

Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy 2023-2026

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Contents

Acknowledgement	3
What is an intercultural city?	3
Purpose and objectives	3
An intercultural city for all Addressing racism and discrimination	
The policy context	4
How the Strategy was developed	5
Demographics: the City of Maribyrnong's diverse community	5
Intercultural Maribyrnong principles	8
Equality, diversity, and interaction	
Intercultural Maribyrnong themes	
Intercultural capacity and capability	8
Active participation and citizenship	
Partnerships, advocacy, and collaborations	
Review and reporting	10
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy Action Plan	11
Appendix 2: Definitions	
Appendix 3: Legislative and policy context	

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Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that we are on traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past, present, and emerging.

What is an Intercultural City?

An Intercultural city is one with a diverse population of people from different cultures, nationalities, origins, and backgrounds; where a variety of languages are spoken, and faiths and beliefs practiced.

Interculturalism widens the view of multiculturalism through the efforts of government and community, to create social and physical environments that support equality, diversity, and interaction between a community's different cultures.

Interculturalism does not replace multiculturalism, but rather is a way of working that further breaks down barriers and encourages social cohesion.

At its foundation interculturalism respects diversity. It empowers and equips communities to express and share their cultures, providing the opportunity to participate and contribute, and see themselves reflected in society.

Interculturalism at an individual level must also be viewed through the lens of intersectionality, recognising that cultural diversity exists alongside gender, sexuality, age, disability, and social background.

Purpose and objectives

An intercultural city for all

The City of Maribyrnong is one of the most diverse communities in Australia. Home to the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation. Fundamental to being an intercultural city is recognising our First Nations history and paying respect to this rich heritage.

Today, the City of Maribyrnong is a thriving multicultural community that continues to benefit socially and economically from its diversity and is home to people from over 135 countries around the globe who speak more than 80 different languages.

The draft Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy 2023-2026 (Strategy) aims to build upon Council's work to support our proudly diverse community by seeking opportunities for their involvement and engagement in all aspects of economic, social, cultural, and political life.

This Strategy represents the first iteration of work in this complex area.

It outlines the themes of the strategy that align with the Council Plan 2021-2025. Actioning these themes will provide valuable data for future work, which aims to bolster opportunities for inclusion, cross cultural exchange, and social cohesion by removing barriers to participation.

In addition, it seeks to address and eliminate inequity, discrimination, and racism.

Council's role is critical in facilitating the conditions that make all people feel safe, welcome, and included.

It is essential that Council continue to be a visible and vocal advocate for diversity and inclusion and actively work to eliminate racism and discrimination.

Council has a proud history of proactive multicultural and anti-discriminatory policy. This draft Strategy further strengthens Council's commitment to foster and promote a sense of belonging amongst its diverse community and staff.

By adopting an intercultural approach, Council is embracing cultural pluralism and empowering all members of the community, regardless of their origin or status, to develop their potential, realise their talents and enable them to contribute to local prosperity.

Addressing racism and discrimination

Discrimination, racism, and exclusion reduce the health and wellbeing of individuals and make society poorer for the lack of opportunity to share, learn and grow from others.

To address this, Council is committed to:

- Raising awareness of racism and how it affects individuals and the broader community.
- Identifying, promoting, and building on positive programs to prevent and reduce racism.
- Empower communities and individuals to take action to prevent and reduce racism and to seek help when it occurs.

The policy context

The draft Strategy aligns with the vision of the Council Plan 2021-2025, to create an inclusive, flourishing, progressive city that cares for both its residents and its environment. Specifically *Objective 3, A Place for all*, which includes the following actions that support the ethos of an intercultural city:

- 3.2 Strengthen inclusion and cohesion by removing barriers to participation in all aspects of community life.
- 3.4 Build capacity for our diverse communities to thrive economically and culturally.

Integral to the Strategy's development are the community engagement principles as outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

The Strategy also relates to a range of other Council policies and plans including the Diversity and Inclusion Plan / Disability Action Plan, the Maribyrnong People and Participation Strategy, the Reconciliation Action Plan, Towards Gender Equity Strategy 2030, the Maribyrnong 2040: Community Plan. Growing the Future Together, and the Putting Customers First Strategy 2021-2025.

How the strategy was developed

The draft Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy has been developed working in collaboration with staff and community.

A consultant was engaged to support discussions and to engage with staff. Internal views were gathered, and these were tested with the community.

An internal staff working group was established and met a total of five times in 2020-2021 to focus on strategy development.

A series of workshops were conducted with Council staff, partners, community members and leaders, academics, private businesses, and service providers operating in the City of Maribyrnong.

It was widely acknowledged that many are actively supporting cross cultural interactions and partnerships, and that the diversity of the community is valued.

The workshops occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and were facilitated via Zoom. The first four workshops focused on development of key themes and concepts to underpin the Strategy.

