

Putting out the welcome mat

A guide for creating welcoming cities



Welcoming Cities acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians and ancestors of this country, and the continuation of their cultural, spiritual and ceremonial practices.

We respectfully acknowledge the past and present Traditional Owners of the land, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and respect their culture and identity, which has been a continuum with the land and sea for generations.

We have a role to play in achieving a just Australia in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights as First Peoples are recognised and respected.

Welcoming Cities also seeks to engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as leaders in welcoming activities.

Cover photo: The City of Greater Bendigo's inaugural Intercultural Ambassadors represent 10 different local cultural communities. In 2020, Greater Bendigo became Australia's first fully accredited Welcoming City under *The Welcoming Cities Standard*. Photo courtesy of the City of Greater Bendigo.

Welcoming Cities

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	3	What success looks like.	49
You are welcome here	3	Welcoming activity ideas.	49
Welcoming Cities	4	Council Spotlight	
How to become an accredited		City of Canning, WA	56
Welcoming City	5	CATEGORY 4	
How to use this guide	7	LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	57
Council Spotlight		Principles.	58
City of Greater Bendigo, VIC.	8	Council Spotlight	
CATEGORY 1		City of Sydney, NSW	59
LEADERSHIP	11	What success looks like.	60
Principles.	12	Welcoming activity ideas.	60
Council Spotlight		Council Spotlight	
City of Hobart, TAS.	13	Brisbane City Council, Logan City Council	
What success looks like.	15	and Cairns Regional Council, QLD	66
Welcoming activity ideas.	15	CATEGORY 5	
Council Spotlight		CIVIC PARTICIPATION	67
Paroo Shire Council, QLD	21	Principles.	68
Council Spotlight		Council Spotlight	
City of Stirling, WA	22	City of Darebin, VIC	69
CATEGORY 2		What success looks like.	71
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INCLUSION	25	Welcoming activity ideas.	71
Principles.	26	Council Spotlight	
Council Spotlight		City of Greater Bendigo, VIC.	79
Tatiara District Council, SA.	27	CATEGORY 6	
What success looks like.	29	PLACES AND SPACES	81
Welcoming activity ideas.	29	Principles.	82
Council Spotlight		Council Spotlight	
City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW	39	City of Port Adelaide Enfield, SA	83
Council Spotlight		What success looks like.	85
Wagga Wagga City Council, NSW	43	Welcoming activity ideas.	85
CATEGORY 3		Council Spotlight	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	45	Townsville City Council, QLD	91
Principles.	46	RESOURCES	92
Council Spotlight			
Banyule City Council, VIC.	47		

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Welcoming Cities is an initiative of Welcoming Australia, supported by the Scanlon Foundation.



“You are welcome here”

It’s a compelling and straightforward statement and a foundational principle of Welcoming Cities.

Foundations are important. In local government, those foundations are what we call ‘the five Ps’ – policy, plans, projects, practice and people. The Welcoming Cities Standard provides a framework for benchmarking those foundations and determining how embedded they are across the council and into the community they serve.

The purpose of this document, *Putting out the welcome mat*, is to bring The Standard to life by celebrating and sharing a snapshot of the exceptional work delivered by local councils and their communities. Throughout these pages, you will read stories and solutions from members of the Welcoming Cities network, both local and international. The case studies dive into the process of welcoming work and describe how various projects and initiatives can build resilience and greater social cohesion.

We acknowledge that one size does not fit all, and this is not an exhaustive compilation of ideas. One council’s approach may not work for another, so we encourage you to adapt these examples to suit your own needs.

We hope that *Putting out the welcome mat* contributes ideas, courage and inspiration to embed welcoming and inclusion work in your community – advancing an Australia where people of all backgrounds have equal opportunity to belong, contribute and thrive.

Aleem Ali
Chief Executive Officer
Welcoming Australia

Welcoming Cities

Welcoming Cities supports local councils, and their communities, to become more welcoming and inclusive.

We are a national network of cities, shires, towns and municipalities who are committed to an Australia where people of all backgrounds have equal opportunity to belong, contribute and thrive.

Welcoming Cities recognises that, of all tiers of government, local councils are best placed to understand the complexity and diversity of their communities and facilitate a whole-of-community approach.

We support local councils and community leaders through a network built around:



Knowledge Sharing

Supporting local governments to access evidence-based research, resources, policies and case studies.



Partnership Development

Facilitating and resourcing multisector partnerships to maximise learning, reach and impact.



Celebrating Success

Recognising local governments that demonstrate leading practice and innovation in welcoming efforts.



Standard + Accreditation

Setting the National Standard for cultural diversity and inclusion policy and practice in local government.

How to become an accredited Welcoming City

Accreditation as a Welcoming City allows councils to benchmark their progress and identify gaps in their welcoming and inclusion practice.

Accreditation has a range of benefits, including:

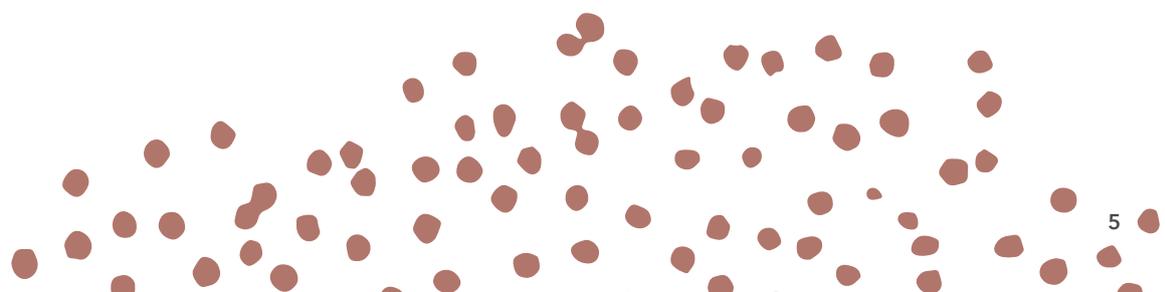
- Increasing the impact of council initiatives for the whole community
- Providing a mechanism to plan for and measure improvement and change
- Building a positive and welcoming reputation, and
- Creating opportunities for shared learning.

Accreditation is not meant to be easy. It is an optional undertaking for members of the Welcoming Cities network who want to better understand where their council is positioned regarding social cohesion and economic participation across the community. The process involves working with many council departments, as well as community members and partner organisations, to provide evidence of best practice against indicators within The Welcoming Cities Standard.

Councils can access and progress through The Standard in stages, according to their capacity and resources. We describe these stages (from lowest to highest) as Established, Advanced, Excelling and Mentoring. To achieve higher levels of accreditation, a council needs to provide more evidence of how it is addressing the indicators described within The Standard's six core categories. This guide gives examples of acceptable evidence, but many other policies, projects and processes will meet the criteria.

Whether or not you decide to pursue accreditation, Welcoming Cities staff are here to support you.

Please visit welcomingcities.org.au/the-standard for detailed information.





“We acknowledge that one size does not fit all, and this is not an exhaustive compilation of ideas.

One council’s approach may not work for another, so we encourage you to adapt these examples to suit your own needs.”

Aleem Ali, CEO, Welcoming Australia.

How to use this guide

Putting out the welcome mat supports you to develop successful plans, initiatives, policy documents, partnerships and ideas that will advance welcoming work in your local council and community.

It is designed to be used alongside The Standard for Welcoming Cities, which is a central element of Australia's Welcoming Cities network. This guide is structured around The Standard's six categories:

1. Leadership
2. Social and Cultural Inclusion
3. Economic Development
4. Learning and Skills Development
5. Civic Participation
6. Places and Spaces

Information on ways in which your council can support welcoming work in your community is included in each category. These are guides only, designed to inspire, stimulate and encourage your own ideas. Each section provides:

Principles - a statement describing the foundations for each category.

Council Spotlight - two or three case studies for each category that describe welcoming activities already under way in Australia.

Please note: the demographic information provided for each local government area is taken from the 2016 Australian Census.

What success looks like - criteria from The Standard that can be applied to existing or new policies and practices.

Welcoming activity ideas - bullet lists of ideas of possible welcoming activities that can be implemented into your organisation.

Examples - real-life examples from Australia and overseas for each criterion in The Standard.

Where to go for help

The team at Welcoming Cities is happy to provide additional support as you develop your welcoming work. If you would like more advice or assistance, please contact info@welcomingcities.org.au

Overcoming racism to build cohesion

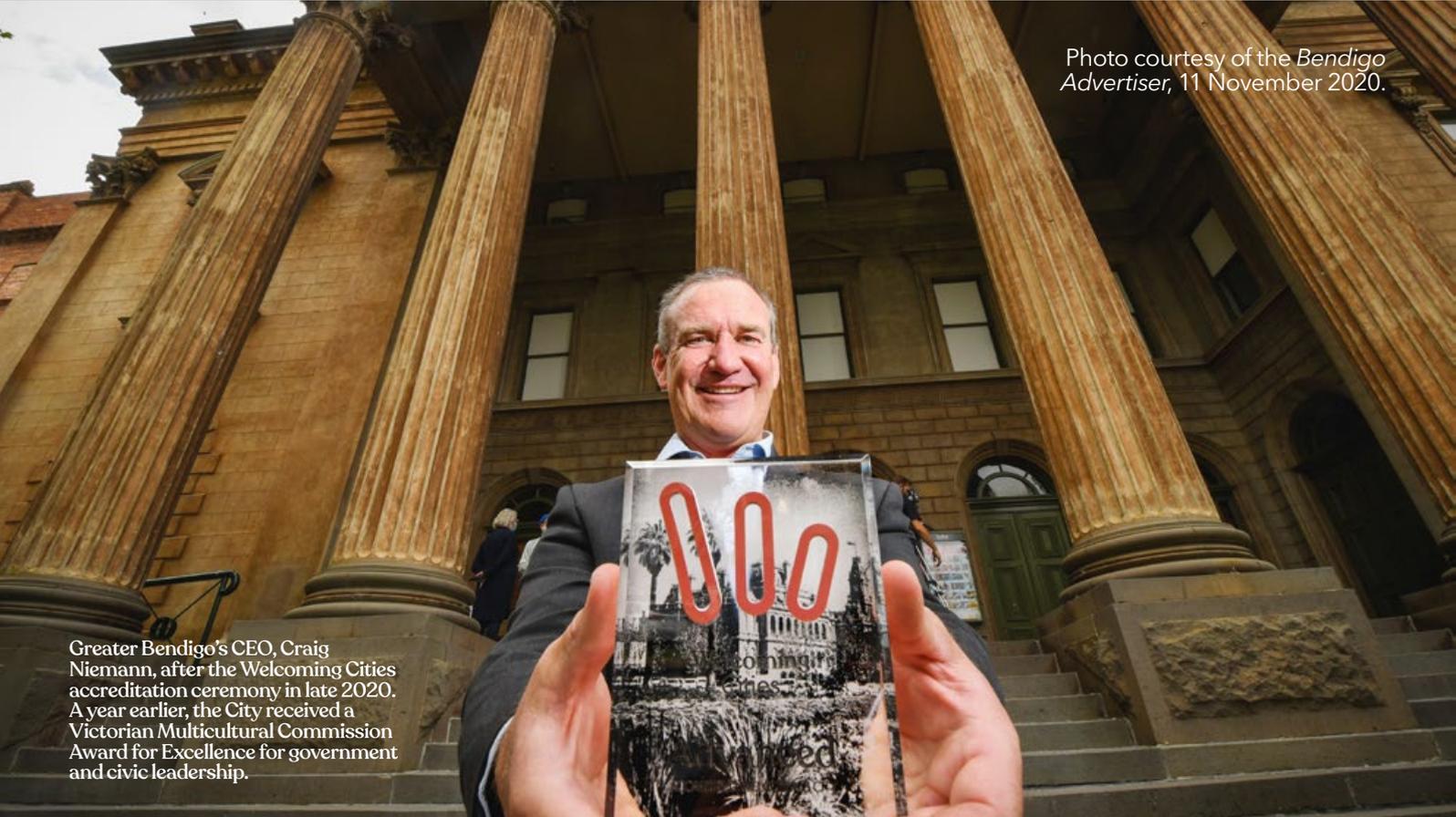
City of Greater Bendigo, VIC

110,000 / Approximate population

7% / Overseas born

1.7% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Photo courtesy of the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 11 November 2020.



Greater Bendigo's CEO, Craig Niemann, after the Welcoming Cities accreditation ceremony in late 2020. A year earlier, the City received a Victorian Multicultural Commission Award for Excellence for government and civic leadership.

The City of Greater Bendigo's journey to becoming Australia's first accredited Welcoming City began in response to a community-level crisis fuelled by racism and cultural misperceptions.

The crisis erupted after the City Council approved a planning application from the Bendigo Islamic Association in 2014 to build a community centre and mosque in East Bendigo. The decision prompted a series of public protests that captured widespread media attention.

"It was one of my most challenging times in local government," explained Craig Niemann, Greater Bendigo's CEO since 2005. "It was pretty scary when the rallies and protests were happening, both in

the streets and in the council meeting environment – the place where the elected council makes its decisions had to be shut down because of loud and disruptive behaviour by a fairly large number of protesters."

What happened next set Bendigo on the path to becoming the first local government area (LGA) formally accredited under Australia's Welcoming Cities Standard.

“We can now measure whether our actions are actually making a difference and have the evidence to back that up.”

Community leaders emerged who wanted to show that the anti-mosque protesters did not reflect the views of most Bendigo residents. The ‘Believe in Bendigo’ movement was formed, and the Council and local organisations joined forces to present a unified message that Bendigo residents do not tolerate racism.

During this tumultuous period, the Council identified the need for a community-wide plan to promote diversity and help address potentially divisive cultural issues.

“Our first cultural diversity and inclusion plan was born out of that experience,” said Craig. “It was a difficult time for Bendigo, but out of that adversity came really good things; it brought many local people and organisations together to make a stand and demonstrate that Bendigo is actually a very welcoming community.”

Many local organisations contributed to the *Greater Bendigo Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2016–2019* (CDIP) and helped deliver the actions. Key partners included Bendigo Community Health Services, Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services, Bendigo Interfaith Council and local sports organisations.

One action in the CDIP was to join the Welcoming Cities network and work towards becoming an accredited Welcoming City.

According to Craig, working closely with Welcoming Cities to prepare its accreditation application elevated the Council’s thinking and provided greater clarity about its strengths and areas for improvement.

In early 2020, specialists from Monash University assessed the City’s policy and practice against all six categories in The Welcoming Cities Standard.

The assessment involved a combination of desktop research and interviews with council staff and community members. The City achieved the ‘Advanced’ level of accreditation.

Achieving accreditation as a Welcoming City raises Greater Bendigo’s profile at the state, national and international levels and sets a benchmark for the City to continue to improve its services and welcoming practices.

“Working with Welcoming Cities was a really engaging process for our people and made sure that we weren’t kidding ourselves and just putting words on paper,” said Craig. “We can now measure whether our actions are actually making a difference and have the evidence to back that up.”

Although the Council’s Community Wellbeing Directorate manages the CDIP, responsibility for delivering the plan is shared across the entire organisation and its community partners.

“The process helped shift our plan from being just another document to being a living piece of work delivered by people across council and the wider community,” added Craig. “That’s where I think we are doing great work here in Bendigo, because no one individual, team or organisation owns this welcoming work – the whole community owns it.”

"...no one individual, team or organisation owns this welcoming work – the whole community owns it."

Craig Niemann, CEO, City of Greater Bendigo

Key welcoming activities in Greater Bendigo

Welcoming initiatives implemented in the Greater Bendigo community since the Council's original CDIP was released include:

- joining the Welcoming Cities network and achieving formal accreditation as a Welcoming City
- the Community Harmony Project aimed at reducing racism and discrimination towards Muslim residents and supporting their sense of belonging
- a reconciliation plan recognising, and responding to the needs of, Greater Bendigo's two First Nations clans
- the Greater Bendigo Intercultural Ambassadors pilot program
- the Karen Connections Project
- the Building Culturally Inclusive Sporting Clubs Program
- sponsoring Bendigo Business Council's annual Diversity and Inclusion Award, and
- providing cultural awareness training for the Council's workforce and in the wider community.

Top tips for council CEOs

Greater Bendigo's CEO, Craig Niemann, offers the following advice for other council leaders thinking of pursuing accreditation as a Welcoming City:

1. Do your homework and make sure you understand exactly what outcomes you want to achieve.
2. The most important aspect is being able to measure whether your plans are actually making the desired positive difference in the community. Set realistic objectives and targets and put in place the necessary systems and practices to accurately measure progress.
3. Give your staff licence to embed welcoming work across your organisation.
4. Make sure everyone across your organisation understands what welcoming practices and services are and why they are important.
5. Encourage and empower your staff to think creatively and engage with other organisations to combine efforts and have a much greater impact in your community. Partnerships are key; councils cannot develop a welcoming community working in isolation.

1 Leadership



Members of Hobart's Aboriginal (palawa) community perform a smoking ceremony during the public launch of the City's Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan.

1. Leadership

Principles

Inclusive leadership from local government and other community leaders sets the tone and direction for communities to follow.

Council policies and plans can provide guiding frameworks that foster inclusive leadership and increase positive connections between migrants and existing residents. By partnering with community stakeholders to promote a welcoming culture, councils cultivate the connective tissue that underpins social cohesion.

Welcoming Cities recognise the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion and seek to advance and institutionalise that work by collaborating across councils, with the local community and with other government agencies. Voices and experiences of both receiving and migrant communities are brought together to define a shared welcoming agenda and platform.

