

Item No: C1118(1) Item 3

Subject: MULTICULTURAL POLICY

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SUMMARY

On 21 August 2018 Inner West Council endorsed the draft Multicultural Policy and Action Plan 2018-2020 for public exhibition. A revised Multicultural Policy and Multicultural program priorities are proposed for adoption (Attachments One and Two). This policy is to ensure equity of access to Council services, to ensure the voices of people from multicultural backgrounds are heard in Council's decision-making and that Council advocates for the needs of people from multicultural communities. Council aspires to create social inclusion for people from diverse backgrounds: particularly for children and young people, older people and people with disability, and particularly in employment, health care, and aged care.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

- 1. Endorse the Multicultural Policy;**
- 2. Reallocate \$113,000 in 2018/19 and subsequent financial years within the Community Services and Culture Group to deliver the Multicultural program priorities:**
 - a. Employing a part time Multicultural Policy Project Officer (\$84,000 per annum);**
 - b. Developing and delivering a multicultural small grants program enabling community-lead celebrations of culture \$29,000**
 - c. Initiating the Multicultural Advisory Committee commencing 29 November 2018;**
 - d. Initiating the Inter-Faith Reference Group commencing first quarter 2019**
 - e. Continuing translation of key Council documents into community languages as required;**
 - f. Developing the framework and protocols supporting community to community relationships;**
 - g. Identifying a prospective Chinese city with which to form a community to community relationship; and**
- 3. Note that the following Multicultural program priorities are not recommended to proceed in 2018/19 and are unfunded:**
 - a. Additional investment in expanding Lunar New Year celebrations**
 - b. Investment in an anti-racism film competition and festival.**

BACKGROUND

Notice of Motion (C0818 Item 1) Multicultural Policy

THAT Council:

- 1. Receive and note the stocktake of activities across Inner West Council which support cultural groups in our multicultural community;*
- 2. Receive and note a report back on potential additional multicultural initiatives;*
- 3. Endorse the draft Multicultural Policy for public exhibition;*
- 4. Endorse the community engagement plan and the action plan 2018-2020 contained in the report;*

5. *Amend the draft action plan 2018 - 2020 to include the following:*
 - a. *Council will re-establish the community to community relationships listed in point 6 with the inclusion of Maliana in East Timor. These relationship will be initiated after an assessment of the willingness of the other parties to recommence the previous agreements and the capacity for the community links to be reactivated;*
 - b. *New criteria for the establishment of new community to community relationships, with a requirement for demonstrated, existing cultural, social links between overseas communities and communities within the Inner West; and*
 - c. *Council seek advice from Chinese community organisations about a Chinese city that a relationship can be established with.*
6. *Write to Multicultural NSW seeking advice about best practice for local government support for ageing culturally and linguistically diverse communities;*
7. *Assist in establishing a quarterly ethnic community organisations interagency to encourage information sharing and cooperation; and*
8. *Work with the economic development unit on this policy to harness the multiculturalism within our business communities.*

More than one third of the population of the Inner West is from multicultural backgrounds, 66,228 people were born overseas, and 51,597 speak a language other than English at home. Council recognises that the engagement with multicultural communities and their expressions of culture and faith enrich our whole community and build inclusion across the city.

This policy seeks to ensure that people from diverse backgrounds participate in local decision making, including in design of Council's services and policies; access and are supported by Council services and policies; and that people from diverse backgrounds are celebrated and acknowledged across our communities in the Inner West. Overall, this policy seeks to ensure that residents of the Inner West from diverse backgrounds achieve equitable social and economic participation.

Council is deeply engaged in service provision to people from multicultural backgrounds, through specifically designed and tailored services, and through service provision provided for the whole community.

New initiatives for people from multicultural backgrounds are supported by community engagement on the Policy. These initiatives include new celebrations for Lunar New Year, creation of an anti-racism film festival, a new inter-faith reference group, new approaches to translation and interpretation for residents who use community languages, and expanded community to community relationships for specific groups.

Council officers discussed the needs of older people from multicultural backgrounds with Multicultural NSW. Following their advice, Council has engaged with the seniors policy area of the Department of Family and Community Services, and these officers, along with Council of the Ageing NSW will support Council in development of a Well-being Strategy for the city in 2018/19.

Council has an existing multicultural forum with more than 50 organisational participants. This forum will be reviewed to ensure that all ethnic community organisations in the city have the opportunity to participate. As Council's new Economic Development Strategy is developed through 2019, the opportunities for economic participation by multicultural businesses will be included.

The Policy supersedes earlier Council plans and policies of the former Ashfield Council: *Local Ethnic Affairs Policy* 1998 and *Culturally Diverse Society Principles Policy* 1997.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Finance confirms the \$113,000 required for the implementation of the Multicultural Policy for current (2018/19) and for future financial years is available from reallocating resources within the Community Services and Culture Group.

A dedicated Multicultural Policy project officer would be required. The cost for a four day per week position would be \$84,000 per annum.

OTHER STAFF COMMENTS

Council officers provided input on the draft policy and action plan. These are summarized in the table below:

Issue	Response
Further demographic analysis required for policy implementation	To be undertaken within the Community Services and Culture division in 2018
Deeper engagement across the city with existing organisations and services working with multicultural communities	Through 2018/19 to support the development of a Well-being Strategy for the city
Deeper exploration of the role Council needs to play in multicultural policy	Options to be explored through 2018/19 to support the development of a Well-being Strategy for the city
More comprehensive stock take of council policies and services for multicultural community	To be undertaken within the Community Services and Culture division in 2018

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public engagement on the draft policy and action plan was promoted through:

- Media release and social media on Facebook
- Council's column in the Inner West Courier
- Council's enews and Your Say Inner West enews
- Multicultural NSW email newsletter (8,000 recipients).