Themes were subsequently tested with internal and external stakeholders in the remaining four workshops, to ensure they reflected their views, insights, and ideas, and aligned with the values outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Data from the 2021 Census has also been included, which further supports the evidence of the cultural, language and religious diversity of the residents of the City of Maribyrnong.

Demographics: the City of Maribyrnong's diverse community

(Infographics will be included when published)

Countries of birth

TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF BIRTH		
COUNTRY	%	PEOPLE
Vietnam	9%	7,669
India	3.4%	2,936
UK	2.7%	2,275
NZ	1.9%	1,645
China	1.9%	1,639
Philippines	1.5%	1,269
Malaysia	1.1%	936
Italy	0.9%	804
Greece	0.9%	742
Columbia	0.7%	607

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021. Compiled and presented by id Community Profile 2021

38.0% of people in City of Maribyrnong (32,394), were born overseas, compared with 35.7% in Greater Melbourne.

21% arrived in Australia within five years prior to 2021.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER		
2016	2021	%
431	637	+47.8%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

Languages

TOP 10 LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME							
City of Maribyrnong - Total persons (Usual residence)	2021			2016			Change
	Number	%	Greater Melbourne %	Number	%	Greater Melbourne %	
Language (excludes English)							2016 to 2021
Vietnamese	9,928	11.7	2.3	9,768	11.9	2.3	+160
Cantonese	2,425	2.8	1.6	2,449	3.0	1.7	-24
Mandarin	2,044	2.4	4.3	2,628	3.2	4.1	-584
Greek	1,626	1.9	2.1	1,782	2.2	2.4	-156
Spanish	1,482	1.7	0.8	1,058	1.3	0.8	+424
Italian	1,211	1.4	1.7	1,465	1.8	2.3	-254
Telugu	967	1.1	0.5	916	1.1	0.3	+51
Filipino/Tagalog	908	1.1	0.9	817	1.0	0.8	+91
Arabic	731	0.9	1.8	801	1.0	1.7	-70
Macedonian	704	0.8	0.6	718	0.9	0.6	-14

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id Community Profile 2021

38.1% of people spoke a language other than English at home in 2021

6,678 people who spoke a language other than English at home reported difficulty speaking English.

Religion

RELIGION RANKED BY SIZE							
City of Maribyrnong - Total persons (Usual residence)	2021			2016			Change
Religion	Number	%	Greater Melbourne %	Number	%	Greater Melbourne %	2016 to 2021
Western (Roman) Catholic	16,051	18.8	20.5	16,579	20.1	23.2	-528
Buddhism	6,827	8.0	3.9	6,829	8.3	3.8	-2
Islam	3,370	4.0	5.3	3,579	4.3	4.2	-209
Hinduism	2,679	3.1	4.1	3,099	3.8	2.9	-420
Greek Orthodox	2,507	2.9	3.3	2,576	3.1	3.5	-69
Anglican	2,440	2.9	5.5	3,014	3.7	7.6	-574
Christian, nfd	1,874	2.2	2.7	1,668	2.0	2.6	+206
Baptist	754	0.9	1.3	875	1.1	1.3	-121
Uniting Church	738	0.9	1.7	1,039	1.3	2.3	-301
Presbyterian and Reformed	527	0.6	1.1	652	0.8	1.6	-125

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by id Community Profile 2021

Intercultural Maribyrnong Principles

The following principles underpin the themes and actions of this draft Strategy. They establish a vision of an equitable and inclusive community where difference is valued, respected and celebrated.

Equality, diversity, and interaction

- We facilitate a greater understanding of the issues facing First Nations people.
- We value and respect differences and diversity as a source of strength and opportunity.
- We foster a welcoming, cohesive intercultural community where all people are respected equally.
- We are a city where all residents have equal opportunity to participate in social, economic, and political activity.
- We actively combat racism and discrimination.
- We are always inclusive.
- We continue to build a city where all people feel safe. Our public places are welcoming and reflect our diversity and are inclusive for all.
- We support and provide opportunities for cross-cultural exchange that bring diverse groups, and individuals together.

Intercultural Maribyrnong Themes

The following themes were developed from consultations that were held in 2020 and 2021 with internal and external stakeholders.

The consultations revealed many existing strengths as well as opportunities for growth. The themes align with the values outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025 of respect, courage, and integrity.

The themes are also underpinned by the following key elements of intercultural practice that:

- Includes First Peoples' perspectives in cross-cultural dialogue.
- Builds on the foundations of multiculturalism.
- Respects differences.
- Brings together people of different cultural, language and faith backgrounds.
- Identifies and avoids divisive politics.
- Fosters and build connections and partnerships between diverse communities and organisations.