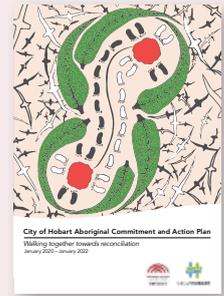
Welcoming Cities respectfully acknowledge the past and present Traditional Owners and custodians of this land – the First Nations peoples. They seek to engage local First Nations representatives as leaders in welcoming activities.

In a Welcoming City, receiving communities are given opportunities to understand who their new neighbours are and why welcoming work is important.

Council Spotlight

Embracing the truth of a troubled history

City of Hobart, TAS



50,000 / Approximate population 24% / Overseas born 1.4% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

When the City of Hobart set out to update its 17-year-old Aboriginal strategy, it quickly became clear that the unique context in Tasmania demanded a flexible and highly tailored process. A responsive approach was needed to support meaningful engagement and local ownership.

Community engagement during the early phase of the project revealed that the usual Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) format was not universally accepted. Many members of the local Aboriginal community wanted the plan to be a more tailored and nuanced document that reflected Hobart's and Tasmania's unique history.

For many years Tasmania had been relatively silent about its Aboriginal history, particularly the devastating impacts of colonialism on the state's Aboriginal inhabitants. This had contributed to a widespread misconception that there was no continuing Tasmanian Aboriginal culture. This troubled history made the new action plan, and the way in which it was developed, especially important.



From left, Harley Mansell, Uncle Dougie Mansell, Lord Mayor Cr Anna Reynolds, Sinsa Mansell and Janice Ross celebrate the launch of Hobart City's Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan.

The City of Hobart embraced this feedback and reframed the document as an Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan. The City embarked on a process that would enable the community

to acknowledge the difficult truths of the past and deeply consider ways of moving forward together. The year-long project was guided by Aboriginal people, City employees and the broader Hobart community.

The approach reflected the relationship the City hoped to have with Aboriginal stakeholders moving forward – one of respect, consideration, acknowledgement and walking together.

Reconciliation Australia recognised the unique context in Hobart and agreed to endorse the document under the RAP framework.

The City of Hobart's project team was overwhelmed by the positive community response to the genuine and respectful engagement process.

"There were many face-to-face conversations, including difficult conversations," said the City's Community Development Officer - Aboriginal, Jessica Quin, who was one of a small number of Aboriginal employees at the City at the time. "The level of engagement was actually quite overwhelming."

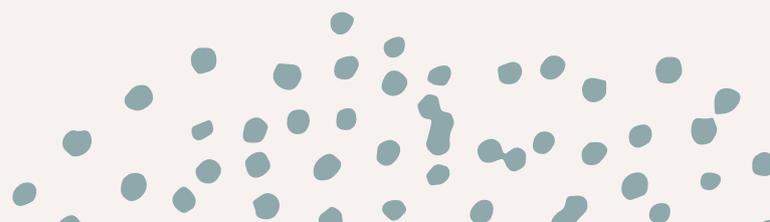
The resulting *City of Hobart Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan: Walking together towards reconciliation January 2020 - January 2022* includes 20 significant actions for the City to deliver, with the aim of building relationships; raising the profile of Aboriginal people, heritage and culture across the city; and building a culturally safe workplace.

See [01] [Resources](#), p92

‘Local governments are well-positioned to help broker partnerships, mediate tensions and create opportunities that foster trust and build relationships.

Working proactively with both newcomers and long-term residents, the City can help our community successfully navigate cultural change and create a broader sense of ‘us’.

Source: *City of Stirling Multicultural Framework*, p15



What success looks like

- 1.1 The local council recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of this Nation and seeks to engage local Indigenous communities in welcoming work.**
- 1.2 The local council partners with diverse stakeholders to promote a welcoming culture through advocacy and communication activities across various platforms.**
- 1.3 The local council supports and promotes activities and initiatives that nurture connections between migrant and receiving communities.**
- 1.4 The local council incorporates cultural diversity and inclusion in strategic, business and community plans and monitors their progress.**

Welcoming activity ideas

Having an organisational commitment to diversity and inclusion creates an environment that stimulates and supports inclusive leadership within your council and in the local community.

Inclusive leadership can be shown by 'official' and 'unofficial' leaders. It can be found and encouraged in adults and children, among all genders, existing community members and newcomers.

There are many ways you can role model and foster leadership that supports inclusion, diversity and social cohesion. The following ideas and examples come from Australia's growing network of Welcoming Cities and are provided here to help get you thinking.

1.1 The local council recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of this Nation and seeks to engage local Indigenous communities in welcoming work.

- Develop a formal Reconciliation Action Plan and/or commitment statement in partnership with your community that acknowledges local First Nations communities. Produce regular action plans that translate these commitments into measurable targets, activities and outcomes. Report on progress annually.
- Partner with residents and council staff from First Nations backgrounds to develop welcoming protocols and practices that introduce migrants to local Indigenous heritage.
- Establish a First Nations advisory committee and invite local First Nations community members to participate in other local multicultural advisory groups, committees and forums.
- Co-develop a plan or strategy to build partnerships between local First Nations leaders, migrant and refugee community leaders, and local government, and agree on principles for a collaborative approach to working together.
- Create opportunities for First Nations people to lead welcoming activities, such as cultural history, heritage and nature tours for new arrivals.
- Develop an internal protocols guide to help council employees engage with First Nations people and become more culturally aware and responsive to their needs.

Examples 1.1

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The Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee contributes to and monitors the implementation of the Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan. The committee provides strategic advice to Darebin City Council, supports community engagement, highlights issues and barriers affecting local Indigenous people, explains complex cultural issues, and helps the Council develop more effective relationships and partnerships with the First Nations community.

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The Parramatta Dialogues project involved a series of community conversations and cultural exchange workshops between First Nations and migrant communities in the City of Parramatta. The project aimed to strengthen mutual understanding between First Nations people and migrants in Western Sydney and build capacity for individual action towards reconciliation and welcoming.

Dialogue sessions (separated by gender) involved evenings of professionally facilitated storytelling and conversations. Cultural exchange activities involved sessions on weaving, art, tool making, drumming and tree planting. The project was delivered by Parramatta City in partnership with anti-racism storytelling social enterprise, Our Race, and four multicultural and settlement support organisations.

See [02] [Resources](#), p92

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The City of Stirling's newcomer's guide opens with a welcome message from an Aboriginal Elder and a map showing local Aboriginal place names and their meanings. The guide also features 'a yarn' with three Elders who talk about sharing their culture with newcomers, what life is like in the City, and local community groups and services.

See [03] [Resources](#), p92

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The Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Resource Centre in Balga is a regular stop on the City of Stirling's newcomer tour. Participants experience a traditional Welcome to Country and learn about First Nations culture and history.

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The City of Hobart's seasonal Bush Adventures program includes immersive outdoor activities led by Tasmanian Aboriginal organisation, Nita Education. Participants learn about Tasmania's Aboriginal (palawa) culture and history, stories, dance, crafts and connection to Country.

—

The City of Newcastle made use of virtual reality technology to travel back in time to help people experience nine local Aboriginal places before the Newcastle penal colony was established. In the video, the cultural significance and stories of each site are explained by Elders Wayila (Black Cockatoo) and Buuyaan (Bellbird) from the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

See [04] [Resources](#), p92

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The Australian Capital Territory Government's Welcome to Ngunnawal Country webpage includes a detailed history of the first inhabitants of the land, how to appropriately perform an Acknowledgement of Country and organise a Welcome to Country. It also acknowledges that after European settlement 'government policies and the pressures of this new occupation created severe social pressures on the Ngunnawal community and neighbouring Indigenous peoples'.

See [05] [Resources](#), p92

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Migrant women learn about First Nations culture during a Parramatta Dialogues session. Photo courtesy of Our Race.

Examples 1.2

1.2 The local council partners with diverse stakeholders to promote a welcoming culture through advocacy and communication activities across various platforms.

- Develop a welcome resource or newcomer's guide.
- Work closely with neighbouring councils to identify regional partnership opportunities that benefit your respective communities.
- Use council and partner venues and communication channels to promote strong welcoming messages. For example, produce welcoming videos, banners, posters and publications; incorporate welcoming messages into Mayoral and Councillor speeches; and support inclusive programs at local libraries, recreation centres, sporting clubs and events.

Ensure communications material features community members from diverse backgrounds.

- Consider including a category or assessment lens in community and business grants programs to prioritise proposals that contribute to achieving welcoming outcomes.
- Provide meeting and event spaces where multicultural community groups can gather. A relatively small investment of this kind can deliver significant results by helping to channel the knowledge and skills of local community members towards fulfilling local needs.
- Plan and implement integrated welcoming support services and intercultural awareness programs in partnership with multicultural associations and other stakeholders.

Moreland City Council holds an annual event to highlight the issues and challenges faced by refugees and people seeking asylum, and to celebrate the contributions these people make to the local community. The Council has also displayed banners over the entrances to its municipal offices to emphasise that Moreland City Council welcomes refugees and people seeking asylum.

In 2020, the Council hung banners on the outside of the Coburg and Brunswick town halls featuring the slogan: 'One blood, one world: Stand up against racism', indicating its commitment to promoting social cohesion and stamping out racism. The banners were developed in consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders and the First Nations members of the Moreland Reconciliation Working Group.



An anti-racism banner on a town hall in Moreland. Photo courtesy of Moreland City Council.

Examples continued on next page...



A volunteer assists a newcomer in the Stirling Welcome Hub based at the Herb Graham Leisure Centre in Mirrabooka. Photo courtesy of the City of Stirling.

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The City of Stirling led a partnership of five organisations to establish the Welcome Hub, which is based in a local recreation centre and funded through the Department of Home Affairs. Operating under an integrated service model, the hub assists people who have been in Australia for less than five years with their holistic settlement needs. Satellite services are offered within several other Perth municipalities.

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The City of Greater Dandenong produces 'Welcome All' videos featuring messages of welcome spoken by local community members, businesspeople and council staff from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, ages and genders. The Council states in the YouTube message accompanying its 2020 video that it 'values and is committed to promoting cultural, linguistic and religious diversity; community harmony and respect for all'.

See [06] [Resources](#), p92

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The Statement of Commitment for a Culturally Inclusive Greater Bendigo has been signed by more than 20 regional organisations. Led by the City of Greater Bendigo, the commitment includes a declaration that the City is a Refugee Welcome Zone. The Refugee Council of Australia has information on how to be recognised as a Refugee Welcome Zone.

See [07] [Resources](#), p92

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Examples 1.3

1.3 The local council supports and promotes activities and initiatives that nurture connections between migrant and receiving communities.

- Host welcome dinners and tours; multicultural festivals, markets and arts projects; storytelling sessions and other events that bring migrants and members of the receiving community together.
- Identify opportunities for community leaders and local service providers to showcase their organisations' inclusive activities – for example, through community awards and by promoting good practices on council websites.
- Hold 'collaboration days' and invite all the known community groups in your municipality to attend, including multicultural associations.
- Establish a designated role or team and an advisory group to plan and implement Welcoming Cities activities.
- Identify and support community leaders, such as Welcoming Cities champions and intercultural ambassadors. Use this to open up leadership opportunities for young people and members of the community who may otherwise have limited opportunities to engage in civic leadership.
- Broker cross-cultural relationships and information sharing to help resolve community tensions due to racism and misconceptions.
- Support connections between existing civic society organisations and new associations.
- Foster connections between new and receiving communities. For example, partner with Islamic groups to hold open days in local mosques.

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The City of Tea Tree Gully hosted an end-of-year Welcome Picnic in a local park to enable residents to meet each other, make new friends, try food from all over the world and join the City in welcoming newcomers to the local area.

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Darebin Intercultural Centre is a dedicated space for intercultural development, dialogue, engagement, participation and celebration. The Centre hosts a number of events each month, ranging from cultural programs and celebrations, to workshops, film days, forums, and panel discussions.

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Little World Storytimes is an inclusive, multicultural and multilingual program that showcases Karen, Afghan, South Sudanese and Indian cultures and languages to young children and their parents. The program was held regularly in Goldfields Library branches and agencies in central Victoria in 2019, as part of the City of Greater Bendigo's Inclusive Multicultural Library Project (MLP).

The MLP aims to increase the participation of newly arrived and refugee communities in library programs and increase interculturalism and cultural safety at libraries across the region. It was developed in close association with the City's 10 Intercultural Ambassadors, who contributed cultural knowledge and insights.

See [08] [Resources](#), p92

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1.4 The local council incorporates cultural diversity and inclusion in strategic, business and community plans and monitors their progress.

- Ensure all business units developing policies and plans, or delivering services to external customers, obtain feedback from and report back to multicultural communities on a regular basis.
- Establish a stakeholder reference group that reflects the full diversity of the community.
- Develop a cultural diversity and inclusion plan to promote multiculturalism and a welcoming attitude within your municipality. Ensure the plan's values and objectives are also reflected in other community vision statements, plans and strategies.
- Develop an organisational workforce development policy that fosters diversity and inclusive recruitment practices.
- Create dedicated positions within your workforce (for example, a Community Development Officer - Migration, or a Multicultural Project Officer) with responsibilities for delivering community development plans and programs that harness the assets of multicultural communications and connect them to information, resources and support.
- Embed cultural competency training in professional development programs for council staff and elected representatives and make it available to other community leaders.
- Identify cultural diversity champions in all council business units.

Examples 1.4

Volunteer Diversity Champions have been appointed within the City of Stirling's workforce to help the organisation employ inclusive practice and harness the talents and ideas of its diverse workforce. The champions' purpose is to inspire and support their colleagues to be involved in implementing the City's Multicultural Framework. They host awareness-raising activities, facilitate learning experiences and help to troubleshoot issues as they arise.

The Darebin Inclusive Communications Charter is designed to ensure the City of Darebin staff can communicate the services, activities and facilities provided by the City in an inclusive and accessible way. The charter includes a CALD communications toolkit to assist council staff to communicate with community members in different community languages.

The Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan (CDIP) Steering Committee was established by the City of Greater Bendigo to support a whole-of-community approach to advancing cultural inclusion within the region. More than 40 stakeholder organisations spanning business, sports, education, government, health, ethnic communities and civil society are represented on the committee and contributed to developing the City's CDIP. The City provides an annual report to the community about progress in achieving the actions and outcomes in the plan.

Hold an event in your council as part of A Taste of Harmony. This is a great opportunity to celebrate and support the diversity of employees within your organisation.

See [09] [Resources](#), p92

Council Spotlight

Preparing a rural community for greater diversity

Paroo Shire Council, QLD

1,600 / Approximate population

12% / Overseas born

28% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Welcoming migrants can pose challenges for receiving communities with relatively low levels of cultural diversity. This is one of the challenges Paroo Shire Council is seeking to address through its Welcoming Plan.

The Shire's population of less than 1,600 residents is spread across almost 50,000 square kilometres in South West Queensland. A declining population and the threat of widespread drought continue to impact services and opportunities for residents. However, the decline also creates job vacancies and opportunities in the local area.

The Council identified that many migrants previously lived in rural areas in their homeland and therefore may prefer to settle in communities outside Australia's major cities. These new arrivals can bring significant economic, social and cultural benefits to rural and regional communities.

Initial conversations with community members about migration into the region uncovered a variety of concerns about how local towns would fare with new arrivals. This highlighted the need to prepare the community for regional migration.

Paroo's Welcoming Plan is both outward and inward looking. It seeks to reach out to new migrants to give them an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of living in the Outback and encourage them to settle in Paroo. The plan also aims to build the capacity of the receiving community to embrace newcomers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The Council invested significant time and energy into talking with business owners, the community sector and Shire residents to clearly define the language and messages used to describe migration; communicate the rationale for and benefits of attracting new arrivals; address concerns, stereotypes and misconceptions about migrants; explore ideas and invite people to be part

of the journey. The communication process involved the following steps:

Identifying and sharing stories of migrants already living in the Shire via social media, newsletters and news media to improve community perceptions.

Using the correct terminology around migration, and explaining different migration streams and requirements for being accepted as a skilled migrant.

Developing and implementing a communications strategy around the economic and cultural benefits of migration.

Promoting a clear and concise message across the Shire about the aims of the Welcoming Plan.

Leveraging existing community activities to promote the Welcoming Plan and achieve its objectives. For example, the local librarian invited migrants living in the Shire to read a book or share a story about their culture or childhood during regular children's story time sessions.



Filming a story time session inside the Cunnamulla pharmacy. Photo courtesy of Paroo Shire Council.

Providing a guiding framework

City of Stirling, WA

220,000 / Approximate population

33% / Overseas born

1.0% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

The *City of Stirling Multicultural Framework* is a high-level guiding document that underpins the City's strategic vision of achieving an inclusive and harmonious community.

As one of Western Australia's most culturally diverse local government areas, the City of Stirling has actively promoted multiculturalism and newcomer integration for many years. The City established the Mirrabooka Multicultural Centre, has built strong partnerships with local multicultural communities, and supports programs that provide migrants with information and connections to help them settle into the community.

The Multicultural Framework builds on what has already been achieved and aims to help the community reap the rewards of cultural diversity.

The framework focuses on three key areas:

- **Newcomers** - ensuring newcomers to Stirling are informed, connected, engaged and empowered
- **Community** - developing a welcoming, inclusive, enabling and resilient community
- **Organisation** - council staff and practices are culturally competent, accessible, responsive and committed.

It identifies 12 outcomes, many of which are being pursued in partnership with other stakeholders.

The framework sits alongside the City's Reconciliation Action Plan, Access and Inclusion Plan, and Age Friendly Community Strategy, and has been developed to specifically deliver on the 'Inclusive and Harmonious City' objective in Stirling's Strategic Community Plan.

