PLANNING FOR A MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY

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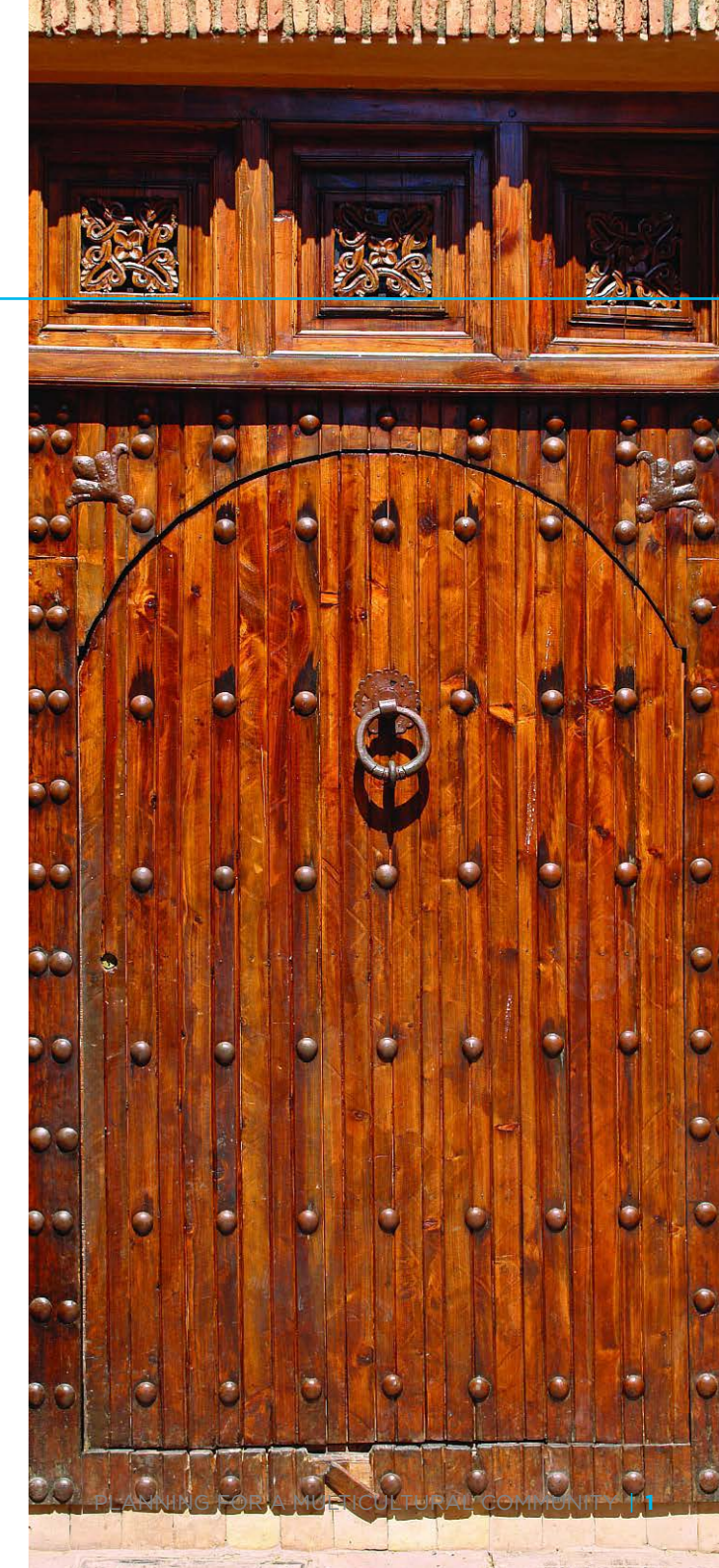
Introduction

This resource aims to support multicultural planning in all local councils in NSW, regardless of size or demographic makeup.

Multicultural planning should be undertaken by councils as part of their Integrated Planning and Reporting processes, seeking to achieve outcomes for the whole community.

How to use this resource

This resource describes a continuum of multicultural planning practice and processes – from meeting basic requirements to best practice.

