



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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In line with the Federal Government's National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia, I announce today the implementation of the Community Relations Strategy.

This will provide \$5.7 million to fund practical programs in keeping with the objectives of the Agenda, released by the Government in July 1989.

This is an important and concrete outcome of the Agenda, which now sets in train community relations initiatives targeting all areas of our society.

It is appropriate that the strategy should be implemented at this time when events in the Middle East continue to focus attention on racial and religious differences. I am proud that, despite some incidents of deplorable harassment of Arab, Muslim and Jewish Australians during the Gulf War, the vast majority of Australians clearly demonstrated their commitment to a multicultural society by standing firm in their opposition to such discrimination.

The strategy has been developed by four Government agencies: the Office of Multicultural Affairs; Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders Commission; Department of Immigration, Local Government & Ethnic Affairs; and Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission. During planning, these agencies consulted over 250 community organisations, together with Commonwealth and State/Territory government bodies, and each agency will administer programs under the strategy.

Practical, innovative projects will be pursued under the strategy tackling grassroots issues in areas such as legislation, police, media, youth, education and public housing. The initiatives being funded will involve wide sections of the community and government at all levels.

I am delighted that community groups, Commonwealth, State/Territory and local governments are co-operating in this initiative.

While the programs announced in the strategy are scheduled for completion in 1992-93, this should not be seen as the end of the strategy. The projects being tested, implemented and evaluated will have wide implications for the community as a whole and for individuals, particularly those from under-represented groups for years to come.

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