To shape and develop the framework, the City:

- established a cross-organisational steering group
- researched local and international best practice
- analysed local demographic trends
- consulted with multicultural community leaders and agencies providing services to migrants and communities, and
- held co-design sessions and feedback sessions with City managers and staff.

The Stirling Multicultural Advisory Network was established to monitor the framework's implementation and help strengthen its delivery and outcomes.

One example of an initiative arising directly out of the framework is the City's Women Only Swimming Program. This program was developed in partnership with the Royal Life Saving Society of Western Australia to give women from diverse cultural backgrounds access to a safe and private space, free from men, in which they could learn to swim.

The original Multicultural Framework was accompanied by a two-year implementation plan with clear targets, responsibilities and timeframes. The framework will be reviewed every four years and implementation plans updated every two years.

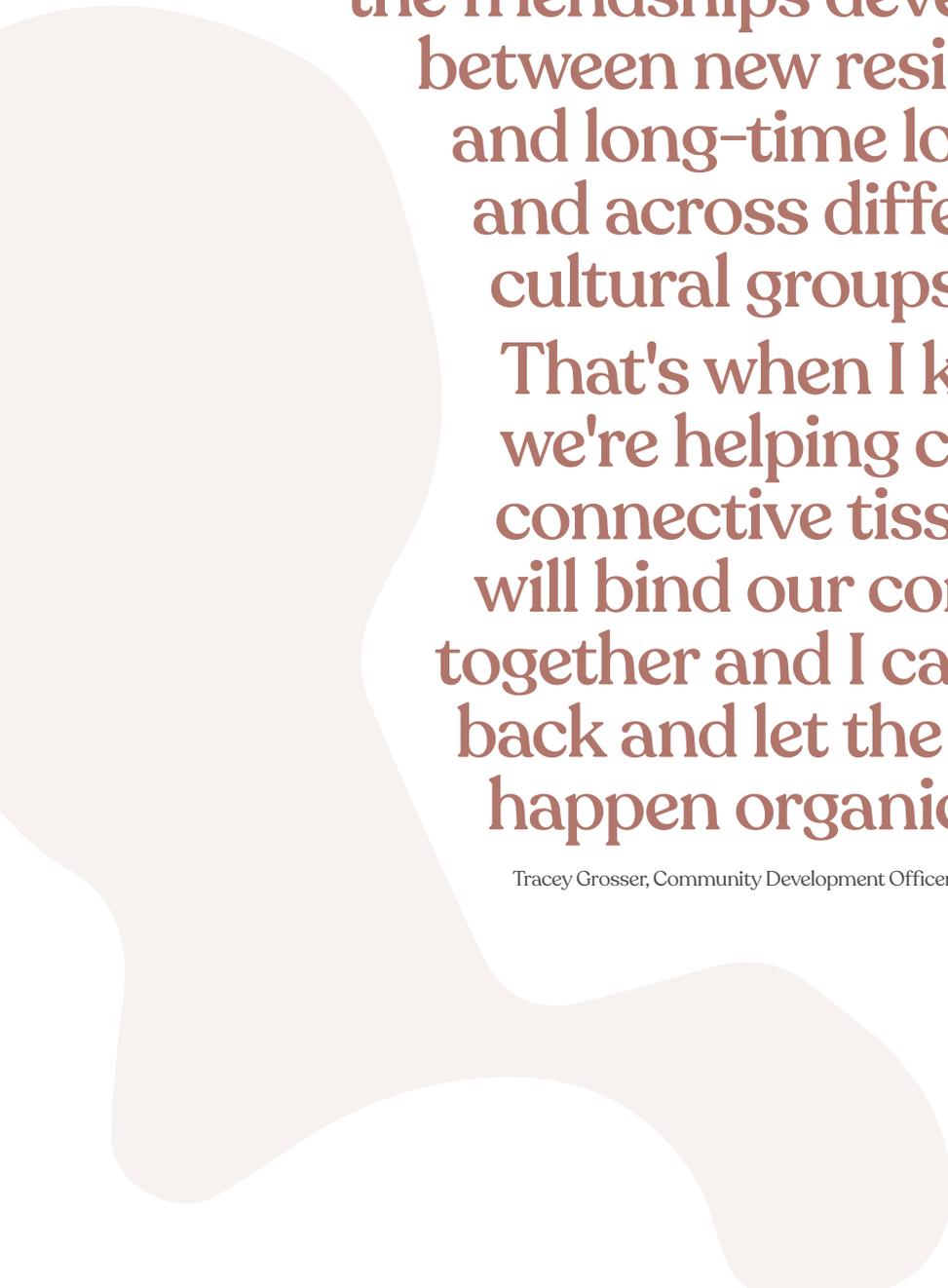
See [10] [Resources](#), p92



A family enjoys a community event in the City of Stirling in Perth. Photo courtesy of the City of Stirling.

‘By working in partnership with community organisations, local schools and other tiers of government, the City of Stirling plays an important role in creating welcoming environments.’

Source: *City of Stirling Multicultural Framework*, p5



“The best feeling is when I see the friendships developing between new residents and long-time locals, and across different cultural groups.

That's when I know we're helping create the connective tissue that will bind our community together and I can step back and let the rest happen organically.”

Tracey Grosser, Community Development Officer – Migration, Tatiara District Council

Social & Cultural

2 Inclusion



Hobart school students help with preparations for the traditional Chinese Lion Dance during the City of Hobart's Harmony Week. Photo courtesy of the City of Hobart.

2. Social and Cultural Inclusion

Principles

A connected and inclusive community is a place where people feel included in local activities and decision-making processes and can safely express themselves in ways that acknowledge their culture, heritage and background.

Community members know their voice is being heard and their needs are understood when they see them reflected in the local council's policies and practices.

Communities that proactively address racism and work to strengthen social cohesion are more vibrant, innovative and resilient - and much more welcoming to migrants.

Welcoming Cities seek to achieve these socially and culturally inclusive outcomes by facilitating relationships between migrant and receiving communities.

Welcoming Cities ensure that all residents have equitable access to council services and cultural assets. They stimulate diverse cultural expression within the local community and remove barriers to civic participation so all residents can freely engage in community life.

Council Spotlight

Building understanding across the dinner table

Tatiara District Council, SA

6,500 / Approximate population 20% / Overseas born 1.3% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

The Homemade dinner series is harnessing the universal language of food to build acceptance and understanding among Tatiara District's increasingly diverse community.

More than one quarter of the 2,500 residents in Bordertown – Tatiara's main population centre – are migrants. They come from 23 countries and most have moved to the area in recent years to work at the local meatworks operated by the nation's largest meat processing company, JBS Australia.

Tatiara District Council's Community Development Officer – Migration, Tracey Grosser, said it had become evident that a lot of "parallel living" was happening in the town. Migrants and members of the receiving community weren't mixing and the level of interaction between the different cultural groups was also low.

The receiving community needed support and opportunities to get to know and embrace their new neighbours, while the new arrivals also expressed an interest in getting to know each other better.

The Council partnered with the local migrant resource centre and JBS Australia to establish a Multicultural Group and develop a Multicultural Action Plan. The idea for the Homemade program flowed out of these initiatives.

With the Council's support, Bordertown's Highway Church secured almost \$20,000 in federal funding to pilot the Homemade dinner series. Locals were able to try Filipino, Malaysian, Afghan and African cuisines prepared by groups of residents from each of those cultural backgrounds.

Each group designed the menu for a three-course meal and a program of activities, which included cooking demonstrations, storytelling and cultural dance. The four sold-out dinners were held in the church hall.

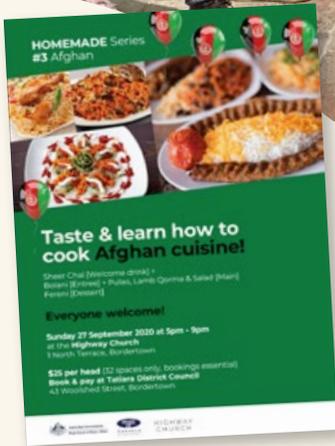
Planning and hosting the dinners helped migrant participants develop leadership skills, practise English and establish intercultural friendships. A number of employment and business opportunities were also generated, for example, in catering.

The Homemade program is centred around the idea that sharing a homemade meal can facilitate cultural understanding and foster integration. Feedback following each of the four dinners has certainly borne that out.

"The vibrant personalities, resilience and strength of their hosts really came across to everyone attending the dinners," Tracey explained. "The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive - we now have our traditional residents telling us how blessed Bordertown is to have such brave and inspiring people living in our community ... it's really helped change people's perceptions."

“Thank you for a wonderful evening. You are a blessing to our community.”

Written feedback from a Tatiara resident after attending a Homemade dinner



“Thank you very much for the opportunity to share in your food and culture. It has helped me understand challenges faced by others in our community. I hope one day we can share our food with you too, but it certainly will not be as tasty.”

Written feedback from a Tatiara resident after attending a Homemade dinner

Main image, Tatiara’s Malaysian Homemade dinner hosts with their ‘Malaysia House’ pop-up restaurant sign and certificates of participation. Inset, the flyer for Tatiara’s Afghan Homemade dinner event. Images courtesy of Tatiara District Council.

What success looks like

- 2.1 The local council's policies and practices include and engage both receiving and migrant communities.
- 2.2 The local council facilitates diverse cultural expression through a range of activities and observances.
- 2.3 The local council facilitates language access.
- 2.4 The local council partners with government, business and community stakeholders to promote affordable, safe and accessible housing, health, justice and transport services.
- 2.5 The local council is committed to embedding broader diversity and inclusion approaches across the organisation and recognises that there are often additional barriers and vulnerabilities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, women from migrant backgrounds, younger and older people from migrant backgrounds, people living with disability, and/or people who identify as LGBTI.

Welcoming activity ideas

By developing policies, programs and practices that support inclusion and celebrate diversity, migrants and long-time residents can feel like they belong.

There are a number of things your council can do to strengthen social and cultural inclusion in your community. We've listed some ideas below to support your planning.

2.1 The local council's policies and practices include and engage both receiving and migrant communities.

- Collect and analyse current demographic data to determine the cultural, religious and linguistic composition of the local community.
- Collect local area data and community perspectives to understand trends concerning settlement issues, ethnicity, racism, health, education, employment and socio-economic status.
- Conduct quarterly or half-yearly surveys to monitor residents' satisfaction with council services and gather feedback and suggestions. Ensure the survey uses plain English and is suitable for translation into a range of languages. Provide additional support to help people from groups at risk of exclusion complete the survey.
- Ensure that an up-to-date diversity profile is available and being used across your council to inform new plans and strategies, develop community engagement processes, and update existing planning documents.
- Collaborate with local organisations that have access to valuable community-level data, for example: community health services, police and multicultural services organisations.
- Develop an anti-racism strategy and consider offering training to help community members learn how to safely and constructively intervene when they witness incidents of racism or discrimination.
- Ensure your council's welcoming, diversity and social inclusion plans comply with relevant international conventions and frameworks, Commonwealth and state legislation, and your jurisdiction's human rights charter, and align with other municipal plans and strategies. List these alignments in each new publication.
- Regularly review the aims and functions of council-run multicultural centres, programs and services.
- Partner with local tertiary education and training providers to host welcome events for international students and provide them with in-language information on local community support services and programs.

- Develop resource kits or 'welcome packs' to encourage newly arrived migrants to use council-run facilities and services, meet other members of the community and understand that these services and facilities are there for them to use. Welcome packs could include free passes and/or free or subsidised membership for a period of time for council-run services and facilities – for example, swimming pools, recreation centres and libraries.
- Ensure your council's published plans and communications collateral feature the faces, comments and stories of people who reflect the diversity of the local population.
- Provide council staff and community members with bystander racism training.
- Ensure customer service staff responding to inbound phone calls have clear referral pathways for the diversity of the community, including translation support.

Examples 2.1

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Moreland City's first Human Rights Policy was inspired by the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Australian Human Rights Framework*, and the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, which sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all Victorians.

The policy provides the Council with a 10-year overarching framework for delivering accessible, equitable and inclusive programs, services and decision-making processes. It aims to unite and strengthen the Council's existing policies and commitments by adopting an intersectional approach[^] to ensuring the human rights of all Moreland residents are upheld.

See [11] [Resources](#), p92

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Give Nothing to Racism – Following the launch of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission's Give Nothing to Racism campaign, the students at Holy Family School in Porirua made a video asking their teachers to always believe that they can achieve and to simply pronounce their names correctly, as a way of giving nothing to racism.

See [12] [Resources](#), p92

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The City of Hobart implemented the Hobart Welcomes All campaign to support its aspiration to be the most inclusive city in the world. The subsequent Hobart Respects All anti-racism campaign builds on the earlier campaign and is a call to action for residents to take a stand when they see racist behaviour. The campaign informs bystanders about practical actions they can take to support anyone who is being targeted by racist or discriminatory behaviour.

See [13] [Resources](#), p92

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Darebin City Council consulted with diverse audiences from its community before its 2019–20 budget was finalised, with the aim of giving under-represented groups more influence in budget outcomes. This process was undertaken after demographic analysis identified groups that were at risk of exclusion.

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[^] An intersectional approach acknowledges and responds to the combined complexities of people, systems and structures in our society and how they interact with each other. It enables a council to understand the connections between structures that shape diverse populations and offer a more effective and efficient response than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to solving social inequities.

2.2 The local council facilitates diverse cultural expression through a range of activities and observances.

- Host festivals and other events that create opportunities for migrants and the receiving communities to share and get to know about each other's cultures. Events could include multicultural food festivals, music and dance events, art and craft exhibitions, community picnics, neighbourhood meet-greet-and-eat events, cultural dinners, and street parades and performances to mark special cultural celebration days.
- Develop and promote a community-wide Welcoming Cities calendar of events to celebrate and showcase cultural diversity in your municipality.
- Organise a series of community dialogues, led by experienced facilitators, that provide both migrants and members of receiving communities with safe and supportive opportunities to express their opinions, including their concerns and fears.
See [14] [Resources](#), p92
- Stimulate opportunities for migrants and receiving community members to work together on joint projects such as a fundraising campaign, an emergency relief effort, or addressing an issue of local concern, or participate in activities of mutual interest such as gardening or sports.
See [15] [Resources](#), p92
- Encourage the organisers of existing community festivals and events to broaden their programs to open up opportunities for newcomer communities to participate.
- Encourage existing volunteer and community programs to create opportunities for migrants, both as participants and as service recipients.
- Consider establishing a local new arrivals network and/or a mentoring program, involving members of the receiving community and including established migrant residents.

For example, a network may hold a weekly coffee catch-up where migrants can practise their English with volunteers from the receiving community and organise in-home dinners with local families. Mentors take migrants on activities such as hikes and road trips to explore local surroundings, excursions to learn how to get around on public transport, and visits to museums and other local attractions.
- Encourage migrants to join the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of their child's school, as migrants are often under-represented. Information on the role of PTAs and governing school councils could be shared with new migrants.
- Upskill your council's sport and recreation team to actively support the welcoming program. Building capacity within local sports clubs to offer culturally inclusive programs can be an excellent way of helping both migrants and receiving communities to embrace diversity and foster inclusion.
- Encourage community groups and churches to invite migrants to regular meet-and-chat events, such as baking and craft classes and coffee mornings.
- Partner with non-profit organisations offering programs that connect, educate and empower new migrants and their receiving communities. Look for evidence-based programs that may not currently be offered locally and find ways to make them available in your community.

‘Diversity in culture, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, ability, age, body, family, recreation, profession, personal strengths, income level, language, education, life experiences and more make up each of us and, together, make up our city.

We recognise and embrace the rich complexity diversity brings to our lives – we are all part of creating Hobart’s identity.’

From the City of Hobart’s strategic plan: *A Community Vision for our Island Capital*, p40

Examples 2.2

Dialogues on Immigrant Integration (DII) is a community effort in Boulder County, Colorado, USA, which experimented with many different forms of community dialogue and found it required creativity and persistence to get various audiences to mix. Rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all model, the preferred approach was a combination of large, small and one-on-one dialogues held in familiar and comfortable settings.

One of DII's greatest dialogue successes was with the University of Colorado, which brought together immigrant workers, students and university faculty. The dialogues stimulated greater respect between each of these different segments of the University community. The University subsequently adopted dialogues as an ongoing practice and incorporated them into campus life.

See [16] [Resources](#), p92

Newcomers Networks operate in more than 40 locations across New Zealand. Networks aim to help people meet and establish friendships in their communities by participating in shared activities. They go a long way towards helping migrants feel connected and included in community life.

See [17] [Resources](#), p92

The Canterbury-Bankstown City's Emerging Communities Resource Centre is located in the Lakemba Library building. The centre serves as a community hub that provides meeting, office and training space for local emerging and refugee communities to develop their own capacity-building programs and build linkages with other communities and mainstream service providers.

In Macomb County, Michigan, USA, the county-led multisector One Macomb Committee hosts celebrations of religious and cultural holidays.