Councils are encouraged to move towards better multicultural planning practice by building planning processes that take into account as many of the activities described as possible.
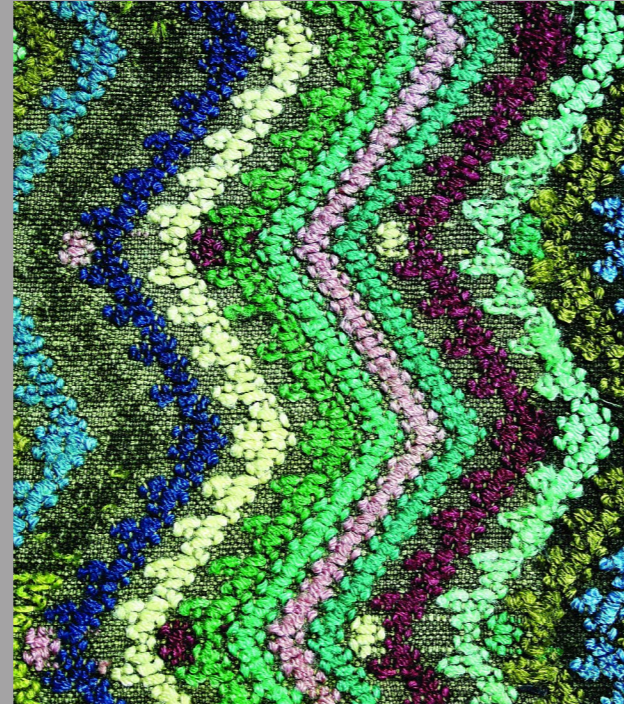
Commitment to your multicultural community

All councils, regardless of the diversity of the community they serve, must:

› exercise their functions in a manner that is consistent with, and actively promotes, the principles of multiculturalism

› ensure that their Community Strategic Plan is based on social justice principles. People from multicultural backgrounds should have the opportunity to participate in the development and ongoing review of the Community Strategic Plan.

Features of a council meeting the needs of its diverse communities

› multicultural policy goals are included in Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.

› policy development and service delivery is informed by council expertise and by client feedback.

› the General Manager and senior staff actively promote and are accountable for the implementation of the Principles of Multiculturalism within the council and the wider community.

› the capacity of the council is enhanced by the employment and training of people with linguistic and cultural expertise.

› people of culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds can access services.

› a range of communication tools are used to inform people from diverse backgrounds about council programs, services and activities.

› council programs and services harness skills of a culturally diverse population for the social and economic benefit of the community.

Improving planning and service delivery to people from diverse backgrounds.

This document provides suggested activities to guide councils from basic towards best practice in multicultural planning and service delivery.

What is Multiculturalism?

The Principles of Multiculturalism are set out in the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000. These principles guide the multicultural policy of NSW and commit us to:

1. accepting that we are diverse and that people from diverse communities are free to maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage

2. sharing democratic values, governed by the rule of law

3. creating opportunities for all people to participate in all aspects of public life

4. respecting and providing for different cultures, languages and religions, with English recognised as the common language

5. providing the greatest possible access to Government programs and services

6. promoting and maximising the value of our diverse cultural and linguistic heritage to develop NSW.

The principles of multiculturalism are the policy of the State. This means that each local council must observe the principles of multiculturalism in conducting its affairs.

What is social justice?

Social justice is about promoting a more socially inclusive society for all people, and in particular for those groups of people most likely to be marginalised or in vulnerable situations, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, children, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, older people, women and young people.

Social Justice Principles

Social justice is based on four interrelated principles of equity, rights, access and participation, to ensure that:

› there is **equity** in the distribution of resources

› **rights** are recognised and promoted

› people have fairer **access** to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life and

› people have better opportunities for genuine **participation** and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

> *Social Justice is a PROCESS,*
> *not a PROGRAM*

Planning and performance measurement

The council integrates multicultural policy goals into all its planning processes.

The council addresses the needs of the multicultural community throughout the planning cycle.

› The council's community engagement activities, as articulated in its Community Engagement Strategy, are based on the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

› The Community Strategic Plan includes strategies and actions which relate to multiculturalism.

› The council's annual and end-of-term reports measure progress against priorities which relate to multiculturalism.

› The council allocates responsibility for coordinating and evaluating its multicultural activities to a senior council staff member.

› The council considers the multicultural strategies of other councils and agencies to guide the development of its own multicultural program.

› The council has established a multicultural planning team. This team includes managers from a range of corporate functions to ensure its activities are relevant to all Directorates

of the council [click here for a case study example].

› The council ensures the multicultural planning team meets regularly to:

  » monitor the progress of multicultural initiatives

  » identify and address any barriers to implementing these initiatives

  » identify new opportunities to further implement the principles of multiculturalism.

› The council analyses census data to:

  » determine the key ethnic and language groups in the local government area

  » understand population trends in the local government area.

› The council tracks spending in key areas of multicultural activity. This could include expenditure on:

  » interpreters

  » communication strategies

  » cross-cultural training

  » funded services.

› The council develops a stand-alone multicultural plan with performance measures and assessment methods to enable achievement of the multicultural strategies of the Community Strategic Plan.

› The council coordinates planning on multicultural issues with other councils, government and other agencies, and shares multicultural expertise.

› The council gathers evidence to forecast emerging issues for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the local government area.

