

**A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN
THE SERVICE DELIVERY IMPLEMENTATION OF
MULTICULTURAL POLICIES IN THE CONTRACTUAL
ENVIRONMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES IN THE
NORTHERN METROPOLITAN REGION OF MELBOURNE**

Submitted by

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SUMMARY

This study investigated the nexus between multicultural policies and contract management within the Community Health Services in the Northern Metropolitan Region of the Victorian Department of Human Services. Access and equity of services to linguistic minority migrant groups is a central component of this study.

The study drew on literature pertaining to social work theory and practice, with a particular focus on structural social work, the evolution of Australia's multicultural policy and the context of contract management.

The data collection consisted of two stages. The first stage comprised of twenty-two semi-structured interviews with Chief Executive Officers and managers from the Community Health Services, government personnel from the Department of Human Services and key informants. The second stage of the study, a self administered questionnaire survey for service providers, was developed and designed from the key themes identified from the interviewee data. A total of 119 service providers responded to the questionnaire.

Key findings of this study were first, that the Community Health Services have broad policies of inclusion. Secondly, that the multicultural policy may be considered a broader policy than just a policy relating to people of non-English speaking backgrounds or culture relating to ethnicity. Thirdly, funding arrangements appeared limited in their expectations regarding linguistic accessibility. Fourthly, service providers had a different perception of the quality level of service their organisation provided to English speakers and non-English speakers.

Implications of this study included, first, having broad inclusive policies would require specific strategies of access. Secondly, multicultural policy as such may need to develop into a policy of "structural cultural equity". Thirdly, partnerships between government and Community Health Services can be further utilised to develop more innovative service delivery methods to respond to linguistic minority groups. Lastly, culturally sensitive practice modules may need to be considered as a central component in the health and welfare field of tertiary education.

The study concluded that Community Health Services are ideally located to implement services, which not only address the notion of multiculturalism, but also address the issues of equity in the context of a dominant paradigm. In such an environment someone who speaks a language other than English is "visible" and therefore, *"a woman without a word of English enters the Community Health Service"* and receives the same service as an English speaker.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis, contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures in this thesis were approved by the Faculty of Health Sciences, Human Ethics Committee, La Trobe University.

Nora Ruzzene
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access to services	Right to receive clinical treatment, therapy or entry to facility
Community Health Services	Organisations that provide primary care services to the community
Contract management	The application of funding and service agreements, and tender contracts between government and Community Health Services
Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)	Australia's varied population, in culture and language
Culture	Values, beliefs, customs, symbols
Dominant culture	The predominant values, beliefs, customs, traditions and language that permeate throughout Australia's institutions and societal structures.
Equity	Equality of outcomes
Ethnicity	Identity based on group membership, culture, geographical affiliations and racial heritage
Funding and Service Agreements	Documents that set out financial arrangements and expected outputs between government and Community Health Services
Linguistic minority groups	Migrant groups who speak a language other than English
Minority migrant language groups	Migrant groups in Australia who speak a language that is not English
Multicultural policies	Principles and frameworks that respond to Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse society
Multiculturalism	Literally, a term meaning "many cultures". It is also frequently used interchangeable with "multicultural policies"
Non-English speaking Background (NESB)	People who migrated to Australia from countries where English is not the national language
Service providers	Clinical practitioners, community development workers

Structural cultural equity	Australia's institutions and societal structures have shared power between all cultural groups
Tender contracts	Documents that set out financial arrangements and expected services between government and Community Health Services