See [18] [Resources](#), p92

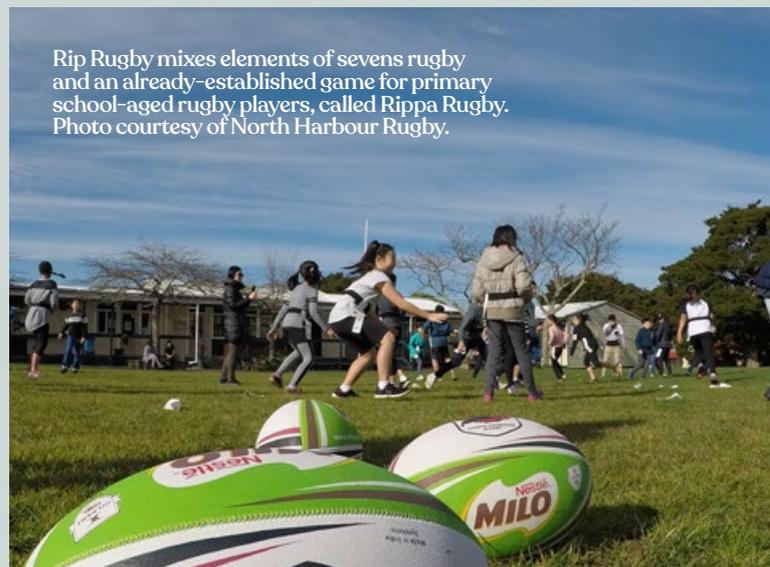
During Welcoming Week each year, the City of St Charles in Minnesota, USA, sponsors a community cultural celebration and includes the planning and promotion of the event as part of the City Council's official business.

See [19] [Resources](#), p92

Quick Rip Rugby has been introduced in New Zealand as an ideal way to introduce the sport to people from cultural backgrounds that have no rugby tradition. This form of rugby is a safe, non-contact, easy-to-play sport anyone of any ability can play.

In Australia, the sport of futsal opens up similar opportunities to introduce a broad cross-section of the community to playing this small-sided, usually indoor, version of soccer (see the City of Port Adelaide Enfield Council Spotlight on page 83).

Rip Rugby mixes elements of sevens rugby and an already-established game for primary school-aged rugby players, called Rippa Rugby. Photo courtesy of North Harbour Rugby.



2.3 The local council facilitates language access.

- Establish targeted projects to support language access and connections for specific cultural groups in your community.
- Consider holding a language celebration event for groups who wish to celebrate their cultures and maintain their heritage languages.

See [20] [Resources](#), p92

- Review the accessibility and use of accredited translators and interpreters across your council to identify gaps and barriers in providing assisted language access to support the delivery of council programs and services.
- Use your local libraries to run programs and events that support cultural awareness raising and language access. There is no cost or

barrier to entering a library – they are places migrants and other newcomers can freely access and feel welcome and supported.

- Partner with local English language schools to help them broaden their services to migrants, for example by establishing a weekly women’s group to help strengthen community bonds as well as improving people’s English.
- Consider creating paid roles for community members to share council information within the community and stimulate and support opportunities to engage. This also opens up opportunities for the community to feed information back to council.

Below: Tatiara residents enjoying the multicultural food festival held in early 2021. The festival was the culmination of the inaugural Homemade project, which brought locals together to share food, stories and performances.





Examples 2.3

A significant number of Karen migrants have settled in the City of Greater Bendigo. The Karen Connections pilot project aimed to increase the level of access to services in the City for people from a Karen background. The project supported the Council in providing interpreting and translation services, and a range of resources were developed to ensure the Karen community had equitable access to council services and other community support services.

For example, a Welcome Resource Booklet was published in English and Karen, and the Council partnered with a local publisher and library network to produce the children’s book *Counting in Karen Culture*. The book was written and illustrated by Karen children and their families and used in story times at the Bendigo Library.

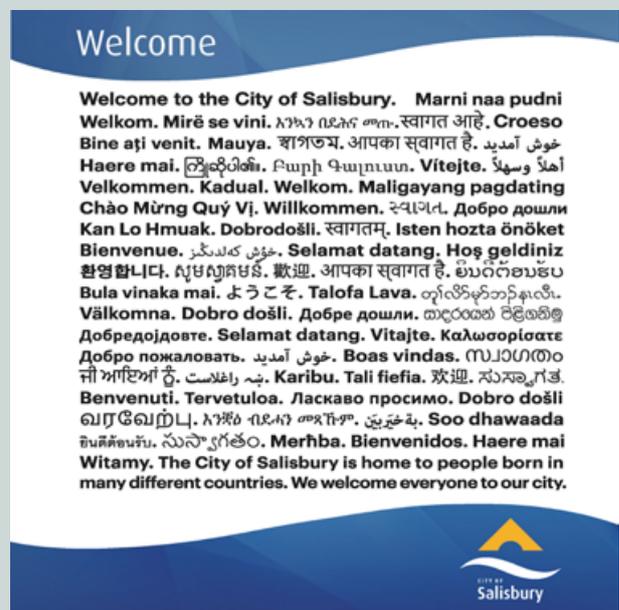
The Karen Community Hub and Language School was established to improve settlement opportunities and the wellbeing of Karen people and help them preserve their identity and cultural traditions.

Palmerston North City Library in New Zealand refers to itself as ‘the Living Room of the City’. The library offers a continual program of cultural and language-related events and exhibitions, often complementing events happening in the wider city. Events hosted at the library have included multicultural book groups, free Chinese language sessions, Latin American film screenings, and cultural performances.

Brisbane City Council has developed the *One Brisbane many cultures* newsletter – a quarterly publication in 10 languages, including English, to provide a snapshot of key council initiatives and city-wide events. Through the newsletter, the Council actively leads, advocates and promotes Brisbane as an inclusive city and encourages communities from diverse cultural backgrounds to participate in its programs and enjoy the many activities on offer in Brisbane.

The City of Salisbury’s Welcome Booklet is available in English and 13 other prominent local languages, ranging from Bosnian and Swahili to Tagalog. The booklet was developed and translated to raise migrants’ awareness of the services, facilities and other resources available in the community and support their settlement and integration journey.

See [21] [Resources](#), p92



Above, the City of Salisbury’s webpage for new residents features a Welcome message presented in a large number of languages used by local community members.

Salisbury Libraries also provide a variety of multicultural resources in around 30 languages across their five branches. The libraries’ Community Language collections include books, large print, CDs, DVDs, magazines and newspapers, including providing online access to foreign language media. A large selection of resources for learning English is also available.

2.4 The local council partners with government, business and community stakeholders to promote affordable, safe and accessible housing, health, justice and transport services.

- Identify the most reliable federal and state government information sources for migrants that refer them to appropriate agencies and information about wider national topics, such as Australia's education, health, laws and justice systems.
- Enlist the help of community leaders and cultural ambassadors to help convey information in accessible formats to hard-to-reach community members.
- The 2019-20 bushfires and 2020 coronavirus pandemic highlighted how diverse communities with existing strong communication pathways were more prepared to respond to a crisis and, ultimately, more resilient. Consider establishing a community language information network in your municipality or wider region to support the delivery of targeted communication, particularly about important public health topics and in emergency or crisis situations.
- Engage with local migrant and refugee communities and community health services to identify the barriers and enablers to accessing health services in your LGA. This process may also uncover hidden or undocumented public health issues affecting specific cultural groups. Develop shared, place-based approaches to addressing issues.
- Develop a directory of information about locally available health promotion programs, public health risks and community recreational activities. Ensure the directory is accessible, including having information translated into key languages represented in your community. Where you find gaps in the quality and suitability of available information, work with the source organisations to address those gaps. Regularly update the directory and distribute it among local multicultural services and associations and community groups.
- Partner with local community health and multicultural services to develop culturally inclusive programs and services that address the most critical needs of migrants living in your community. For example, you could develop a targeted 'peer education health program' for new migrants, or a diabetes awareness program for older migrants, to increase their health literacy and access to services.
- Engage with groups requiring affordable housing in your LGA to better understand their needs and concerns and identify systemic social and affordable housing issues affecting your municipality.
- Advocate for increased access to targeted social and affordable housing, develop an affordable housing action plan, and broker relationships between priority groups and housing support and supply organisations.
- Strengthen relationships with transport planning authorities and local area transport operators. Become an information bridge to help them stay in touch with the needs of your community. Shine a spotlight on the needs of residents experiencing the greatest transport disadvantage.
- Make targeted improvements to the quality and connectivity of walking and cycling routes in neighbourhoods with low levels of car ownership. Focus on improving routes linking these areas with schools, shopping centres, parks and civic venues.
- Develop a walking and cycling decision-making framework, for internal use, to prioritise the delivery and upgrade of infrastructure based on social, health, geographic and participation equity factors.
- Collaborate with the community policing unit for your area to organise crime prevention and justice support information sessions and help strengthen the relationship between local police and CALD communities.
- Partner with police and other stakeholders to support coordinated communication with, and support for, population groups within the community who are the targets of racial and religious discrimination. Aim to increase the safety and wellbeing of these groups, and their capacity to take appropriate action.

Examples 2.4

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A Healthy Eating Guide was translated into Karen language for the Karen refugee community in the City of Greater Bendigo. The project was a partnership between the City Council, Bendigo Community Health Services and Diabetes Australia. The guide featured easy to understand illustrations and provided information about healthy and unhealthy foods that were readily available in Bendigo, healthier cooking methods, recommended daily intakes, and other information for maintaining a healthy diet.

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New Zealand's Community Languages Information Network Group (CLING) was established in the wake of the 2011 Christchurch earthquake to help get emergency information to CALD communities.

"People could see that there was part of the population that wasn't getting information or messages," said Maria Fresia of Interpreting Canterbury. "Agencies didn't know how to get information out to people who didn't speak English."

CLING's first publication was an information sheet titled *Guidelines for Getting Public Information (Earthquake Messages) to CALD or Multi-Cultural Communities*. The document includes a priority list for language translation based on Christchurch's demographics and most vulnerable groups. It gives tips about making English easier to understand, particularly when it is going to be translated, and explains how to use interpreting services and distribute information.

CLING later released a comprehensive document of best practice guidelines for engaging with CALD communities in times of disaster and continues to help local authorities with CALD communication campaigns.

See [22] [Resources](#), p92

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In Wellington, New Zealand, five education providers, international student volunteers and the police are working together to promote the wellbeing of New Zealand's international student community.

International students can be more vulnerable to falling victim to crimes such as burglary and fraud. Wellington's International Student Ambassador Program helps get the right messages out using messengers who understand the best ways of connecting with their communities. As part of the program, between 20 and 30 students are trained by the police to be ambassadors to their student communities, helping to prevent crime and victimisation.

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The City of Pittsburgh's Mayor's Office of Equity partners with the Urban Redevelopment Authority to provide access to homebuyer assistance, rental assistance and home repair assistance for immigrant residents. The Mayor's Office provides advice on language access and program access strategies for these programs.

See [23] [Resources](#), p92

2.5 The local council is committed to embedding broader diversity and inclusion approaches across the organisation and recognises that there are often additional barriers and vulnerabilities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, women from migrant backgrounds, younger and older people from migrant backgrounds, people living with disability, and/or people who identify as LGBTI.

- Ensure that key direction-setting plans specifically reference the principles of promoting cross-cultural understanding and addressing barriers to access and inclusion. Publish measurable targets for achieving meaningful outcomes in these areas.

- Develop frameworks and other tools for use within your council to support the development of cross-departmental policies, plans and services that recognise and address barriers to inclusion and the challenges of intersectionality in policy and practice.
- Embed cultural and diversity champions in each council department to advocate for and provide guidance to their colleagues on matters relating to inclusion and diversity.

Examples 2.5

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The City of Darebin's Equity Impact Assessment Tool

helps council staff implement the City's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework in everyday council business. The tool is used to inform initial thinking, planning or scoping for any council initiative, including policies, projects, events, services and strategies.

The tool asks staff to consider their project or activity from an equity, inclusion and wellbeing perspective and to look through overlapping lenses including (but not limited to) people, places, experiences, environments for health, human rights and environmental justice. It asks: 'Who is impacted (negatively or positively) by the project I am about to undertake?' And: 'How do I ensure that the project outcomes will be inclusive of and of benefit to Darebin's diverse community?'

The tool can also be used for reviews and audit purposes and ensures that disadvantaged communities, including newly arrived communities, are not directly or indirectly excluded from council initiatives.

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The Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21

is formed around five concepts, one of which is being 'Connected to culture and community'. This is being measured by the proportion of adults who feel valued by society. The City's approach aims to promote the development of inclusive communities by valuing: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; cultural diversity; people with a disability; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning/queer community members.

See [24] [Resources](#), p92

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The City of Dallas in Texas, USA

houses its immigrant integration and welcoming work within its broader Office of Equity and Inclusion, and has created equity indicators that embed the work of belonging with resilience, human rights and environmental quality.

See [25] [Resources](#), p92

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Council Spotlight

Stories strengthen community understanding

City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW

346,000 / Approximate population

35% / Overseas born

0.7% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Stories of Strength is an innovative oral history project designed to combat negative perceptions and stereotypes and improve social cohesion within a local community.

Initiated in the City of Canterbury Bankstown in Western Sydney, the project equipped students from local high schools with the interviewing and production skills to collect and curate stories from inspiring adults in their community.

The interviewees came from diverse cultural backgrounds and included migrants, refugees and Aboriginal Elders. The aims were to uncover and share empowering stories that are seldom heard; use narrative therapy techniques and the power of storytelling to develop students' wellbeing, resilience and understanding of their community; and inspire community members to stand united against forces of hate, violence and fear.

The project was delivered by Outloud, an intersectional, CALD-focused social impact arts organisation that creates genuine and meaningful opportunities for young people in Western Sydney. The Council engaged Outloud as its delivery partner because the non-government organisation had greater flexibility to explore creative approaches for engaging with young people and the wider community.

Joyce Conte, a drama teacher at Sir Joseph Banks High School, said her students really embraced the program. "Their theory was that their family was boring, until they started to speak to their parents and grandparents and uncles and aunties and see that they had these amazing stories that they'd never shared," explained Joyce.

Andrew Viller, a social science teacher at Chester Hill High School, had this to say about the program: "For me, what this does is not provide us with more strength, it simply uncovers the strength that resides in us".

Describing her experience of participating in the program, student Hope Sankari said: "I learned to not judge a book by its cover and just to respect everyone for who they are."

The three-year Stories of Strength and Resilience Project was funded by Multicultural NSW's COMPACT Program.

The project took many forms - art gallery exhibitions, podcasts, a website and a published book containing oral stories, essays, portraits and illustrations highlighting intergenerational and cross-cultural understanding and empathy. The book is a collection and celebration of the strength and resilience of inspiring individuals from the Bankstown and greater Western Sydney area. Some stories were shared through a monthly Stories of Strength podcast and via Sydney's independent youth broadcaster, FBi Radio's 'All the Best' program.

The project received the 2019 Oral History NSW Community History Award for its contribution to community storytelling.

The Stories of Strength program was later delivered in Lake Macquarie, through a partnership between Community Activities Lake Macquarie (CALM) and Outloud, with funding from the Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

See [26] [Resources](#), p92

Abdullah Sankari from Sir Joseph Banks High School interviews Ilona About-Zolof as part of the Stories of Strength project. Photo by Christopher Woe Photography.





**“I learned to not judge
a book by its cover and
just to respect everyone
for who they are.”**

Stories of Strength student participant, Hope Sankari

Participants in Wagga Wagga's Common Threads project, which is strengthening the city's social fabric. Photo courtesy of the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga.



“Being part of the group gave me confidence to take the opportunity. I applied, went for an interview ... and I got it!”

Hafiz, Common Threads participant

Council Spotlight

Stitching together the local social fabric

Wagga Wagga City Council, NSW

62,500 / Approximate population

15% / Overseas born

5.6% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Dozens of women from diverse cultural backgrounds in Wagga Wagga, NSW, have been brought closer together through a project that offers them a creative outlet as well as valuable social and learning opportunities.

The Common Threads project provides a safe space for participants to build important social support networks and reduce social isolation, while developing skills in a variety of textile mediums.

Participants are encouraged to explore opportunities to sell their products at local markets and establish social enterprises. They also participate in public exhibitions and activities showcasing multicultural arts.

Common Threads is being delivered through a partnership between the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga (MCWW), Wellways and the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors. Multicultural NSW provided funding through its Unity grants program and Wagga Wagga City Council supported the project through its annual community grants program.

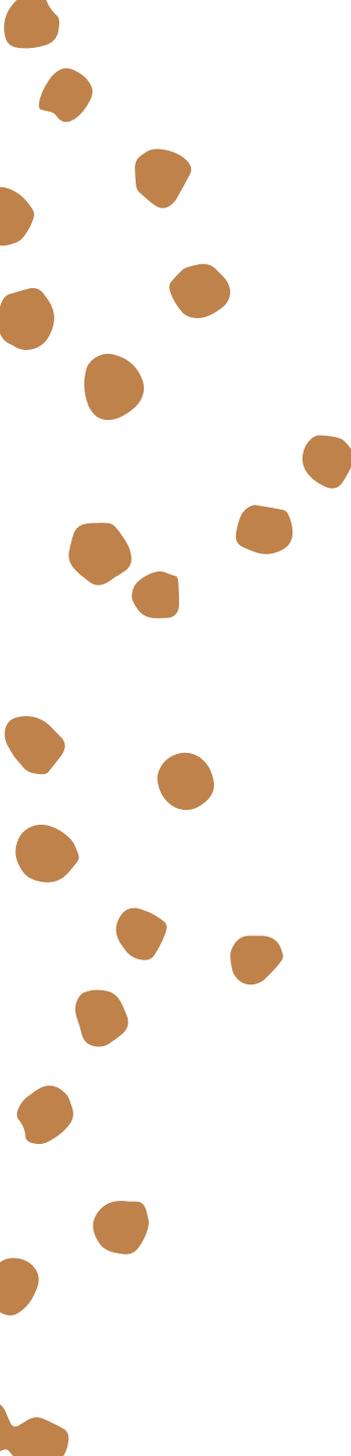
MCWW Community Development Officer, Thom Paton, said 71 women from 14 different cultural backgrounds participated in the weekly sessions during the first two years of the project (group activities were paused in 2020 due to COVID-19, but there are plans to resume in 2021).