Towards best practice in PLANNING

CASE STUDY:
Hurstville City Council

Hurstville City Council's Multicultural Strategy has been developed in the context of the *Community Strategic Plan 2021* and emphasises the Council's commitment to creating a diverse harmonious and inclusive City. The value of the City's cultural diversity was identified as a significant factor by the local community in the development of the *Community Strategic Plan 2021*.

A multicultural planning framework has been applied by Hurstville City Council. The framework provides a direction for working with culturally and linguistically diverse people and is based on the principles of multiculturalism. The framework encompasses five key activity areas, including valuing cultural diversity, improving service delivery and increasing community participation.

The Council's Operational Plan outlines the annual actions arising from the Multicultural Planning Framework. The Operational Plan is subject to regular review to enable the Council and a Multicultural Advisory Committee to monitor progress and to respond to changes influenced by demographic trends and feedback from the community.

Integration with corporate planning

The council integrates multicultural policy goals into all its planning processes

› The Community Strategic Plan recognises that the council operates in a culturally diverse environment by:
  » acknowledging the cultural diversity of the population
  » highlighting the council's responsibility in implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism
  » setting out the high level priorities of the council for its culturally diverse clients.
› The council reviews ethnicity data as part of the planning process and checks that its priorities address the community profile.
› The Community Strategic Plan identifies the cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of the people in the local government area.

The Delivery Program includes strategies which address the needs of the diverse communities in the local government area.

› The Resourcing Strategy provides a budget and other resources for achieving the delivery of multicultural initiatives.
› The council ensures cultural and linguistic diversity is an integral consideration in developing mainstream and targeted programs.
› All units within the council incorporate multicultural issues when developing services, operational policies and guidelines.
› The council develops a stand-alone multicultural plan which details:
  » management responsibilities
  » timeframes for achieving key priorities of the plan
  » key performance indicators
  » an evaluation and review mechanism.

CASE STUDY:
Auburn City Council

Auburn is one of the most culturally diverse local government areas in Australia. The Auburn City Community Strategic Plan acknowledges this diversity and has a strong focus on developing an inclusive community.

To help achieve the Community Strategic Plan objectives relating to its diverse community, Auburn City Council has integrated its Cultural Plan with its Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Towards best practice in PLANNING

Use of data and analysis

Council planning and program development is informed by relevant and contemporary data, for example: Australian Bureau of Statistics data, information gathered from relevant service areas and other data sources.

› Data collected by the council about people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who access council services is reviewed.

› Client data is analysed against population data to identify whether people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds generally, or particular cultural or language groups, are accessing services at the level indicated by population data.

› The council identifies what other information is required to improve its planning and service delivery, and determines whether collected data should be collated into categories such as age, gender, duration of time in Australia, and English language competence to better inform planning.

› Opportunities are identified to integrate consistent ethnicity data collection across the council's operations.

› Quantitative data collected by the council is supplemented with qualitative information obtained through community engagement or consultative bodies.

› Qualitative information is analysed to help understand the service requirements of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the local government area.

Towards best practice in PLANNING

Planned communication

Councils carefully plan strategies for communicating with people from diverse backgrounds.

› Information to be communicated to multicultural groups or clients is identified, and a decision is made whether the information should be translated.

› Front-line staff and program managers are consulted about the information needs of people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

› Communication strategies of other councils and government agencies are researched and adapted to the council's needs.

› Demographic and client data is analysed to define the target groups for these communications. The People of New South Wales document analyses ethnicity data by birthplace, gender and age of community, language spoken, religious affiliation and local government area using census data.

› The council seeks external advice, for example from the Community Relations Commission or another council, if it does not have internal expertise.

› Options for delivering information to the target group are researched:

  » information in clear English

  » using ethnic or community radio

  » translating multilingual information

  » utilising bilingual workers to communicate with community networks.

› Community groups are consulted on the best combination of media and community networks to reach target communities.

› The council considers how new technologies and communication tools (such as smartphone applications and social networking) can be used to communicate with the community appropriately and cost-effectively.

› In mainstream campaigns, the council considers whether the campaign's effectiveness would be enhanced by utilising languages other than English.

› The council ensures the accuracy, appropriateness and professionalism of the information or messages provided to the target language group.

› Feedback is sought on the council's communication strategy when evaluating campaigns to inform future council planning and activities.

CASE STUDY: Crime prevention through education for the Chinese community

Burwood Council initiated the 'Watch Out' project to reduce 'robbery' and 'steal from person' offences. As part of the project, safety talks were given to newly arrived migrants and the local Chinese community, and a series of crime prevention factsheets were produced in Chinese languages.

'Watch Out' also uses international symbols and pictures to depict lighting corridor routes in Burwood. The project focuses on creating pathways which have increased visibility, to link Burwood and Strathfield train stations, using language that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Towards best practice in COMMUNICATION

Staff expertise and research

Policy development and service delivery is informed by council expertise, client feedback, and participation on advisory bodies and committees.