The engagement was open from 24 August – 21 September 2018. Council also held two public forums on 12 and 18 September 2018, attended by 15 people. A detailed report on the engagement is at Attachment Three.

The following table summarises key policy issues raised in the engagement, and provides brief responses:

Issue	Response
Love the idea!! Film Festival is a great idea! Please include Hindi language	This initiative is unfunded, and costs of expanding the programs are detailed in Attachment 2.
More commitment to newly arrived communities and services	Council provides extensive support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, and has specific programs for newly arrived communities. Additional support will be explored during the pilot period.
Expand the Lunar New Year celebrations in Marrickville	This initiative is unfunded, and costs of expanding the programs are detailed in Attachment 2.

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Indian civic reception	Applications from community organisations will be sought via a multicultural small grants program enabling community-lead celebrations of culture
Re the interfaith committee. Why are you linking faith to multiculturalism and politics? Culture based on religion is concerning as religion can be used to preference views which exclude people	There was significant support for diverse representation on the interfaith reference group, including for the participation of women and secular leaders.
Diwali function	Applications from community organisations will be sought via a multicultural small grants program enabling community-lead celebrations of culture
Recreation and sporting clubs can assist in bring community groups together to improve social cohesion and celebrate diversity	Options to be explored through 2018/19 in the development of a Well-being Strategy for the city
Needs measurable outcomes and funding for multicultural NGOs and groups to express and celebrate their cultures	The Council grant programs utilise a funding agreement that defines outcomes, and grant recipients report on their results at the end of the project. In addition to the existing Grants program, this can be achieved via a multicultural small grants program enabling community-lead celebrations of culture
The policy needs a lot of work, in my view	The policy has been redrafted, following feedback in the engagement
Council's community to community relationship need clearer policy guidelines	Council resolved on 21 August 2018 to proceed with the community to community initiative, and the guidelines for these relationships will be finalised following the appointment of the proposed Multicultural Policy Project Officer
I don't believe the policy captures a community development aspect	Implementation of the Policy and program by the proposed Multicultural Policy Project Officer position will be aligned with Council's strengths-based community development methodology
I am concerned that new expenditure is being proposed while the council has not and is not adequately providing services and performing essential maintenance, particularly on the proposed film festival	The proposed policy and action plan have received overwhelming support in the engagement, and the Officer's recommendations propose reallocation of existing funds.
The purpose is too narrow. Multicultural Policy must be expansive into the future to be inclusive of more than 'needs' and 'aspirations'	Comment is noted, and it is recognised this policy sits within Council's established policy commitment to equity, access, participation and rights, in the Community Strategic Plan. Council's role is distinct from that of Commonwealth and State governments.
I would also suggest that faith be added to "Council recognises that the engagement with multicultural communities and their expressions of culture and faith enrich our whole community and build inclusion across the city."	Noted, and included in the policy at point 7.
Why are you wasting our money on this divisive nonsense?	Noted.

Input must be invited in making the draft itself, not after it is developed.	Noted, and as detailed in this report, extensive community engagement has occurred.
Don't put council money into supporting religion of any type	Noted, and the proposal is to facilitate interfaith dialogue.
We also need to focus on supporting the community in their endeavours to learn/improve English	Noted. Options for better promotion of existing programs will be explored.
I am strongly opposed to expanding C2C relationships	Noted. Council resolved on 21 August 2018 to proceed with the community to community initiative, and the guidelines for these relationships will be finalised following the appointment of the proposed Multicultural Policy Project Officer
The policy document should strongly state the positive relational values of multiculturalism	The policy has been redrafted
We strongly recommend consultations be held with community, and with this multicultural interagency	Engagement will continue through 2018/19 through Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee and the wider local democracy initiatives.
An ageing population	With the Department of Family and Community Services (NSW) and the Department of Social Services (Commonwealth), options for improving policy and services for older people in multicultural communities will be explored through 2018/19
Isolation and the elderly Isolation and families	Council is currently undertaking well-being research across the city, recognising the critical importance of social participation and connectedness in building and maintaining well-being. This research will bring leading practice to the design of Council's forthcoming Wellbeing Strategy for the city
Cultural engagement	Council maintains an extensive investment in events and arts and cultural activities throughout the year, and across the city.
Council must be inclusive of all diversity and it must value the diversity of its own workforce	Council has developed an employment strategy which has a focus on building diversity in its workforce
Participants were very pleased with the proposed expansion of community celebrations for local community groups, they argued that community harmony and understanding is built from shared celebration and understanding	Noted. The Officer Recommendations propose the development and delivery of community-lead celebrations of culture.

CONCLUSION

Responding to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds includes improving the manner in which Council services and programs are designed to meet specific needs along with timely and effective advocacy. The proposed Multicultural Policy and Multicultural program priorities formalises a new approach for Council in meeting this requirement.



ATTACHMENTS

1. [↓](#) Multicultural Policy
2. [↓](#) Multicultural program priorities
3. [↓](#) Engagement Outcomes Report
4. [↓](#) Social Media Outcomes Report
5. [↓](#) Local Ethnic Affairs Policy Ashfield
6. [↓](#) Culturally Diverse Society Principles Ashfield