"We had a huge number of participants - within the first couple of weeks we had up to 26 people turning up every session," said Thom. "The popularity and demand for additional classes was so high, we started a second weekly class."

The regular Common Threads activities have helped reduce the social isolation experienced by new settlers to the Wagga Wagga community and opened up an avenue to build important social support networks between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The groups host guest speakers from support agencies and act as a platform to introduce participants to these services. Some participants have also picked up work as a result of the project.

Hakimeh Rahimi, a migrant from Afghanistan, said it is "a great way to meet new people, share ideas, learn new skills and have fun while practising English in a social setting".

Another participant, Hafiz, also from Afghanistan, found work thanks to the connections opened up by participating in Common Threads. "One of the teachers we were working with told us about a position that was being advertised at a local shop," Hafiz explained. "Being part of the group gave me confidence to take the opportunity. I applied, went for an interview (which included showing what I could do) and I got it!"



‘...the evidence shows that welcoming people and giving them a pathway and a sense of belonging is the most significant thing you can do.’¹

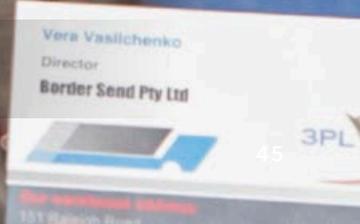
1. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Standing Committee on Migration, *No-one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*, Mr Evan Lewis, Group Manager, Multicultural Settlement Services and Communities, Department of Social Services, quote from transcript, p22

See [27] [Resources](#), p92

3 Economic Development



Participants in the Enterprising Wyndham Program pilot proudly display their business cards. Photo courtesy of Scanlon Foundation.



3. Economic Development

Principles

Achieving economic growth relies on having an inclusive economy that encourages the active participation of all residents, including new arrivals.

Welcoming Cities facilitate access, for both receiving and migrant communities, to opportunities for employment, business development and entrepreneurship.

Welcoming Cities value the unique talents and experiences that people of all backgrounds contribute to the economic prosperity of their communities.



Migrant Uzma Rubab was employed through Banyule's Inclusive Employment Program. Photo courtesy of Banyule City Council.



Council Spotlight

Being a community role model

Banyule City Council, VIC

122,000 / Approximate population 30% / Overseas born 0.6% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A central theme running through Banyule City Council's *Inclusive Local Jobs Strategy 2020-2025* (the ILJ Strategy) is the Council's intention to role model the change it wants to see in local workplaces.

The ILJ Strategy was developed in partnership with the local community. It represents a new place-based model of community and economic development for Banyule and galvanises the Council's role in creating local job outcomes for local people experiencing barriers to employment.

The ILJ Strategy has four focus areas that demonstrate the role local government can play in supporting vulnerable community groups:

1. Stimulate inclusive local employment opportunities.
2. Strengthen pathways to employment.
3. Grow business ownership and entrepreneurship.
4. Advance inclusive employment practices across the local government sector and private sector.

Banyule is located in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs. Although the City's overall published unemployment rate is not significant compared with other municipalities, there are pockets of high disadvantage in the local community where unemployment sits well above the Victorian average.

For example, First Nation peoples; culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, including refugees and asylum seekers; people living with a disability; and young people aged 16-25 are under-represented in the local labour market and continue to face barriers to full workforce participation.

This places them at greater risk of economic and social exclusion.

Banyule Mayor, Cr Rick Garotti, said there are some groups in the Banyule community that do not have

equal access to employment and the ILJ Strategy provides a pathway that otherwise might not have been available.

"We're proud of this Strategy and understand the responsibility of role modelling the change that we would like to see in our workplaces," Mayor Garotti said. "The Strategy is needed more than ever as we navigate the employment impacts of COVID-19, and we are passionate about making sure that all people in our community have the opportunity to find employment."

Banyule's Inclusive Employment Program is one example of how a local council is helping local people overcome barriers to employment. The program offers individuals from targeted community groups six months of paid employment in the Council's workforce, tailored to individual interests, aspirations and abilities.

One participant, Uzma Rubab, migrated to Australia from Pakistan with her husband and two young children, and was shocked to discover how challenging it was to settle and find work in a new country so different from her own. She gained valuable experience as a Strategy Development and Performance Officer with the Council, which led to her taking on another internal role.

"I feel like I am supported here ... I am accepted here," said Uzma. "Psychologically, I feel that I am important, and I can do so much that is of value."

See [28] [Resources](#), p92

“Only one third of more than 70,000 jobs in Hume City are filled by local residents – two-thirds of the workforce come from outside. And yet, we have high local unemployment. That’s why we’ve made this place-based partnership model a local priority ... Our goal is to see at least half the jobs in Hume taken up by Hume residents. Supporting economic participation is one of our priorities and has become a focus for our whole community.”

George Osborne, Manager, Economic Development, Hume City Council, referring to Hume’s Local Jobs for Local People Program.

What success looks like

- 3.1 The local council employs a workforce that is inclusive and diverse.**
- 3.2 The local council advances local business sourcing and contracting.**
- 3.3 The local council partners with the local business community to identify strategic opportunities for economic development and to encourage local jobs for local people, including those from migrant communities.**
- 3.4 The local council supports both receiving and migrant communities to advance economic development opportunities.**

Welcoming activity ideas

Local government has a critical role to play in fostering community and economic development at the local level.

This includes actively working to address systemic barriers and the underlying causes of disadvantage affecting local residents by investing in initiatives that generate local vocational training, employment and business development opportunities for people vulnerable to being excluded from the workforce.

Language barriers, unrecognised qualifications and some employers' unconscious bias are huge obstacles for migrant job seekers to overcome. At the same time, cultural diversity within our community and our workforces is proven to provide bottom-line benefits to businesses, as well as improved problem-solving, creativity and innovation.

For a local council to truly understand and respond to the needs of its community, its own workforce must reflect the diversity of that community. Practising inclusive employment is a crucial area in which a council can role model the change it wants to see in the local business community.

More than 620,000 of Australia's small businesses – more than one-third of our total small business community – are run by first- or second-generation migrants. Importantly, 80% of these small business owners did not own a business before coming to Australia. Opening a new business is a challenging task, especially for those who are newly arrived. They must learn about the local culture, language and laws. Supporting these small business owners to understand the Australian business landscape increases their chances of success, which has flow-on effects for their local communities.

The following ideas and examples come from across Australia's thriving Welcoming Cities network.

They are provided to help get you thinking about ways you can cultivate both prosperity and a welcoming community.

3.1 The local council employs a workforce that is inclusive and diverse.

- Develop a workforce justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) strategy for your council.
- Provide work experience, internship and mentoring opportunities for people from diverse communities. Reach out to under-represented groups and communities and provide assistance to help them prepare applications to participate.
- Revise traditional job application information to 'Easy read' English, reduce the amount of written content required and consider letting applicants know that translation and interpreting services are available if needed.
- Partner with local universities, TAFE colleges and vocational training organisations to develop capacity-building courses that support an inclusive and diverse workforce. Adopt internal practices that enable employees to take up this training.
- Embed cultural awareness training for existing and new employees, particularly for those in people management and recruitment roles, to promote better internal working relationships. Ensure updated and refresher courses are offered every few years.

- Encourage your council's human resources team to adopt blind recruitment strategies, for example, blocking out elements from job applications that could trigger conscious or unconscious bias, such as name, age, gender and suburb.
- Advertise job opportunities in targeted media and community networks that will reach members of diverse local communities.
- Create networking opportunities across your workforce that encourage employees from diverse backgrounds to mix and learn more about each other's cultures.
- Appoint cultural diversity champions in each of your council's departments.
- Bring in external multicultural specialists to help identify opportunities for opening career support pathways for culturally diverse staff members.

Examples 3.1

When recruiting for the role of **Karen Connections Officer** to increase access and connection for residents and visitors from a Karen background to Bendigo, staff at the City of Greater Bendigo engaged an interpreter to translate answers to the interview questions and help provide candidates with an equitable experience.

Staff worked closely with Human Resources to develop a tailored recruitment plan, as a standard process would not have been appropriate. To form a deeper connection, shortlisted candidates were invited for a coffee in the days leading up to the interviews and, once inside the interview room, each was asked where they would like to sit to ensure they would feel safe.

The final question for each candidate was asked in Karen language by the interpreter: 'What do you love about your community in Bendigo?' This was so the panel could see the candidate's passion shine through, even though they could not understand the answer.

Darebin Council decided to develop a Community Employment Program in direct response to a recommendation from its Welcoming Cities Reference Group. The program aims to strengthen the municipality's culturally safe, diverse and inclusive workforce and enable the Council to better anticipate and respond to the needs of its community.

In many local councils across Australia, the responsibility for engaging and including diverse communities often lies with a standalone community development department. Sharing knowledge of multicultural communities and their needs is often done in isolation and without broader council buy-in. In some instances, promoting cultural competency within a council's workforce only involves offering occasional cultural diversity training and informal, internal consultancy.

The City of Stirling has addressed this by establishing a volunteer Diversity Champions Network among its workforce. Diversity Champions are embedded in each department and help the Council implement its Multicultural Framework and achieve its vision of being an 'inclusive and harmonious city' - an aspiration in Stirling's Community Strategic Plan.

Diversity Champions receive specialised training in issues involving diversity and inclusion, which means this knowledge and expertise are no longer held in only one section of the Council's workforce - they are spread across the organisation.

By empowering staff members to play a proactive role in responding to multicultural issues in a work context, the City of Stirling is bringing about real change among its staff and in its work practices.

See [29] [Resources](#), p92

3.2 The local council advances local business sourcing and contracting.

- Embed local procurement targets in your council's procurement policy.
- Identify barriers that may be constraining local businesses, particularly small businesses and start-ups, from responding to council tenders and develop ways to address those barriers (for example, business insurance requirements).
- Build a categorised, capability-based database of local businesses and contractors and proactively keep them informed about opportunities to apply for council contracts.
- Run information sessions for local businesses on council procurement processes and offer training in how to develop and submit responses to tenders.
- Ensure the language in council tender application documents and processes follows plain English and 'Easy read' principles. Test wording and processes with a diverse group of people from local businesses to identify areas for improving readability and accessibility.

Examples 3.2

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City of Melbourne is committed to providing greater opportunities for the economic participation and development of First Nations peoples. The City views this as one way it can help close the gap of existing disadvantage.

To help achieve this, the City has listed Aboriginal Procurement as a priority within its procurement policies and within its Sustainable Procurement Framework. This commitment includes:

- ensuring all staff engaged in procurement activities have undertaken cultural safety training to increase the successful selection and engagement of Aboriginal suppliers
- developing an equity-based, self-determining procurement framework and processes that acknowledge the disadvantages faced by Aboriginal suppliers and businesses, and
- increasing procurement from Melbourne-based Aboriginal businesses registered with Supply Nation and Kinaway.

See [30] [Resources](#), p92

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Some jurisdictions in the USA have used best practice to understand what racial equity looks like in contracting and procurement and how contracting can be used to move racial equity goals forward. These local government bodies have focused on changing the culture inside and outside their jurisdictions, so inclusion becomes the norm and second nature.

See [31] [Resources](#), p92

3.3 The local council partners with the local business community to identify strategic opportunities for economic development and to encourage local jobs for local people, including those from migrant communities.

- Hold business networking events and business development workshops that feature guest speakers from a diverse cross-section of local businesses, including migrant business owners.
 - Partner with employers, local chambers of commerce, financial institutions, employment services and other relevant community-based organisations to identify needs and opportunities and barriers to local employment. Co-design community-wide responses.
 - Establish a jobs and skills taskforce comprising stakeholders from across your community, including training providers, employers and people who represent cohorts facing barriers to accessing job opportunities.
 - Establish a 'local jobs for local people' program delivered by an in-house team of people skilled at connecting employers within your LGA with the local labour force.
 - Set aspirational targets to create a certain number of local job outcomes for local people, with a clear deadline, then put in place the team, strategy and action plan to achieve that goal. For example, in partnership with the community, Banyule City Council has set an aspirational target of creating 1,000 local job outcomes by 2025 for local people experiencing barriers to employment.
 - Host local jobs fairs in partnership with businesses, training organisations, employment service providers, and state and federal government agencies. Ensure these activities are designed to connect local people into genuine job opportunities.
- Invite major employers in your LGA to present information sessions to local residents about their business activities and upcoming employment opportunities.
 - Develop video case studies of local business owners in your community, with an emphasis on showcasing the diversity of people running businesses in your municipality.
 - Embed ethical, social and human rights considerations into your council's procurement policies to ensure that appropriate due diligence is taken to identify and disqualify local businesses that may be involved in labour exploitation practices.



A Hume City resident hones her job interview skills as part of the Council's Local Jobs for Local People Program. Photo courtesy of Scanlon Foundation.

Examples 3.3

The Local Jobs for Local People (LJLP) Program

model developed by Hume City Council enables a council to assist unemployed residents while also giving employers streamlined access to a supply of local job candidates who are motivated, capable and ready to work.

Hume's LJLP program is delivered by an in-house team skilled at labour market facilitation and establishing employment and learning partnerships. The team delivers a range of services at no cost to employers or residents, including:

- labour market facilitation
- hosting and supporting local online talent communities
- organising employer-led information sessions and major events such as job fairs
- one-on-one coaching and support for jobseekers
- pre-screening and shortlisting applicants for employers, and
- negotiating priority or exclusive access for local residents to some vacancies.

The Hume LJLP team aims to provide a holistic and seamless transition for their employer and jobseeker clients, adopting a dual approach that focuses on:

- the supply side - the needs of the jobseeker, and
- aligning these to the demand side - the needs and requirements of the employer.

A local government guide to setting up a local jobs for local people program based on the Hume model is available on the Welcoming Cities website.

See [32] [Resources](#), p92

The award-winning Kaleidoscope Mentoring Program (KMP)

is jointly delivered by the City of Stirling, City of Canning and the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre in Perth. The program helps highly skilled migrant professionals improve their employment potential by connecting them with mentors from their field. Mentees come from a range of professions, including various engineering streams, medical, banking, ICT, architecture, research, legal and community services.

KMP is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and the Western Australian Government. It is part of the broader Kaleidoscope Initiative, which aims to build the capacity of local employers to reap the rewards of a diverse workforce. The main project and the mentoring program have been recognised with a number of awards, including two 2019 National Awards for Local Government (winning the overall Excellence Award and the Multicultural Australia - Cohesive Communities category).

See [33] [Resources](#), p92



Mehrnoosh Alemi, second from left, secured a job in the engineering industry within three months of completing the Kaleidoscope Mentoring Program in 2019. Mehrnoosh is pictured with her young son, Mahyar Mirmonsef; husband, Hossein Mirmonsef, right; and Mahdi Chavoshi. Hossein and Mahdi enrolled in the program in 2020.



“This program is helping me to fly!”

Enterprising Program graduate, Evgenia Vinogradova, is a Russian-born migrant. Evgenia runs Evi Craft, a leatherwork and handicraft business. Photo courtesy of Scanlon Foundation.

3.4 The local council supports both receiving and migrant communities to advance economic development opportunities.

- Partner with other organisations to offer intensive business incubator, start-up and accelerator training programs for local residents, with a focus on gaining participation from migrant and refugee communities, women, youth and seniors.
- Offer subsidies, scholarships and childminding to enable a diverse range of people to participate. Ask potential participants about the optimal days and times to hold sessions, to remove potential barriers to involvement.
- Establish a co-working hub to support start-ups, scaleups and other local businesses, with a focus on assisting business owners from diverse backgrounds.
- Use council newsletters and social media to promote local businesses and their achievements, with a focus on promoting a diverse range of businesses and businesspeople.
- Work with local business associations to develop and coordinate a community events

program across the entire year that opens up opportunities for local business promotion and involvement.

- Ensure that locally run events prioritise and support opportunities for participation from local businesses.
- Keep local businesses informed about ways they can become involved in local community events and maximise their relationships with your council and the wider community. For example, encourage them to participate in and/or sponsor local events and programs. Publicly acknowledge and promote local businesses that support community events and programs.
- Host local business collaboration events, including marketplaces and ‘speed networking’ sessions that bring local businesses, non-profits, community organisations and council officers together to discuss business opportunities and establish relationships.
- Support local initiatives that provide entry-level certificate courses in, for example, hospitality and aged care. Provide subsidised child care or childminding support while parents attend courses.

Examples 3.4

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Warrnambool City Council and South West TAFE partnered to open a co-working and collaboration space where members of the local community can bring their ideas to life. Known as 'The Hive', the space supports start-ups, small business, freelancers and industry to promote innovation and connection.

Located in the TAFE college's former library site, the hub allows local people to interact, share and build their ideas. The collaborative space features a meeting room, hot desks, communal space to share ideas, a podcast studio, smart board and a green screen. Desks and spaces are available for hire and the space hosts events, workshops and masterclasses on a range of topics.

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StartNorth, Hume City Council's co-working space and business hub, has partnered with ygap, a non-profit international development organisation, to deliver the StartNorth Accelerator program. Tailored to the needs of one of the most diverse demographics in Victoria, this program supports up to 15 migrant and refugee-led business ventures in each intake.

The four-month program is supported by LaunchVic and is free for selected participants. It consists of a five-day intensive business accelerator followed by three months of tailored support. The program dismantles the key barriers refugees and migrants face when trying to participate in the business community. It fosters the development of social capital, which is essential for businesses during their early stages.