Staff expertise from across the council is drawn upon to develop, implement and evaluate multicultural initiatives. There are a number of steps involved:

› The cultural diversity skills and experience of staff is identified within the council.

› The level of cultural competency of staff to develop and deliver services to a culturally and linguistically diverse community is mapped.

› Staff with relevant skills and knowledge from across the council are invited to participate in multicultural planning and implementation.

› A network of staff with cultural diversity skills and expertise is established to assist the council in understanding issues of concern for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

› Expressions of interest are sought from staff with multicultural expertise to participate on internal council advisory bodies and to represent the council on external advisory bodies with a multicultural focus.

The council addresses the needs of particular client groups within the local government area using research and analysis:

› Culture, religion and language are included as standard considerations in qualitative and quantitative research. The sample group for research conducted should reflect the composition of the community/client population.

› Opportunities are identified to conduct research with other agencies that provide services within the local area.

› Behavioural trends and support needs of specific cultural and language groups that are deemed to be `at-risk' or a priority for the council are researched

The council's cultural diversity expertise and practice in the community is promoted through multicultural practice seminars with other councils, government agencies and the non-government sector.

Client and community feedback

Policy development and service delivery is informed by council expertise, client feedback and participation on advisory bodies and committees.

The council's Community Engagement Strategy:

› ensures the culturally and linguistically diverse groups within the local government area are provided with opportunities to be included in community engagement activities.

› uses a range of strategies to communicate with diverse communities. These may include:

  » providing information in plain English

  » using ethnic and/or community radio and other media

  » translating information into community languages

› working with bilingual workers and using their community networks**.**

Information gathered through the council's complaints processes is used when planning and delivering services for diverse communities. This is supported by:

› having and promoting an accessible complaints mechanism which allows clients to provide feedback in a language other than English (via bi/multilingual staff or an interpreting and translation service).

› training council staff on how to receive complaints from people with little or no English.

› assessing whether people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are providing feedback to the council in proportion to population size within the local government area.

Community members with multicultural expertise are encouraged to participate on council advisory bodies.

Multicultural and community networks, ethnic media, and the council's multicultural staff are utilised to actively seek feedback from the community.

› This case study is an example of an interagency convened by a local council.

Client satisfaction surveys are used to develop a better understanding of the service experiences for non-English speaking clients, including particular population sub-groups such as refugees, young people or older people.

› See here for more ideas about engaging multicultural communities.

Towards best practice in CONSULTATION & FEEDBACK

Towards best practice in CONSULTATION & FEEDBACK

CASE STUDY:
Auburn Community Sector Networking Forum

The **Auburn Community Sector Networking Forum** is held quarterly to provide opportunities for networking among workers in the Auburn Community Sector, hear from guest speakers on relevant topics and develop collaborative relationships. The forum is an amalgamation of the former Auburn Multicultural Interagency and Auburn Interagency and undertakes an annual consultation on local settlement needs for new arrivals, as well as discussing issues relevant to Auburn's diverse community. The forum also provides an e-group which enables regular information exchange among local workers. Themes for the 2014 forum include – *Making Partnerships Work, Community Health & Wellbeing, Settlement Issues & Needs for New Arrivals, Best Practice in Community Development.*

Community Engagement

Councils could consider incorporating some of the following techniques into their Community Engagement Strategy in order to obtain information from clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds:

› **Client surveys** – the council contacts a sample of clients to find out about their service experiences with the council.

› **Client panels** – the council invites a representative sample of clients to provide service feedback on an ongoing basis. These panels can take the form of face-to-face interviews, online panels (where clients are technologically literate) or phone-based panels.

› **Focus group research** – the council explores client experiences through a structured information collection process (qualitative research).

› **Community consultations** – the council invites members of specific ethnic communities, language groups and/or their representatives to speak about access issues, services difficulties, service priorities and community needs.

› **Community access committees** – such committees facilitate ongoing community consultation and communication with people from multicultural communities.

Fairfield City Council has a Community Engagement Strategy that thoughtfully considers how to engage its multicultural community.

Involvement and accountability of councillors and senior management

Councillors, General Managers and senior staff promote and are accountable for the implementation of the principles of multiculturalism within the council and the local community.

› **Elected councillors, the General Manager and senior council staff are encouraged to:**

» launch multicultural initiatives.

» recognise and celebrate the cultural competence of council staff and initiatives which support diverse communities.

» participate in multicultural events and training opportunities.

› **A multicultural-related standing item is included at management team meetings.**

› A multicultural planning coordinator is appointed from senior management to oversee the council's planning and service delivery for the multicultural community.

› The responsibility for leading, oversight and evaluation of multicultural activities is incorporated into the position description and/or performance agreement of a senior executive(s).

