



Multicultural Health Advisory Group

Meeting: 25 February 2026

The Multicultural Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) convened for their third meeting on Wednesday 25 February 2026.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (department) welcomed members to the first meeting for 2026.

The department shared the draft 2026 work plan, which details programs, policies and initiatives across the health, disability and ageing portfolio that support improved health outcomes for multicultural communities. The work plan remains a live and iterative document that will continue to evolve throughout the Advisory Group's term. Members reiterated the importance of remembering the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and using the tools and resources developed such as the toolkit on how to prepare communications.

The Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) shared an update on the National Syphilis Response, covering key facts about syphilis and its effects, including impacts on multicultural communities and main challenges and opportunities. Members were invited to provide insights and suggestions on new opportunities and ideas to address challenges for people with multicultural backgrounds. The Advisory Group discussed the role of interpreters and bicultural educators in supporting education and awareness of syphilis risks and treatments in migrant and multicultural communities, and the need for plain language information and geographical data from government.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) presented on the introduction of the National Messaging System (NMS). This included an overview of the major milestones and tests, and public awareness activities. NEMA also highlighted planned strategies to enhance inclusivity in the NMS for multicultural communities. NEMA sought feedback from the Advisory Group on ways to raise awareness, particularly for vulnerable groups such as older adults, people with disabilities, children, and those affected by domestic and family violence. The Advisory Group highlighted the importance of engaging groups that support settlement services in particular for new residents who have experienced trauma and universities supporting international students.

The department presented on the use of integrated data to research mental health service access and utilisation for multicultural communities. Members were asked to identify research questions most likely to influence policies and programs supporting mental health care for multicultural Australians. The Advisory Group highlighted mental health as a priority for multicultural youth, emphasising the value of geographic data and recognising key links between service access and risk factors such as family and domestic violence and alcohol and other drugs.

NEXT STEPS

The Advisory Group will hold its next meeting on Tuesday 21 April 2026.

See [Multicultural Health Advisory Group](#) and [terms of reference](#) for more information.