See [34] [Resources](#), p92

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The Stepping Stones to Small Business micro-enterprise program offers mentoring, training and support to women from refugee, migrant and asylum seeker backgrounds. The program helps participants develop new skills and increase their participation in business and the community.

Stepping Stones is delivered by the Brotherhood of St Laurence with funding from the Victorian Government and eight Victorian councils, including seven members of the Welcoming City network.

See [35] [Resources](#), p93

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The Enterprising Program is a community strengthening and employment-generation project piloted in Wyndham City in Melbourne's north-west. The program aimed to establish meaningful relationships between emerging entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, provide them with intensive business skills training, and link them into the local business community and support networks.

The pilot was delivered through a partnership between Scanlon Foundation, Wyndham City Council and the Centre for Multicultural Youth. A detailed guide to the Enterprising Program, featuring several participants' stories, was published to introduce other councils to how it was structured and implemented.

See [36] [Resources](#), p93

Mentoring future business leaders

City of Canning, WA

90,000 / Approximate population

55% / Overseas born

1.0% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

The City of Canning Business Mentoring Program encourages everyone from start-up entrepreneurs to seasoned business owners to take a leap outside their comfort zone in a supportive and enabling environment.

In 2020, the program sponsored a number of participants to further develop their business at each different stage - Start, Sprint, Surge and Sustain. The City of Canning sponsored the cost of each successful mentee and facilitated the connection between the applicant and the mentoring agency, to provide the best mentoring opportunity.

One of the new programs piloted in 2020 was the YoungGems program, delivered in partnership with Multicultural Futures and Gemstar Technologies. The City of Canning's Mayor, Patrick Hall, said YoungGems is the main program within the overall Canning Business Mentoring Program that focuses on supporting people from diverse backgrounds.

Over six sessions in a safe and nurturing environment, participants are equipped with practical skills required to run their businesses. There were 12 sponsored places in the YoungGems program in 2020.

One of the participants, Kamel Elnaggar, runs Mosaic Bites, a food truck offering a diverse range of Arabic-flavoured dishes. Kamel wanted to learn practical steps to turn his food truck into a pop-up shop. "We started as a food truck but now we have a pop-up shop," he said. "We're now basically an upmarket kebab shop offering retail options such as grab and go."

Since leaving the program, Kamel has changed the way he operates. "It made us look at how to change our revenue stream," he explained. "We now understand the perspective from a start-up and have more confidence to run a business with different offerings."



YoungGems Program mentee, Kamel Elnaggar, transitioned his business, Mosaic Bites, from operating as a food truck to an upmarket pop-up kebab shop. Photo courtesy of the City of Canning.

At the program's pitch night, which was the final gathering, the participants were given feedback from three industry experts. Cr Hall said overall the program was a huge success. "Feedback gathered from the participants shows that 100% felt that the program improved their business capability and know-how," he said.

The benefits cited by participants included gaining a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from 'real-world' entrepreneurs, and learning more about the essential steps required to turn their passions and ideas into a successful new business.

Learning & Skills 4 Development



A group of International Student Ambassadors from the City of Sydney. Photo courtesy of Katherine Griffiths/City of Sydney.

4. Learning and Skills Development

Principles

Engaging in learning and development creates pathways to further learning, employment, civic participation and self-empowerment.

Providing migrants with opportunities to acquire new skills and access education, vocational training and personal development programs empowers individuals and strengthens entire communities.

Councils are well placed to promote a culture of inclusive, lifelong learning and knowledge sharing within their communities and also within their own organisations.

Welcoming Cities can bring together education and training providers, libraries, support services, non-profit organisations and other local stakeholders to offer targeted programs that actively support learning and inclusion for all residents, including migrants.

Welcoming Cities support both receiving and migrant communities to develop the skills, assets and opportunities required to foster social cohesion. They facilitate partnerships with, and referrals to, local service providers that value learning and inclusion.



Council Spotlight

Student ambassadors develop lifelong skills

City of Sydney, NSW

240,000 / Approximate population 54% / Overseas born 1.2% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Sydney is one of the world's most popular destinations for international students, and the City of Sydney goes to great lengths to make them feel at home.

One core initiative for achieving this is the International Student Leadership and Ambassador Program. Launched in 2013, the program offers participants free training and skills development, meaningful work-integrated learning experiences, and volunteer opportunities.

The student ambassadors work with the City to co-design projects to support international students' health and wellbeing and encourage them to participate in the wider community.

The program also helps to enhance Sydney's reputation as a preferred study destination and to strengthen social cohesion and global connections.

Each year, a new group of ambassadors is chosen through an application process that includes a group assessment followed by individual interviews with shortlisted applicants.

In 2021-22, the City inducted 33 student ambassadors across eight educational institutions, including universities and private colleges. The ambassadors comprise 15 different nationalities.

The student ambassadors are provided with valuable opportunities to develop their cultural awareness and competency, establish cross-cultural friendships, build local support networks and develop a sense of belonging. They are also involved in co-designing events for international students.

"I do not want to go back just with a degree on hand ... I want to make the most out of my experience here," says Sarina Manandhar, from Nepal, one of the 2018-20 student ambassadors. "I find this opportunity to network with diverse international

peers and industry professionals an exceptional opportunity for an exchange of knowledge, culture and experience."

"Everything here is just lovely – the people, the environment, the feeling of another home."

"I really love how Sydney embraces different cultures so peacefully ... [it] is a city where people would have a nice chat with you when you are sitting on a bench admiring the beautiful natural environment," says another 2018-20 student ambassador, Pui (Cherry) Yu Keung, from China. "Everything here is just lovely - the people, the environment, the feeling of another home."

The program won first prize at the 2014 NSW International Student Awards and was also recognised for its Outstanding Work with Diverse Young People at the 2018 NSW Youth Work Awards.

See [37] [Resources](#), p93

What success looks like

- 4.1 The local council works closely with community facilities such as schools and libraries to support learning and inclusion for migrant communities.**
 - 4.2 The local council encourages learning and skills development opportunities that enable people from migrant communities to participate in community life.**
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Welcoming activity ideas

Receiving and migrant communities have much to learn about and from each other.

Also, many newly arrived migrants have limited experience of living in a multicultural society and want to learn about the other cultures they are joining in Australia.

New arrivals from non-English speaking countries usually need intensive support to learn and practise everyday English. There is also a great deal to learn about Australia's lifestyle, environment, government, education and health systems, and the many support services available.

Migrants also have an abundance of knowledge and experience to share with their new communities. To do this, they need to feel welcome and have access to opportunities that build their confidence and enable them to contribute.

The following ideas and examples from across the national and international Welcoming Cities network are provided to help get you thinking about ways in which your council can support learning and skills development within your community.

4.1 The local council works closely with community facilities such as schools and libraries to support learning and inclusion for migrant communities.

- Ensure that local libraries offer bilingual books, children's story time sessions, conversation circles and other inclusive resources and activities appropriate for your community's demographics.
- Encourage and support the use of library facilities for English tuition and conversational English practice.
- Develop 'pop-up' outreach programs that take council services, such as libraries, neighbourhood houses and recreation centres out into the community to engage directly with multicultural groups.
- Offer tours and free trial memberships for new families at local libraries, recreation centres and other council-run community facilities.
- Establish clear referral pathways that enable frontline council workers, including customer service, call centre and library staff, to confidently connect migrants with existing support services, including English language support, education, health and settlement services.
- Encourage the sharing of culturally inclusive stories and knowledge in schools and libraries that align with local cultural demographics. For example, partner with non-profit and service organisations to support storytelling competitions and oral history projects that involve migrant families.
- Create and maintain a directory of local civil society organisations and make it accessible to council staff and to the local community in both online and printed formats.
- Ensure that wayfinding signage and other information signs in council facilities use universally recognisable symbols that transcend language barriers, to facilitate inclusion and learning.

Examples 4.1

Gladstone Regional Council is a founding partner in the Port City Language Café, where people from diverse cultures meet to practise their English language skills, learn about other cultures, and share their own culture and languages with the community.

The concept was initiated by the Council in 2013 as an informal monthly morning tea held on the verandah of the Gladstone City Library for anyone who wanted to come along, meet others and make friends. The initiative was in response to the rapid growth in Gladstone's liquified natural gas plant, which brought many new residents from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The morning tea evolved into a more formal monthly gathering, which focuses on a different nationality each month. The Council provides the venue (the library) and equipment. A Friends of the Library volunteer co-facilitates each session alongside local non-profit project partner, Welcoming Intercultural Neighbours.



Residents engaged in Gladstone City Library's monthly language café. Photo courtesy of Gladstone Regional Council.

The **City of Salisbury** supports a number of social groups for older residents that help them maintain social connections and receive information in their own language. Examples include Aboriginal, Bosnian, Bhutanese and Vietnamese seniors groups. There is also an intercultural seniors group,

which enables people from different cultures to meet together.

These groups offer activities such as social gatherings, meals, information sessions, active learning, physical activities and referrals to help seniors access appropriate services.

See [38] [Resources](#), p93

Libraries in the **City of Manningham** in eastern Melbourne offer Chinese-language programs all year round to support the large population of Chinese migrants who have settled in these communities. These library programs have included:

- English conversation circles attended by both migrants and native English speakers
- a monthly book circle for Mandarin speakers
- regular Mandarin story time sessions for preschool children, which are often attended by three generations within families, and
- Chinese-language information sessions with expert speakers on topics such as raising bilingual children and caring for pets.

In 2019, the libraries attracted nearly 500 attendees to the fortnight-long Chinese Reading and Writing Festival. Most of the festival's events were in English. However, some sessions were in Mandarin, including a Chinese poetry reading salon and a Chinese essay writing workshop.

The festival engaged many people who had never been to a library event before, including older Chinese residents who otherwise may have been reluctant to visit a library because of the perceived language barrier.

See [39] [Resources](#), p93

Examples continued on next page...



Friends meeting up at Gladstone City Library, which hosts the monthly Port City Language Café. Photo courtesy of Gladstone Regional Council.

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The First Voice initiative at Palmerston North Intermediate Normal School in New Zealand draws on leadership from a number of agencies, including the local library service, and the wider community to help new arrivals to the school feel welcome.

Each year since 2000, the school has produced a First Voice booklet of themed short stories written by students in the languages they speak at home with their families. The children are helped to write their stories by volunteer mentors recruited from the local multicultural centre.

The booklet is published by the Palmerston North City Library, which also holds an exhibition of the students' entries. The school holds a Multicultural Assembly for students, teachers and parents to celebrate each annual publication.

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Librarians at Knox Toy Library in the City of Knox noticed that many new families from multicultural backgrounds were not making use of the library and that its existing toys did not reflect the increasingly diverse nature of the community.

With funding from the Victorian Government through Welcoming Cities, the library acquired a broader choice of resources designed to interest people from a range of cultural backgrounds, physical abilities and genders. A team of librarians and community members selected the new items, which included dolls, dress-up costumes, puzzles and games that reflected social, cultural and gender diversity.

In addition to the new toys, the library offered free memberships to new families, staged pop-up libraries in multicultural playgroups, and translated promotional material into key languages.

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4.2 The local council encourages learning and skills development opportunities that enable people from migrant communities to participate in community life.

- Develop a community-wide strategy to encourage and support a culture of inclusive, lifelong learning within your community.
- Establish partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organisations social enterprises and training providers, to offer targeted training and skills development programs that address the specific needs of culturally diverse residents, including new arrivals. Examples from across the Welcoming Cities network include conversational English programs, road safety education and driving lessons, parenting programs, water safety classes, and women-only swimming and exercise programs.
- Partner with local universities and colleges to develop programs that open up opportunities for international students to access leadership development, work and volunteering experience and serve as ambassadors within the community.
- Stimulate knowledge-sharing opportunities such as gardening, cooking, craft and sewing sessions that encourage cross-cultural learning.
- Identify specific opportunities for migrants to share their knowledge and skills with the wider community, for example, by presenting art, craft and cultural awareness workshops at local libraries and learning centres.
- Provide training to improve the cultural competency of frontline workers in council offices and council-owned community facilities, so they can engage with and support people in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Provide trauma training for frontline council staff to improve how they engage and communicate with people likely to have a trauma history, such as refugees.
- Support sports clubs, associations and non-profit organisations to offer programs designed to help migrants try out new sports and improve their physical activity levels, skills and experience.
- Encourage local sporting organisations to increase the cultural diversity of their management committees. This opens up leadership and development opportunities for migrants and expands each organisation's ability to offer culturally inclusive programs.
- Invite different language groups to attend mock council meetings, conducted in their primary language or translated via an interpreter, to help them understand the role of local government and how they can get involved in civic life. Produce a series of videos, narrated in the most relevant languages, that serve a similar purpose.
- Identify ways to publicly recognise the efforts of volunteers from migrant communities, so the wider community is made aware of their contributions.

Examples 4.2

The **City of Canning** adopted its first Learning City Strategy in 2016. Canning's subsequent *Enriching Your World Learning City Strategy 2020-2024* embraces the challenges and opportunities presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

The current strategy aims to enable the Canning community 'to adapt to change with resilience, grasp opportunities with ingenuity, and respond to challenges courageously and innovatively'. It closely aligns with UNESCO Learning Cities, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Welcoming Cities Network, as well as the City's own Strategic Community Plan and other key strategies.

The Learning City Strategy is intended to achieve the following priority outcomes:

1. **Enabler of resilience and agility:** Our community responds to change with agility, overcomes challenges with resilience and capitalises on opportunities with ingenuity.
2. **Empower through Dynamic Learning:** The Canning community is supported to realise their potential through embracing a culture of lifelong learning.
3. **Community Agora** - the peoples place: Community members feel that Canning is a place of Welcome - they are connected, included and have a sense of belonging within the community.
4. **A hub for creative and innovative endeavour:** The Canning community is engaged in creative exploration and innovative development in a collaborative environment.

See [40] [Resources](#), p93

Gladstone Regional Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan was launched in 2018 and led to the development of cultural awareness and heritage training, which is being delivered to all 700 council employees.

The training is mandatory for all new staff and features an orientation video created by the Council's Reconciliation Action Plan Officer. The training is presented by a council employee who is a descendant of the Gurang peoples. It aims to grow cultural understanding.

The Council's 2020-21 Reconciliation Action Plan includes a further commitment to engage Traditional Owners to develop face-to-face cultural awareness training and contribute to the development of an online cultural awareness training module for councillors and council staff.

“I feel strong as I feel lots of love from people around me and I think it is time to spread the love and kindness. I am always willing to give any support that I could give to help others, as I believe an inclusive community is beneficial for anyone to learn and grow.”

Anxiu (Ashley) Liao, 2018-20 City of Sydney
International Student Ambassador

Getting into the swim of welcoming

Brisbane City Council, Logan City Council and Cairns Regional Council, QLD

The Aqua English Project is a strategy for supporting new arrivals to Queensland that empowers and engages people through language and swimming.

Swimming pools are Queensland's version of the town square – a natural meeting place when the weather is hot and the desire to cool off becomes the most important consideration of the weekend.

However, many people from diverse communities struggle with swimming and water safety, especially if they have not been readily exposed to water.

Logan, Cairns and Brisbane councils have partnered with The Aqua English Project to help address some of the barriers people face by building community capacity through targeted education, health and fitness programs.

These barriers are often invisible to the broader Australian community. For example, pools and aquatic facilities may be unaware that language, swimwear, public transport, the cost of lessons, self-perception, gender, the level of welcomeness and body language can create significant hurdles for meaningful aquatic participation.

The Aqua English Project has reached over 26,000 people in South East Queensland. It uses swimming as the conduit for cultural English language immersion, upskilling and employment. It also uses the teaching of English as a way to immerse people into water culture.

Participant Mekdes Tilanun said, "I came from Ethiopia. I didn't swim before. We learn the vocabulary in the pool, for example CPR, togs and goggles".

From 2008-18, 794 people who were born overseas drowned in Australia's waterways. Although this figure includes international students, the vast majority were refugees and migrants (*RLSSA National Drowning Report 2019*).

Sarah Scarce, Founding Director of The Aqua English Project, said swimming lessons that are culturally sensitive and socially inclusive are vital for refugees and migrants.

"There needs to be a dual focus on language as well as acquiring aquatic skills," explained Sarah. "Swimming pools and recreation facilities need assistance to better equip themselves as welcoming venues that can confidently engage, teach and empower new members of the Australian community in relation to swimming and water safety."

Since the program began in 2006, it has trained lifeguards and swim teachers who are Vietnamese, Karen, Afghan, Sudanese, Chinese, Singaporean, Thai, Burmese and Egyptian.

"There is no greater joy than seeing our original non-swimmers sharing a lane with a member of the broader Australian community and subsequently sharing culture through conversation and the art of swimming," Sarah said.

