



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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The Government has now determined the top structure of the new Office of Multicultural Affairs.

The position of Head of the Office, and the two senior supporting positions, are being advertised this week, and it is hoped appointments will be made by early in the new year.

As I said in my statement on 18 November, the Office will be basically an advisory and research body.

It will have a number of roles - perhaps the primary one of which will be to develop and maintain close liaison with ethnic communities and provide a channel through which their needs and concerns are brought to the Government's notice.

The Office will conduct and sponsor research on policies, programs and services which bear on multiculturalism and the needs and concerns of ethnic communities.

It will be providing advice to me, Mr Hurford and the Government on those matters, and on any other proposals coming forward to the Government which might have an impact on the development of multiculturalism and policies, programs and services for ethnic communities.

It will have a co-ordinating and supporting role in information programs for ethnic communities, and information programs directed to the development of multiculturalism.

It will, of course, have a monitoring and policy development role in this broad field, including access and equity issues.

It is particularly important that the Office will be working in a way which is fully integrated into internal Government decision-making processes, so that its advice can be given at the appropriate points of decision-making.

The filling of senior positions in the Office will represent the first stage in its establishment.

Those persons chosen will be charged immediately with examination of existing Government activity and the role formerly played by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA), and with conducting consultations with the ethnic communities about the structure and role of the Office and of the Advisory Council associated with it.

Decisions on the detail will then be taken by the Government on the basis of a considered report as early as possible in the new year.