› Opportunities are identified for senior managers to develop their skills in identifying good practice and innovation in multicultural planning and delivery.

› Where the council has a stand-alone Multicultural Plan, the council links the Plan's actions and initiatives to the performance agreements of senior managers.

› High level achievements under the Multicultural Plan are promoted to other councils and levels of government.

Towards best practice in LEADERSHIP

Workforce planning and recruitment

Effective workforce planning ensures that a council has the appropriate staff to deliver targeted and mainstream services to its multicultural community.

Effective workforce planning means that the council:

› assesses whether the its workforce reflects the demographic characteristics of the community it serves.

› identifies common communication issues when providing front-line services within a culturally and linguistically diverse community.

› develops position descriptions which include the multicultural or specific skills required by the council to ensure the it has the expertise to be responsive to its client profile.

› within all recruitment, emphasises that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are welcome to apply (or include 'multicultural skills and knowledge' as one of the desirable criteria for positions).

› uses images of people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in promoting the council and its activities, and when recruiting staff.

› advertises designated positions and bulk recruitments through relevant ethnic media, targeted information sessions, and community networks in order to broaden the pool of people who may respond to the recruitment strategy.

The council has a policy for determining when to designate positions as requiring language and/or cultural diversity skills as essential requirements. This could include situations where:

› specific language expertise is essential to plan, deliver and evaluate services provided to a particular community or group.

› the work is of a complex or sensitive nature, and the information being conveyed must be accurate and culturally appropriate.

To provide for more effective planning, delivery and evaluation of multicultural initiatives, the council decides whether it requires multicultural/ethno-specific skills in occupational categories other than for direct client contact.

For example:

› managers of programs and services

› policy development managers

› community development workers

› professionals and para-professionals.

The council develops recruitment and retention policies to deliver multicultural skills to the council.

The council identifies the business, program and/or service areas where the deployment of staff with multicultural expertise will be most effective. Consideration should be given to:

› integrating staff with multicultural skills and expertise across a range of teams.

› negotiating flexible arrangements so staff with linguistic and cultural diversity skills can be used across teams.

› articulating career paths for staff with multicultural skills to enhance career progression and staff retention.

Cultural and linguistic competence

A council's organisational capacity is improved by the employment and training of people with linguistic and cultural competence.

The council identifies staff who have skills in communicating and working with ethnic communities. The council develops strategies which support staff to work with people from diverse backgrounds.

› The council assesses how it currently communicates with people who speak little or no English and identifies areas for improvement.

› A survey of staff is conducted to find out what languages are spoken within the council. Staff may be willing to use their language skills in client contact to answer short and simple information requests.

› The council has reviewed the Community Language Allowance Scheme (CLAS) guidelines on the Community Relations Commission website and determined if the scheme could be used by the council in its public contact activities.

› Staff with relevant language skills are invited to nominate for CLAS and the assessment of their skills by the Community Relations Commission is endorsed.

The council takes measures to assess, apply and upgrade the skills of its staff according to client needs. This may include targeted skills development and work placements.

› The council regularly assesses how often the language and cultural diversity skills are requested and used within the council. The council considers the need for alternative strategies, such as the designation of multicultural positions.

› The council offers training for bilingual/ bicultural staff to strengthen their operational knowledge and capacity, in order to maximise use of their language skills and cultural knowledge.

› The contribution of staff with these skills and the value it provides is recognised by the council. The council promotes internally the way in which maximisation of staff cultural and linguistic skills have impacted on the organisation – eg increased uptake of services/responses etc.

Community Language Allowance Scheme

The Community Language Allowance Scheme (CLAS) allows government agencies, including local councils, to provide on-the-spot assistance to their clients for simple, uncomplicated matters. This may include answering inquiries at the front counter, providing directions to another office, or making appointments for a further visit.

For matters that would take a longer time, or require an in-depth or formal interview, councils should use interpreters. This is necessary for two reasons: CLAS recipients may not have professional qualifications in interpreting, which are highly desirable for more extended interviews. In addition, as CLAS duties are additional to a normal, full- or part-time working load, it is expected that work through the CLAS scheme will not impact significantly on the employee's usual work commitments.

Employees must be nominated by their agency to be eligible to sit the CLAS examination. The examination is administered by the Community Relations Commission.