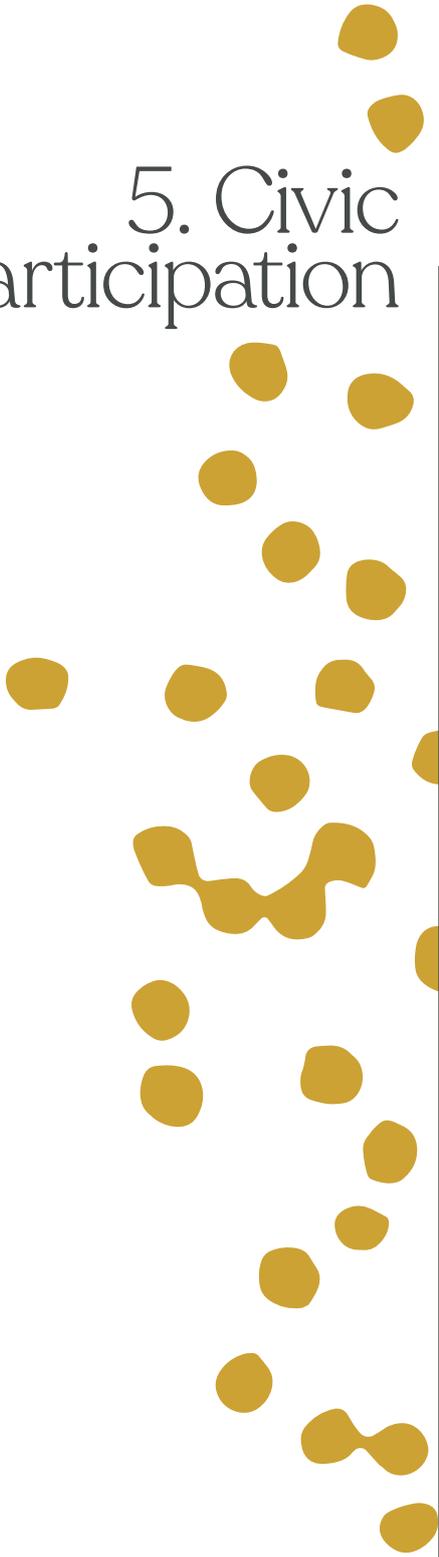


An Aqua English session. Photo courtesy of The Aqua English Project.

Civic 5 Participation



Three newcomers to the City of Stirling are taken on a tour of the council chambers by the City's Mayor, Cr Mark Irwin, second from left.



5. Civic Participation

Principles

Nobody can truly feel as though they are part of a community unless they feel welcome and able to participate in everyday civic life.

Welcoming Cities actively encourage all residents to participate in the local community. They create and support opportunities for migrants to freely participate in community groups, events and forums.

Communities across Australia thrive when there are ample opportunities to engage, and when civic leadership reflects their diversity.

Council Spotlight

Inviting diverse voices to the discussion table

City of Darebin, VIC

162,000 / Approximate population 30% / Overseas born 2.4% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

The City of Darebin in Melbourne's northern suburbs is home to people from more than 153 countries who speak about 150 different languages. Darebin City Council established the Darebin Welcoming Cities Reference Group to bring together these diverse voices to help define a place-based welcoming agenda based on mutual understanding.

"We want to actively contribute to realising the full potential of what it means to live in a multicultural city," explained Darebin City's Deputy Mayor, Cr Gaetano Greco, who also chairs the reference group.

"We want to ensure the effective settlement of refugee communities in Darebin and enable processes for truth telling by providing constructive forums for our residents to share their stories and experience in ways that build a sense of belonging."

The reference group meets quarterly and provides a critical external lens to guide, support and monitor the Council's progress towards fulfilling the national Welcoming Cities Standard's principles and criteria.

The aim is to enable a whole-of-community partnership response to Darebin City Council's Welcoming Cities commitments and create a welcoming and cohesive city in which everyone feels included and can participate in all aspects of community life.

Members of the reference group also represent and advise on issues that impact residents' sense of welcome and belonging. The group's frame of reference acknowledges the continued exclusion and racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Membership of the group is intended to reflect the diversity of experience, identity, resources and status within the Darebin community. Members include representatives from community and migrant support agencies; the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission;



Members of Darebin's Vietnamese Elderly Citizens Club meet in the City's Intercultural Centre. Photo courtesy Darebin City Council.

council advisory committees such as the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council, Darebin Interfaith Council and Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee; and individual community members from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The Council's Multicultural and Diversity Project Officer, Shabaz Fattah, said that becoming a member of the Welcoming Cities network builds on the Council's longstanding commitment to equity, inclusion, social justice and human rights.

"Being a Welcoming City further demonstrates Council's support for cultural diversity and our strong anti-racism stance and the work we continue to do around that," said Shabaz.



“Being a Welcoming City further demonstrates Council’s support for cultural diversity, our strong anti-racism stance and the work we continue to do around that.”

City of Darebin Multicultural and Diversity
Project Officer, Shabaz Fattah

What success looks like

- 5.1 The local council communicates their roles and responsibilities and advances civic participation for both receiving and migrant communities.**
- 5.2 The local council supports and celebrates the attainment of citizenship.**
- 5.3 The local council supports all eligible residents to enrol to vote and participate in local government elections.**
- 5.4 The local council supports people from both receiving and migrant communities to celebrate and participate in volunteering.**

Welcoming activity ideas

Informing migrants about your council's role and services and empowering them to participate in civic life are fundamental ways you can help them feel like valued members of their new community.

Civic participation is best demonstrated when a diverse representation of local residents give their time, skills, knowledge and energy to contribute to the common good in ways that generate positive outcomes. Involving newcomers, including migrants, in planning and decision-making processes means their perspectives and needs can be heard by the wider community and addressed.

There are many ways you can encourage and facilitate greater civic participation. Ideas and examples from across the Welcoming Cities network are listed below to help with planning your council's approach.

5.1 The local council communicates their roles and responsibilities and advances civic participation for both receiving and migrant communities.

- Include explicit outcomes and strategies in council plans around:
 - informing, connecting and empowering migrants, and
 - ensuring that the council as an organisation is culturally competent, accessible and responsive to the needs of people from multicultural backgrounds.
- Give culturally diverse residents equal access to opportunities for cultural and creative expression, civic participation and personal development.
- Increase opportunities for CALD residents to influence council decision-making and planning processes.
- Host tours of council offices and 'meet your local leaders' sessions, to provide opportunities for representatives of culturally diverse communities to meet with councillors and be involved in discussion forums with civic leaders.
- Conduct targeted information campaigns on civic society matters to reach specific communities.
- Partner with migrant and settlement services, schools and other organisations to provide migrants with in-language welcome packs describing the role of local government, your council's services and facilities, and ways they can get involved in council-run activities.
- Set up civic and community leadership development programs for migrants, drawing on the expertise and experience of locals. For example, you could encourage migrants to volunteer on local boards and encourage members of advisory boards to provide mentoring and succession programs.
- Conduct an audit of the age, gender, cultural and physical diversity of your existing committees and reference groups to understand how well they currently reflect the local population.

- Bring together diverse community voices for discussion groups, advisory committees and reference groups to help shape your Welcoming City program and other council plans, programs and services.
- Establish connection working groups to deepen your council's relationships with targeted cultural communities and increase their civic participation.
- Implement programs that increase access to council services for specific cultural communities, while also building connections between those cultural groups and your council, other residents and visitors.
- Reflect the diversity of your local population in all information materials, particularly in the photographs used.
- Include translated information in the main languages spoken in your community on the inside cover of each published council plan, explaining how to access interpreter services to help with reading and understanding the document.
- Engage with multicultural groups during consultation on council policies and plans. Ask migrant-focused agencies and service providers to circulate information on upcoming consultation processes to migrant stakeholders.
- Hold council meetings and consultation activities in outreach settings.



Young refugee a model citizen

Ma Aye Paw, a Karen refugee from Myanmar, arrived in Bendigo in 2016 and has become deeply involved as a leader within the local community.

Ma Aye was invited to serve as one of Greater Bendigo's first Intercultural Ambassadors. She was later named as the City's 2021 Young Citizen of the Year, in recognition of her tireless work providing support for Karen community members and residents from other local culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

"I felt very proud listening to our young citizen of the year, Ma Aye, talk about how much she loves living in Bendigo and how this is her home," said Council CEO, Craig Niemann. "This is the best evidence that what we've been doing to make sure people feel welcome is actually working."

Photo courtesy of the City of Greater Bendigo.

Examples 5.1

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The City of Stirling in Perth's northern suburbs bases its Multicultural Framework around achieving outcomes for migrants to the City, the overall Stirling community and the council as an organisation. The 12 outcomes in the framework include:

Outcome 1. Informed: Newcomers understand our role and are aware of the services, facilities and resources that can assist their settlement and integration journey.

Outcome 4. Empowered: Strong multicultural associations respond to the settlement needs and integration needs of newcomers, creating pathways to participation in the broader community.

Outcome 7. Enabling: Our community enables newcomers to reach their potential by removing barriers that prevent their social, cultural and economic participation.

Outcome 10. Accessible: Our customers from multicultural backgrounds can communicate with the City.

See [41] [Resources](#), p93

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The City of Greater Bendigo established a Karen Connections Pilot Project to improve access to council services, staff and information, and stimulate connections across the City for people from a Karen background. A Karen Connections Officer was employed and information sessions were held to inform members of the local Karen community about the City's role, where to obtain information and how to access key services. Project information and communication resources were translated from English into Karen language.

The project significantly strengthened links between the local Karen community and council staff, as well as other Bendigo institutions. A Karen Connections Project Working Group and mechanisms to promote inclusive employment practices and settlement services for the Karen community were established as a result of the pilot project.

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Wellington City Council in New Zealand hosted 'ethnic discussion forums' for people from diverse local communities. Discussion groups within each forum focused on themes including health and wellbeing, recreation, employment and safety. The Council has established a number of programs and services in response to feedback from the forums, including the City's free interpreting service.

See [42] [Resources](#), p93

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5.2 The local council supports and celebrates the attainment of citizenship.

- Promote information about pathways and processes for obtaining citizenship to migrant communities.
- Maintain close relationships with officials from the Australian Department of Home Affairs to ensure that communication with local residents about obtaining their citizenship and attending their citizenship ceremony is accurate, timely and seamless.
- Consider small but meaningful ways your council can acknowledge and congratulate individual residents on attaining citizenship, in addition to hosting the citizenship ceremony.
- Use citizenship ceremonies to inform new citizens about the opportunities they have to participate in civic society.
- Consider making citizenship ceremonies more memorable, interactive and informative. For example, invite longstanding members of the local business community and volunteer organisations to attend and include activities in the event program that enable those guests and the new citizens to get to know each other.

Examples 5.2

Being formally recognised as an Australian citizen can mean a great deal to a migrant or refugee. Attending a citizenship ceremony can be a much-anticipated and emotional occasion - a symbolic rite of passage and cause for pride and celebration.

It is important to acknowledge the deeply personal significance these occasions can hold for new citizens when planning and officiating at each ceremony. Consider ways of incorporating symbolic welcoming gestures and enabling each individual to actively participate in the ceremony in some way. Provide opportunities for the new citizens to meet with members of the receiving community and council officials and to learn more about Australian culture and values.

The City of Parramatta features videos on its website celebrating its citizenship ceremonies and newest citizens. The videos show how the ceremonies are enriched by performances and demonstrations of Indigenous culture and the involvement of the local Town Crier. They feature uplifting statements from many of Parramatta's newest citizens about why they love living in Australia and what it means to them to formally be accepted as Australian citizens.

See [43] [Resources](#), p93

5.3 The local council supports all eligible residents to enrol to vote and participate in local government elections.

- Support the Electoral Commission to encourage eligible migrants to vote in local, state and federal government elections.
- Run events for migrants explaining Australia's system of government and how to participate in the electoral process.
- Invite past or present councillors from migrant backgrounds to speak at information sessions for newcomers.
- Encourage sitting councillors from migrant backgrounds to engage with their cultural community and other newcomer groups to raise awareness about what is involved in running for council and serving as a councillor.

Examples 5.3

The City of Greater Bendigo hosts 'How to vote workshops' for people who may have difficulty understanding the electoral process. Participants represent the diversity of Bendigo's community. The workshops explain the democratic system and provide advice on how to vote.

In the lead-up to the 2020 local government elections, the **Victorian Local Governance Association** ran a number of workshops targeted at diverse communities, which outlined the role of local government and how to run for a seat on a council.

Each year, the Office of New Americans of Miami-Dade hosts a major **Citizenship Week celebration**. They provide scholarships to cover the cost of citizenship applications, pair buddies to help residents with screening and logistics, and provide legal assistance. As part of Citizenship Week in 2020, the #NaturalizeMiamiNow Campaign was launched to provide a free three-day virtual citizenship clinic to help applicants better understand the process and prepare for the exams.

5.4 The local council supports people from both receiving and migrant communities to celebrate and participate in volunteering.

- Include volunteering objectives and success measures in your council's cultural diversity and inclusion plans.
 - Include diversity objectives and success measures in your volunteering strategies.
 - Increase access to and participation in volunteering opportunities suitable for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including residents from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background; people with a disability; and people of all ages, genders, sexualities and localities within your municipality.
 - Create volunteering opportunities that enable migrants to apply their unique knowledge and skills to help others, in addition to receiving voluntary help from members of the receiving community.
 - Develop a 'cultural diversity and volunteering toolkit' for volunteering organisations in your municipality, so they can conduct cultural safety audits and adopt culturally competent practices and strategies.
- Ensure your volunteering information is translated into the main languages spoken within your local community and features photographs of people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
 - Adopt a coordinated approach to holding an annual program of community events that promote and celebrate volunteering. For example, host volunteering expos, conferences and forums; and organise special events and activities to celebrate National Volunteer Week, National Student Volunteer Week, International Volunteer Day and International Volunteer Managers Day.
 - Invite migrants to volunteer at community events or in a community garden, or work with multicultural communities to come up with new ideas for events.
 - Ensure local awards programs include categories that recognise the contributions of migrants.

Below: A group of recently arrived migrants enjoys some of Sydney's iconic harbour views with their volunteer Welcome2Sydney ambassadors. Photo courtesy of the City of Sydney.



Examples 5.4

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Connecting volunteer ambassadors with recently arrived migrants can go a long way to helping someone feel at ease in a new place.

The Welcome2Sydney project connects local volunteer ambassadors with migrants arriving in the City of Sydney. The aim is to encourage people to explore the city together and help each newcomer develop a sense of belonging.

The volunteer ambassadors host a variety of social, cultural and recreational welcoming activities, including taking newcomers on tours of Sydney Harbour and visiting the Opera House, museums, the zoo and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

The project also gives longer-term residents a chance to give back to their community and enhance their own sense of belonging and connection.

Welcome2Sydney is co-designed and delivered by the City of Sydney and Settlement Services International.

See [44] [Resources](#), p93

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Cultural diversity and inclusion plan: The City of Greater Bendigo's *Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2016-2019* contained more than 140 activities involving volunteers, many of which were non-formal or non-traditional opportunities. For example, it included community education at Bendigo Art Gallery, diversity and inclusion at the Bendigo Business Excellence awards, the Aspire Precinct Multicultural Markets, storytelling of faith and multiculturalism, cultural awareness for sports and recreation clubs, and conducting cyber safety workshops.

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Computer mentoring program in local libraries:

In Hamilton, New Zealand, the city's library service established a computer mentoring program to help local library customers improve their computer confidence and skills.

Most of the mentors are migrants and each volunteer gives up to two or four hours of their time on a weekly basis. They are found through a non-profit volunteer recruitment and placement agency or from word-of-mouth recommendations.

Each mentor has passed a library-arranged police check and been through a 90-minute interview. The interview focuses on finding people who are customer focused, can write and speak everyday English, and have some computer skills.

See [45] [Resources](#), p93

Bendigo's 10 original Intercultural Ambassadors. The ambassadors are helping break down barriers and build closer connections between the city's diverse communities. Photo courtesy of City of Greater Bendigo.



Council Spotlight

Volunteers promote intercultural connections

City of Greater Bendigo, VIC

110,000 / Approximate population 33% / Overseas born 1.0% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

“I want to help people come together to build a better world for our grandchildren,” said City of Greater Bendigo Intercultural Ambassador, Janet Bromley.

Janet was among the first volunteer community representatives recruited for Bendigo’s Intercultural Ambassador Pilot Program, which began in 2019. She is a proud Yorta Yorta woman and a practising artist.

Another Intercultural Ambassador, Edith Muñoz, was born in Mexico and speaks Spanish and English. She came to Australia in 2012 and participated in the City’s New and Emerging Community Leadership Program in 2014.

Edith is passionate about helping Bendigo to become more welcoming and inclusive, including creating more opportunities for the multicultural community. “I fell in love with Bendigo and plan to live here, raise my family and continue contributing to make a positive difference,” she said.

Bendigo’s 10 inaugural Intercultural Ambassadors were recruited from the local community and represent a diverse range of cultural backgrounds: Aboriginal, Afghani, Indian, Mexican, Indonesian, Karen (Thailand/Myanmar), Ghanaian, Filipino (Filipino/Chinese), French, and Malayan (Malaysia).

The pilot program was funded by the Victorian Government and aims to promote intercultural relationships and exchange between all members of the growing regional Victorian city community, which is becoming increasingly diverse. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of Bendigo residents who come from non-English speaking backgrounds increased by 43%.

Following the successful pilot, the program was funded to continue for a further year.

The program’s objectives are to:

- promote and strengthen the civic participation and engagement of existing and new migrants
- increase intercultural communities’ civic engagement through local government investment and support to open up representation on council committees and working groups, and provide leadership development opportunities
- enhance community awareness and foster inclusion for existing and new migrants to Bendigo
- support leadership within the migrant community and recognise the commitment and contribution made by migrants to the Bendigo community
- advocate for and promote the benefits of cultural diversity through intercultural communication, learning and celebration, and
- collaborate with the City Council and help staff with implementing the *Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2016-2019*.

The Intercultural Ambassadors attend civic functions, participate in community events and projects, and contribute to City advisory and reference groups. They serve as champions for their communities while also gaining valuable leadership and development opportunities.

See [46] [Resources](#), p93



‘Sports and recreation clubs make a significant contribution to economic and social capital. They have traditionally held a unique position in the community as a gathering and facilitation point for physical and community activity.

