

# Cultural Diversity

## Council Policy

<b>Policy Name:</b> Cultural Diversity	<b>Policy Number:</b> POL-0038-V04
<b>Date Adopted:</b> 5 September 2017	<b>Review Date:</b> 5 September 2020
<b>Policy Owner:</b> Group Manager Community Connections	

### 1. Policy Statement

Recognising cultural diversity is an important part of Shellharbour City Council's role in the planning and delivery of services and facilities to the Shellharbour community. Council is committed to operating and delivering services in a manner that is consistent with, and actively promotes, the NSW *Multicultural Principles*.

This policy aims to ensure that Council effectively engages and communicates with our culturally diverse residents. It provides a framework to deliver culturally responsive services, facilities and programs and strives to reduce barriers experienced by culturally diverse residents.

The policy will assist Council in achieving community objectives and priorities that are defined in the Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023:

Objective: 1.1 Vibrant, safe and inclusive City

Strategy: 1.1.1 Meet the diverse needs of the community through the delivery of quality and accessible community services and programs

### 2. Scope

Shellharbour City recognises that our community is enriched by many people, from many cultures, living together in harmony and participating in community life. According to the 2016 Census, Shellharbour City's total population was 68,460. Of that, 11,375 or 16.6% of people were born overseas and 9.1% were from a non-English speaking background.

This policy and its associated Framework, has been established in recognition and support of Shellharbour's growing diverse population and the value that diversity adds to the fabric of the Shellharbour community. It provides a guide to ensure that Council's plans, programs, policies and the delivery of services are accessible, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

This policy applies to the Mayor, Councillors, and all employees of Council, as well as contractors and volunteers working for and on behalf of Council in any capacity, along with business and community partners.

The key components of this policy are informed by the NSW *Multicultural Principles* and will guide Council to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The policy is based on one holistic principle; that is to provide guidance on recognising and promoting the value and benefits of cultural diversity at work and in the community.

Council also recognises that the needs of the CALD community are ever changing, therefore is committed to continued research, evaluation and development of information regarding this policy in order to effectively respond to needs.

A comprehensive outline of best practice methods for Council to meet the needs of our CALD community and achieve the *Multicultural Principles* can be found in the Cultural Diversity Framework.

### 3. References

- Cultural Diversity Framework
- Multicultural NSW Act 2000, Multicultural Principles (S3)
- Anti-Discrimination Act, NSW 1977
- Local Government Act, 1993, sections 8(1), 403(6N), 428(j), 344(1), 345(1).
- Planning for a Multicultural Community, NSW Office of Local Government, 2015
- Refugee Welcome Zones 2013, Refugee Council of Australia
- ABS Census - profile.id.com.au/Shellharbour

### 4. Definitions

- **Cultural Diversity:** Cultural diversity is the existence of a group of diverse individuals from different cultures, societies or a variety of cultural ethnic groups within a society. Cultural Diversity takes into account ethnicity, language, religion, race, sexual orientation, gender and age.
- **Multicultural:** The identification or presence of several distinct cultural or ethnic groups. Relating to the co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles.
- **Refugee:** A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. A refugee is a person who has fled their country of origin and is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.
- **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 CALD, people with disabilities, older people, women and young people.

### 5. Variation and Review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy.

## Review History:

Date Policy first adopted – version 1	1996
Date amendment adopted – version 2	March 2002
Date amendment adopted - version 3	May 2010
Reviewed without amendment	May 2011
Date amendment adopted – version 4	5 September 2017

## 6. Policy

Recognising cultural diversity is an important part of Council's role in the planning and delivery of services and facilities to the diverse Shellharbour community. This policy identifies that local government should advocate for appropriate, inclusive and accessible services and facilities for our culturally diverse community members.

Shellharbour City Council is required by legislation to perform its functions *"in a manner that is consistent with and actively promotes the Multicultural Principles"*. (Multicultural NSW, Multicultural Act 2000).

The following Multicultural Principles underpin Council's initiatives for the CALD community:

1. **We are diverse and accepting** - The people of New South Wales are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who, either individually or in community with other members of their respective groups, are free to profess, practice and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage;
2. **We have shared values** - All individuals in New South Wales, irrespective of their linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values;
3. **We participate and contribute to NSW** - All individuals in New South Wales should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life;
4. **We respect diversity in an Australian setting** - All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others;
5. **We ensure access to programs and services** - All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs;
6. **We consider diversity an asset** - All institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource.

The associated Cultural Diversity Framework outlines how these principles will be achieved within Council's activities of planning, communication, consultation and feedback, leadership, human resources, access and equity and social and economic development.

Additionally, Council also ensures that the Community Strategic Plan 2013 - 2023 is based on social justice principles of access, equity, rights and participation.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Councillors and Council staff play complementary roles in catering for the needs of the CALD community.

The elected Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that community engagement with our CALD community informs Council decisions
- Supporting and encouraging CALD initiatives appropriate to the needs of the community
- Providing adequate funding and/or resources to support CALD activities

Council staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is appropriately implemented and applied
- Providing opportunities for community participation for CALD residents
- Reporting outcomes

The community has a role in supporting the principles of multiculturalism. The community is encouraged to actively participate in engagement activities and contribute to Council's decision making processes.

**Link to Cultural Diversity Framework**

The link between the Cultural Diversity Policy and Framework is outlined below.

Cultural Diversity Policy

This policy provides the foundation and states Council's commitment to actively promote the *Multicultural Principles*.

Cultural Diversity Framework

The Framework provides best practice methods and guidelines to ensure a cross organisational approach is undertaken to achieve the *Multicultural Principles*. The Framework provides a comprehensive overview of how the principles can be achieved across areas including planning, communication, consultation and feedback, leadership, human resources, access and equity and social and economic development.

**Partnerships**

As an integral part of this policy, Council is committed in fostering partnerships between all levels of government, businesses, community organisations and importantly the community.

**7. Related forms**

Nil

**8. Attachments**

Shellharbour City Council's Cultural Diversity Framework  
Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration

**Policy Authorised by:**

Name: Council Resolution Number 230

Date: 5 September 2017