Professional qualifications in interpreting are obtained through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).
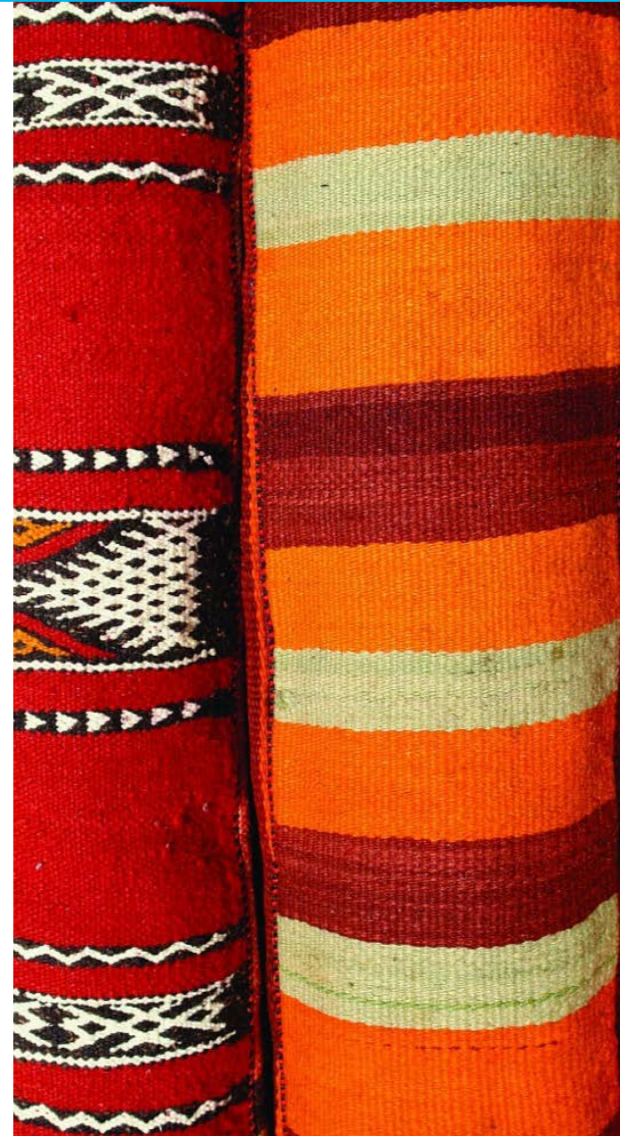
Staff development and support

The council's capacity is improved by the employment and training of people with linguistic and cultural competence.

Council staff are provided with basic training to assist them in working in a culturally diverse environment and in implementing the principles of multiculturalism:

› Cultural diversity content is included in induction programs and entry-level training for all new staff.

› Information on the Principles of Multiculturalism, the council's multicultural plan (if it has one) and its objectives, and the council policy on the use of interpreters is incorporated within mainstream induction and staff training.

› Targeted training is offered for staff in designated multicultural positions to allow them to understand and operate within the council's multicultural context.

› Staff in designated multicultural positions are supported with professional development opportunities, for example, extending their involvement in multicultural or community networks or forums.

The council conducts a needs analysis for cultural diversity training across the organisation. If further training is required, the following is considered when developing the training plan:

› Cross-cultural communication skills for front counter and customer service staff (including libraries and child care centres).

› Functional skills development (such as planning, communication, community engagement and evaluation) for staff with language and cultural diversity skills.

› Skills for managers and senior executive staff for managing and planning for the council's responsiveness to a multicultural environment.

The council evaluates the multicultural training plan regularly.

Towards best practice in HUMAN RESOURCES

Responsive mainstream and targeted programs

The council's programs and services address the barriers confronted by people from diverse backgrounds.

Council programs, services and activities include strategies to ensure they are culturally sensitive and inclusive of people from diverse language, cultural and religious backgrounds.

› The council assesses how people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious groups are using its mainstream programs and services. Service access is analysed against ABS census data to determine whether it is at expected levels reflective of the population demography.

› Specific issues or barriers impeding access are identified. Advice from other councils, government agencies and community networks on ways to address these issues are considered.

› Information is distributed about the council's programs, services and activities in community languages and through mainstream and local community media channels, neighbourhood and community organisations, and community networks.

› Brochures and posters are displayed in different languages at customer services areas. This helps to acknowledge the community's cultural diversity.

› Visual images are used to inform clients that they have the right to request an interpreter.

› All public contact staff are trained in working with interpreters and cross-cultural communication.

The council addresses the whole community's needs through both mainstream and targeted services and programs.

The council has developed an understanding of issues which could reduce service access for a particular group in the community, and addresses these. For example:

› Some people may experience barriers arising from their immigration status, or their length of time in Australia.

› Distance and isolation may be a factor for some groups, especially language groups who are small in number and living in regional or rural areas.

The council has developed strategies which improve access to its programs and services. This could include:

› targeting information campaigns

› using language services

› employing designated workers

› developing special access strategies which are integrated into mainstream programs.

The council partners with ethnic and multicultural organisations to enhance it's delivery of programs and services.