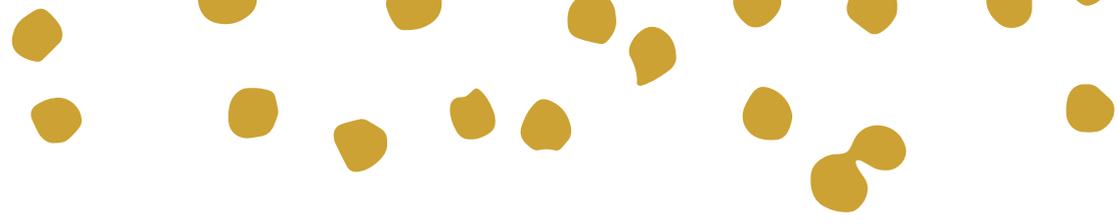
Clubs continue to play an important role in welcoming migrants to a community.’

Welcoming Clubs

Places and 6 Spaces



The Futsal Park clubroom in the City of Port Adelaide Enfield features a mural depicting almost 70 flags representing the many different cultural backgrounds of local residents. The Council provided a Placemaking Grant for One Culture to commission the mural. Photo courtesy of One Culture.



6. Places and Spaces

Principles

The nature of the physical environment – the local civic places and spaces – can influence how welcome people feel and how quickly they develop a sense of belonging as much as the quality of the social environment.

Welcoming Cities make the physical places and spaces in their communities more welcoming by adopting planning and design processes that incorporate the principles of inclusion, diversity and accessibility.

Welcoming Cities value public spaces and facilities that enhance liveability, social cohesion and inclusion of all residents. They also engage all community members in design processes for urban planning.

Council Spotlight

Partnership breathes new life into a tired space

City of Port Adelaide Enfield, SA

121,000 / Approximate population

33% / Overseas born

2.3% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A partnership between the City of Port Adelaide Enfield and local sporting organisations has transformed a run-down and rarely used sports facility into a hive of activity.

The creation of Futsal Park at Blair Athol Reserve is engaging local children and youth, dissolving cultural barriers and seeding promising careers.

The reserve's main oval is used by Kilburn Football and Cricket Club. Up until 2018, the reserve also contained a bank of dilapidated netball courts that were rarely used.

The Council partnered with the club and the South Australian Amateur Soccer League to redevelop the under-utilised space into outdoor community football courts. Combined council, state and federal government funding of more than \$600,000 was secured to resurface the existing hardcourts, install new lighting and fencing, refurbish the small clubroom and line mark the courts to suit both futsal and netball.

The Council also supported giving a sub-lease to a fledgling local non-profit organisation, One Culture, so it could run after-school futsal programs and community engagement tournaments at the upgraded hardcourt facility and use the clubroom as its first headquarters. The aim was to activate the space while also opening up opportunities to engage with young people from the increasingly diverse surrounding population.

"We wanted the facility to be activated to achieve a number of community development and welcoming outcomes, as well as sporting outcomes," explained Paul Zimny, the Council's Sport and Recreation Development Coordinator.

"We can spend some money, we can dress spaces up, but it's the community who really make the place, and One Culture has played a primary role

in opening the place up and making people feel welcome," said Paul. "I feel really proud when I go over to Blair Athol Reserve now and I see that there's activity happening everywhere across the main oval, on the new futsal courts and even on the adjacent tennis courts."

One Culture's futsal programs are attracting young people from diverse cultures, and NDIS-funded programs are being offered for people with a disability. Programs have also been expanded to include cricket and tennis.

At the time it was given a sub-lease to operate from Futsal Park, One Culture comprised only two people: its founders Nader Ibrahim and Josh Smith. Three years later, the organisation has grown to having seven full-time and around 50 casual employees.

"There are a whole bunch of young people who started off attending our futsal programs who are now working for us either as support workers or coaches," said Josh.

"When we all participate in sport together, any cultural or religious preconceptions just completely go out the window and we're all taking part in one culture - that's the unifying nature of sport," added Josh, explaining why they named the organisation One Culture.

Building on the success of their Blair Athol collaboration, the Council and One Culture are working together to reactivate other under-used local sporting facilities in the municipality.

See [47] [Resources](#), p93

Practising futsal skills at Futsal Park, located on upgraded former netball courts in Blair Athol, Adelaide. Photo courtesy of One Culture.



“The opportunities these young people are going to have in the future to be leaders in the community, effect change and help people integrate into Australian society through sport, is a fantastic thing that’s happened through this whole place-based initiative and our partnership with Council.”

Josh Smith, Strategic Manager, One Culture

What success looks like

- 6.1 The local council ensures that public spaces and facilities are safe and accessible to all residents.**
- 6.2 Public spaces and facilities encourage community interaction and facilitate diverse cultural expression and celebration.**
- 6.3 The local council works to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and migrant heritage in public spaces and facilities.**

Welcoming activity ideas

As the main bodies responsible for local-area planning and design, councils are best placed to guide the creation of culturally inclusive and accessible places and spaces.

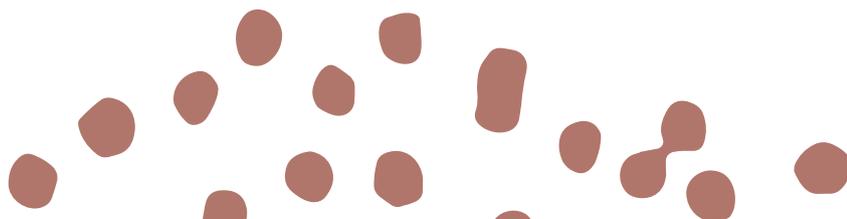
Well-conceived and designed civic venues, meeting places and open spaces that respond to the needs of diverse communities are more likely to be used and respected. They break down cultural boundaries, encourage social interaction and support social cohesion.

The following ideas and examples from across the Welcoming Cities network are provided to help get you thinking about ways in which your council can support inclusion and diversity through the design and activation of local spaces and places.

6.1 The local council ensures that public spaces and facilities are safe and accessible to all residents.

- Engage with local multicultural and accessibility advocacy groups to identify community needs and ways of enabling everyone in the community to readily access and use public places and spaces.
- Include a diverse cross-section of the local community in design-related planning processes, such as consultations for upgrades of existing precincts, infrastructure and spaces, to ensure the outcomes incorporate principles of inclusion and diversity.
- Ensure that new and upgraded spaces and places are designed to accommodate a broad range of cultural needs, for example, by providing prayer rooms, spaces for large community gatherings, and women's only swimming lessons at the local pool.
- Review the current use of your council's public venues and facilities to see whether they are being made available to all citizens in a fair and equitable manner. Involve a diverse cross-section of your local community in reviewing the booking requirements and terms of use for these spaces, to ensure they are inclusive and accessible.
- Encourage migrant groups to meet in council-owned buildings and streamline application and approvals processes.
- Waive hire fees or provide financial support, catering and other forms of in-kind support to enable non-profit organisations and community groups with limited resources to make use of council-owned facilities.
- Improve the way in which communal spaces and places are decorated, to convey a sense of welcome and belonging for residents from all cultures and walks of life. For example, incorporate artworks, murals, flags, soundscapes and other forms of expression that reflect different cultures and convey a message of welcome.
- Display public information signs promoting council services and events in a variety of targeted languages. Where feasible, include audio and/or visual information translated into key languages spoken locally, for example, on your council's telephone call-waiting system.

- Ensure your council and staff are well informed about local sacred sites, and engage with First Nations custodians to understand what constitutes respectful and culturally safe access and use of these sites. Involve community representatives as custodians of sacred sites and work with them to raise awareness among the wider community about how to treat these places appropriately.



Examples 6.1

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The City of Hobart organises an annual Beach Clean-up involving hundreds of volunteer international students and non-students nominated as ‘cultural connectors’. The event is promoted as an opportunity for students to give something back to the people of Hobart who have hosted them, before they return home.

The Council partners the University of Tasmania and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society to coordinate activity, which aims to ensure that the beach is more accessible to all.

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The City of Adelaide’s Community Activation Fund provides opportunities for not-for-profit groups and organisations (NFPs) to apply for up to \$5000 worth of in-kind venue hire support to host an event in one of the Town Hall’s venues. Support is available to large or small NFPs for live performances, fundraisers, awards, meetings and community events.

See [48] [Resources](#), p93

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A number of member councils from across the Welcoming Cities network **offer women-only swimming sessions at local swim centres**, to better accommodate the needs of women who don’t feel comfortable swimming in a mixed gender space.

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The City of Canterbury Bankstown in Sydney engaged intensively with locals and visitors to help develop a masterplan to guide the development of Paul Keating Park as Bankstown’s leading shared public space over the next 20 years.

Community responses shaped four themes to guide the future park’s design and amenities, requiring the design to ensure that the park is ‘safe and social’, ‘pleasant and peaceful’, ‘playful and creative’ and ‘inclusive and connected’.

See [49] [Resources](#), p93

Examples 6.2

6.2 Public spaces and facilities encourage community interaction and facilitate diverse cultural expression and celebration.

- Hold tours of public buildings and spaces to explain their purpose and history to newcomers and help them feel comfortable in these spaces.
- Design and equip council facilities so they can cater to the needs of a range of cultural groups as well as traditional uses. For example, create multi-use facilities capable of hosting a range of sports, including those suited to migrants and beginners.
- Identify under-utilised local spaces and facilities and consider them in light of evolving community needs. Develop community partnerships and programs to increase the use of these places by diverse communities.
- Ensure that diverse population groups within your community know about the places they can use and understand processes involved in booking council facilities.
- Take a holistic view of every space or place you create. Look for opportunities when planning new or upgraded council venues to incorporate elements that foster greater interaction, such as community gardens, communal eating areas and children's play areas.
- Partner with community organisations to host events that activate local places and spaces and provide opportunities for people to experience and learn about each other's cultures.
- Encourage and support neighbourhoods to hold local 'play on the street' days, street barbecues and community picnics.
- Provide accessible and inclusive information, featuring universally recognised symbols, to help people access and use local public spaces and facilities.
- Use the Welcoming Clubs Standard to support sports clubs renting council assets to be more welcoming and inclusive.

Waverley Council has commissioned the restoration and conservation of the Bondi Pavilion, which has been a central focus for residents and visitors to Bondi Beach for more than 90 years. Extensive community engagement has guided the project and led to three separate spaces being included to form a 'Bondi Story Room'.

The vision for these spaces is that they will celebrate the rich history of Bondi culture including: First Nations culture, current cultural events and attractions, surfing history and culture, local culture across multiple nationalities, local history and information about the local environment. The upgraded pavilion will also house a community radio station.

See [50] [Resources](#), p93

The Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre is a multi-disciplinary cultural facility run by Liverpool City Council in Sydney. With over 140 languages spoken in the local area, the Powerhouse aims to showcase the City's culturally diverse stories, artists and community.

The Koori Floor, a major permanent artwork in the Powerhouse, covers the 600sq metres of the Turbine Hall. Created in 1994 and restored in 2020, the artwork was designed to acknowledge the Aboriginal presence on the site predating European settlement and the construction and operation of the power station.

The Powerhouse has been operating for more than 25 years and is embedded in the community as a place of civic pride, home to major community and cultural events, and a hub for exhibitions, festivals and interactive creative opportunities across all art forms.

See [51] [Resources](#), p93

Examples continued on next page...

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The **City of Melbourne** was the first municipality in Australia to host a Play Streets trial, in the suburb of Kensington. Play Streets make play spaces by temporarily closing streets to through traffic so kids and parents can play outside. They make everyday play and exercise fun and easy, and lead to friendlier neighbourhoods.

Whether it is held as a one-off event, run regularly during school holidays or once a week after school, a Play Street can help bring diverse neighbourhoods closer together.

See [52] [Resources](#), p93

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An Immigrant Alphabet is a public art installation displayed at the Municipal Services Building in Center City Philadelphia, USA, and another public space, during 2017-2019. Produced by Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, the installation featured the work of artist Wendy Ewald in collaboration with 18 high school students, exploring their immigrant experiences.

A series of free participatory public events was held in venues across the City as part of the project. The book *America, Border, Culture, Dreamer: The Young Immigrant Experience from A to Z* was also produced, and 26 banners were hung in sites across the city. Information and resources about the project are available for schools, students and other organisations.

See [53] [Resources](#), p93

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6.3 The local council works to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and migrant heritage in public spaces and facilities.

- Use community art and cultural installations in community facilities such as civic and arts centres and libraries, to share cultural heritage exhibitions and stories.
- Consider including specific requirements for ethical storytelling and inclusive approaches in council tenders for public art and placemaking projects.
- Celebrate and share the history of places through plaques, statues, storytelling and artwork.
- Considering changing the names of spaces and places to reflect First Nations' history.
- Ensure that First Nations peoples are consulted and given opportunities to lead or contribute to the delivery of projects involving places for which they are the Traditional Owners.
- Place 'Acknowledgement of Country' plaques on council buildings and facilities, to recognise the Traditional Owners of the land on which they stand.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on council buildings and at public events.
- Create opportunities for migrant communities to have their history and contribution to your LGA documented and publicly recognised in local spaces and places.
- Enable newcomers to tell their stories in public spaces, parks, libraries and at other local venues, through public art and photographic exhibitions, storytelling programs and cultural festivals.



Walkers on the Darebin Spiritual Healing Trail, which was a gift of reconciliation from the local First Nations community. Photo courtesy of Darebin City Council.

Examples 6.3

The **Spiritual Healing Trail** in Darebin Parklands guides walkers along a five-stage metaphoric path for self-healing in a natural bushland setting. The trail includes contemplative stops at Darebin Creek, a billabong and a panoramic lookout.

The experience of walking the trail is intended to promote good health by improving each individual's emotional and spiritual wellbeing and sense of being connected to the land, to others and to themselves.

A gift from the local Aboriginal community as a gesture of reconciliation, the trail also imparts a deeper appreciation of how Australia's First Nations perceived and connected with the land. It was conceived by the Darebin Aboriginal Reconciliation Working Party and created with support from the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri people, and in partnership with Darebin and Banyule city councils, and the Darebin Creek Management Committee.

See [54] [Resources](#), p93

Darebin City Council also supported a project to digitally restore a large Koori Mural originally commissioned in St Georges Road, Thornbury, in 1985. The restoration project involved close engagement with the local Aboriginal community and the original artists.

See [55] [Resources](#), p93

The Aboriginal flag was raised in 2016 and the Torres Strait Islander flag was more recently raised on the flagpoles at the Gladstone Regional Council chambers on Queensland's central coast. Both flags are raised every business day that Council operates.

Examples continued on next page...

The **City of Salisbury** in Adelaide commissioned an outdoor sculpture and performance space to serve as a 'heritage marker' to recognise the Kurna people as the original inhabitants of the Adelaide plains.

Titled *Together Woven*, the site is located in the Greenfields Wetlands beside the Salisbury Highway and positioned between two landscaped mounds. It features a prominent vertical sculpture incorporating Kurna cultural references, including a boomerang symbol that points south-west towards Kangaroo Island - a sacred place for Kurna people. Information at the site is provided in the Kurna and English languages.

See [56] [Resources](#), p93

Salisbury City also supports inclusive placemaking through its Create a Place - Public Art Project, which brings local artists and venues together to create space that add colour and liveliness to the region through the use of paintings and mosaics.

One completed project is the *Meeting Place* mural, which features iconography representing the journey from the past to the present, and people coming together from different pathways to meet, share stories and learn.

See [57] [Resources](#), p93

“The Cultural Artwork Project makes my heart sing and showcases what community development is about.”



Council Spotlight

Traditional artwork enriches a shared community space

Townsville City Council, QLD

195,000 / Approximate population

13% / Overseas born

8% / Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Townsville City Council staff worked closely with local Aboriginal Traditional Owners, Torres Strait Islander Elders and Indigenous artists to create a new communal seating area in the local cemetery.

Local artists Jordan Wyles, Nicky Bidju-Pryor and Ian Kaddy were commissioned to paint the picnic tables and benches, with each seating area depicting scenes from a traditional story.

"I'm very proud of doing this," said Ian. "It's good to get families to come down here. Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait and non-Indigenous people enjoy coming here and sitting and looking at the art."

Established over a century ago, Belgian Gardens Cemetery continues to provide a place of permanent rest for the Townsville community.

The Council undertook deep and meaningful community engagement to guide the Cultural Art Project and ensure the artwork was culturally appropriate and respectful to the location. This included having an initial conversation with Traditional Owners and Elders about the cultural beliefs, practices and customs around the death and burial of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

Lead Project Officer, Helene James, said that she and members of the community had, "multiple relaxed face-to-face conversations over many months, which formed the project and ensured the outcome was what the community required".

The project was recognised by Reconciliation Australia as one of the top five projects chosen from thousands of Reconciliation projects around Australia. The strengthened relationships through the project also resulted in the Council helping local Indigenous artists create business cards so they could promote their artistic creativity and services.

"I feel pride," Helene said. "Pride for the artists that their artistic talents are showcased for all visitors to see; pride for the Traditional Owners and Elders who worked together to guide the project; pride for the multiple areas of Council which collaborated with me along the entire journey of the project."

"The Cultural Artwork Project makes my heart sing and showcases what community development is about."

Townsville City Council has since commissioned the artists to create other art pieces around the City, including a mural at its customer service centre.



From left, local artist Ian Kaddy discusses the finished cultural artwork with Helene James and Julie McTaggart from Townsville City Council. Photo courtesy of Townsville City Council.

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welcomingamerica.org

Welcoming International
welcominginternational.org

Cities of Migration
citiesofmigration.ca

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