop protocols to help navigate this complexity.
2. **Definitions**: While definitions such as 'cultural competency' and 'cultural intelligence' are important, we need to make claims about what constitutes a good definition. There are cultural biases in the way we define terms; these need to be addressed and the different ways the terms are being used need also to be examined.

- **Cultural diversity**: what are we actually saying cultural diversity is, and what do we mean by 'good' cultural diversity? We need to hold on to the notion of multiculturalism but move away from a 'flat' notion where community differences are dissolved into Australian multiculturalism, which can become a new name for nationalism. We have to be able to claim that multiculturalism is uncomfortable; it is not just tolerance but also the recognition that there are uncomfortable differences so that these can be adequately addressed rather than blandly obscured through celebration.

3. **Limitations**: How do we conduct proper evaluations and assessments under time and resource restraints?
   - We can only investigate the progression of certain issues through long-term research; however constantly changing our processes, tools, terms and engagement processes hinders long-term research being carried out.

In Summary:

There was consensus among attendees of the value of such cross-sector conversations around these issues and a need to 'continue this conversation' in future events with this focus.

3 APPENDICES

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
EALD	English as an Additional Language/Dialect
FACS	NSW Department of Family and Community Services
ICS	Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University
MPSP	Multicultural Policies and Services Program
OATSIEE	The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Employment and Engagement at Western Sydney University
RFS	NSW Rural Fire Service
SSI	Settlement Services International