Language support strategies are used which assist the council to deliver programs and services to culturally diverse groups in the community. Strategies could include:

› language-neutral signage

› translated information

› provision of information by bilingual staff, or via short conversations held with CLAS officers

› professional interpreting (either face-to-face, by telephone or via video-conferencing).

Successful programs and services are showcased. Good practice models are shared with practitioners within the council and with others across the local government sector. Click here for examples of good practice in access and equity.

Towards best practice in ACCESS & EQUITY

## CASE STUDIES:

01 Hornsby Council's web weaving project

As a part of a Mental Health Week celebration, Hornsby Council encouraged families in its community to bring along recycled materials that represented an important aspect of their life, such as their cultural heritage. These materials were then intertwined with pieces of recycled yarn, fabric, ribbon, rope and other items. The artwork was chosen to represent the theme of "Celebrate, Connect, Grow", and was a celebration of the mind and the community's diversity.

02 Burwood Council's different people, different voices project

This capacity-building project aims at increasing young people's resilience to cultural isolation and intolerance through the development of a school-based lesson plan for students in years 7–9. The project is based on an intercultural board game and youth services map, and has been used in high schools across the Inner West region. The project received funding through the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, and was delivered in partnership with the Community Relations Commission, NSW Police, Department of Education and Communities, Metro Migrant Resource Centre and local youth leaders.
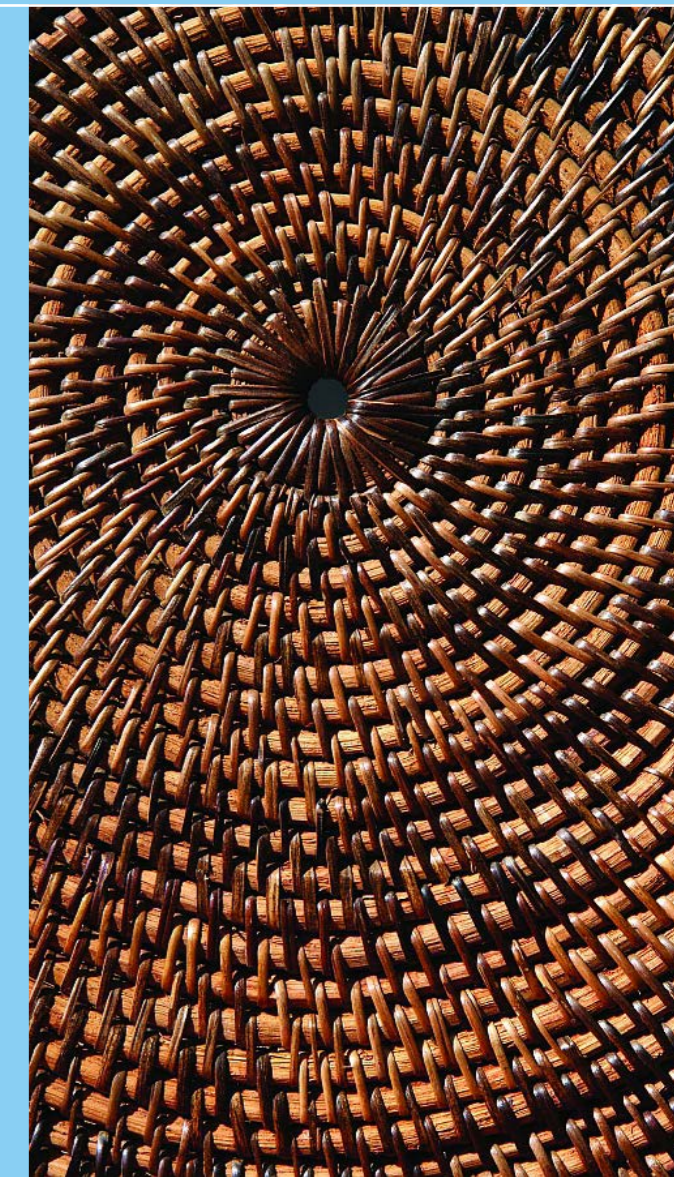
Use of interpreter services

The council's programs and services address the barriers confronted by people from diverse backgrounds.

Language services provided by the council are aligned to an appropriate goal of the Community Strategic Plan or activity of the Delivery Program.

The council has developed a language services policy and guidelines for the use of interpreters. The guidelines provide guidance on:

› when and how to request an interpreter. A checklist is included for staff to help them determine when an interpreter is required.

› the best ways to communicate with clients through an interpreter.

› the types of language services which can be used, eg CLAS to assist in answering simple requests, or the use of face-to-face or telephone interpreting, or video-conferencing.

When preparing the council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, the council considers the use of interpreter services to support community engagement to help inform future planning and for the allocation of budgets.

› The council's use of interpreters is compared against client data and demographics to determine if it is at anticipated levels, and if not, what the blockages to interpreter use might be.

› The council's systems ensure that customer language and interpreter data is being consistently collected across frontline service points (front desk/ library/ child care centres/ etc).

› If there is high demand for assistance with a particular language, the council explores opportunities for partnering with other agencies or neighbouring councils to block book interpreter services.

Towards best practice in ACCESS & EQUITY

Accountability of funded services

The council's programs and services address the barriers confronted by people from diverse backgrounds.

People from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds have access to services which are funded by the council.

› A reference to the Principles of Multiculturalism is included in grant guidelines and tender documents developed by the council.

› The council ensures that selection panels responsible for reviewing grant applications are aware of the multicultural priorities of the council. Wherever possible, membership of the grant panel will reflect the diversity of the community.

› Specific outcomes for particular groups, for example, emerging communities in the local government area, are identified. Funded services are required to address these outcomes in their expressions of interest and project plans.

› Funded services are required to consult with client groups, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, to get feedback on service delivery and access issues.

The council requires funded services to report on multicultural indicators.

The council conducts systematic evaluation of the performance and outcomes of contracted-out and funded services for diverse client groups, including those with additional or complex needs.

› See the case studies for examples of council grant programs where the grants are made based on identified multicultural needs, and the grant recipients are required to report on multicultural access to the funded program.

Towards best practice in ACCESS & EQUITY

01 Marrickville Council's Community Grants and the ClubGrants Scheme

Non-profit community organisations and services in the Marrickville community were invited to apply for funding for projects that met the diverse social needs of residents in the Marrickville Local Government Area.

There were two separate funding sources available: Marrickville Council's Community Grants Program and the ClubGRANTS scheme.

Each year, the Council also celebrates its multicultural community with the Open Marrickville festival. Community groups and organisations may also apply for funding through this program.

02 Parramatta City Council's Community Grants Program

The Council has funded a number of projects which support its multicultural community, including:

› the Cultural Performing Arts Network, to foster and promote culturally-specific performing arts.

› training and development for at-risk young people (including many from Polynesian backgrounds) as coaching mentors to run local rugby union programs, and a football development program for newly arrived refugee young people.

› Sinhalese young people, children and senior citizens' service education awareness programs.

› computer training and excursions for Tamil seniors.

› network building and activity development between Taste Food Tours and other social enterprises from migrant and multicultural not-for-profit organisations.

› capital equipment and resource support for multicultural play groups, computer and English classes, and a homework support program.

Cultural, social and economic development

Using programs and services, the council develops and uses the skills of its culturally diverse population for the social and economic benefit of the local government area.

The council celebrates the contribution that people from diverse backgrounds make to its local government area.

› Events and activities are developed which celebrate cultural diversity and foster community cohesion, including in partnership with communities or organisations.

› The council identifies the diverse cultures and language groups within the council and the community, and showcases their contribution in exhibitions, festivals, launches or annual celebrations.

› Council initiatives are nominated for awards that recognise the contribution of diverse communities.

Initiatives are developed which encourage people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in the social and economic life of the community.

› Community members and/or staff from diverse backgrounds are identified who can assist with building organisational knowledge and respect for diversity issues.

› Multicultural practitioners within the council are encouraged to identify and share good multicultural practice.

› Council staff are alerted about days of cultural and religious significance to build greater cross-cultural understanding and respect.

› The council strives for greater participation of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in specific activities or initiatives, including volunteer programs, council advisory committees, grants and awards. This case study provides an example of how community groups can come together to support diverse communities.

› The council utilises partnerships with other government agencies or local councils to develop projects which support social and economic engagement.

› The council commemorates the significant contribution of ethnic, linguistic or religious groups to the life of the local area.

› Research or funding opportunities are identified that encourage community partnerships and create opportunities to enhance the social, cultural and economic contribution of the diverse communities in the local government area, and in New South Wales more broadly.

Towards best practice in SOCIAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDY:
Auburn Small Community Organisation Network

The Auburn Small Community Organisation Network (ASCON) is a group of small, volunteer-run, not-for-profit community organisations that do not receive regular funding and that operate on a voluntary basis. These organisations play an important role in developing support networks and enhancing social well-being by bringing people together for cultural, social and religious events, literacy classes and sporting activities. Auburn City Council supports ASCON by providing secretariat and other support. The network facilitates the sharing of information and resources and collaboration between the many small community organisations based in the Auburn LGA, and provides a forum for inter-cultural community dialogue and collaboration on joint projects amongst community groups.

ASCON has regular meeting and training sessions for community leaders in issues affecting the development of their organisations. Over 100 people from 30 different community organisations have participated in ASCON activities. Many of these organisations are ethno-specific organisations from a number of new and emerging communities, such as, Sri Lankan, Filipino, Burmese, South Sudanese, Indian, Ethiopian, Afghan and Somali.