Theme 1 - Intercultural capacity and capability

To cultivate an intercultural city, Council must ensure that diversity is valued, respected, and celebrated, and that opportunities for inclusion are fostered through shared cultural experiences.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Facilitate resources for community to promote an inclusive and welcoming city.
- 1.2 Strengthen the skills and capacity of Council to actively respond to diversity and promote inclusive practice.
- 1.3 Facilitate opportunities for community to acknowledge significant cultural days and to share cultural exchanges.
- 1.4 Create greater awareness of diverse community experiences and share this knowledge to build awareness and understanding.

Theme 2 - Active participation and citizenship

Our diverse community has a wealth of experience and expertise. The opportunity for groups and individuals to contribute and actively participate in all aspects of civic life is of benefit to all and builds community capacity. Council will identify and enable pathways that encourage and foster equitable participation.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Facilitate and provide opportunities for diverse communities to develop the skills to participate and become involved in leadership pathways and Council decision making opportunities.
- 2.2 Intersectional perspectives are considered in the design and delivery of programs and improve access to Council services and programs for people from diverse communities.
- 2.3 Build capability to provide services and programming that are accessible to diverse communities.

Theme 3 - Partnerships, advocacy, and collaborations

Council is a connector and can enable partnerships and pathways that actively create opportunities for and with people of diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. Leverage opportunities to build knowledge and expertise.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Maintain, strengthen, and build relationships with and between organisations and community groups working to create an intercultural Maribyrnong.

- 3.2 Work with partners to address systemic racism and remove the various barriers that diverse people may face (e.g. racism, language, technology) in order to be active citizens.
- 3.3 Advocate for services that are accessible, inclusive and promote participation especially for those with significant barriers to access (socioeconomic, status, language barriers etc.).
- 3.4 Collaborate with the community and partners leveraging our community's strengths and experience in cross cultural interaction.

Review and reporting

A critical aspect of future work is accountability and transparency. The draft Strategy and its actions will be reviewed annually and outputs will be reported. Operational planning will evolve from the infrastructure being established as a consequence of the Strategy's first year of implementation.

Data and information collected from the first phase of implementation will assist in the further development of the Strategy over time, so Council can continue to build its intercultural capacity internally and throughout the City of Maribyrnong.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy 2023 – 2026 Action Plan – Year 1

The Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy is an expression of Council's commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive City. It builds on Council's strong multicultural foundations.

The Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy 2023-2026 Action Plan Year 1 identifies the work that will be undertaken during its first year. These actions and the work will build an infrastructure for further action to promote and build intercultural Maribyrnong. A report card on the progress of these actions will identify our progress and provide the direction for the ongoing operational plan for the further work for the life of the Strategy.

Theme 1		
INTERCULTURAL CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY - Cultivate an intercultural city and ensure that diversity is valued, respected, and celebrated, and that opportunities for inclusion are fostered through shared cultural experiences.		
Objective	Action	Year
1.1 Facilitate resources for community to promote an inclusive and welcoming city.	Identify and profile Council programming that celebrates and enables diversity.	Year 1
1.2 Strengthen the skills and capacity of Council to actively respond to diversity and promote inclusive practice.	Conduct cultural competency training for staff and Councillors.	Year 1 and ongoing
1.3 Facilitate opportunities for community to acknowledge significant cultural days and to share cultural exchanges.	Connect and promote opportunities that enable community to celebrate and share cultural experience and expertise.	Year 1 and ongoing
1.4 Create greater awareness of diverse communities' experiences and share this knowledge to build awareness and understanding.	Design community cultural exchange project enabling community to share stories. Project to be delivered in future years.	Year 1 and ongoing

THEME 2		
ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP - Our diverse community has a wealth of experience and expertise. The opportunity for groups and individuals to contribute and actively participate in all aspects of civic life is of benefit to all and builds community capacity. Council will identify and enable pathways that encourage and foster equitable participation.		
Objective	Action	Year
2.1 Facilitate and provide opportunities for diverse communities to develop the skills to participate and become involved in leadership pathways and Council decision making opportunities.	Leverage Council's community leadership programming and build pathways for the participation of diverse communities	Year 1 and ongoing
2.2 Intersectional perspectives are considered in the design and delivery of programs and improve access to Council services and programs for people from diverse communities.	Collaborate in the design and development of Council's intersectional statement.	Year 1
2.3 Build capability to provide services and programming that are accessible to diverse communities.	Action to be developed in Year 2	

THEME 3 PARTNERSHIPS, ADVOCACY, AND COLLABORATIONS - Council is a connector and can enable partnerships and pathways that actively create opportunities for and with people of diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. Leverage opportunities to build knowledge and expertise.		
Objective	Action	Year
3.1 Maintain, strengthen, and build relationships with and between organisations and community groups working to create an intercultural Maribyrnong.	Audit and activate networks that link service providers, partners and communities.	Year 1
3.2 Work with partners to address systemic racism and remove the various barriers that diverse people may face (e.g. racism, language, technology) in order to be active citizens.	Design and conduct research into the impact of Council's anti-racism signage, including gathering local experiences of racism.	Year 1
3.3 Advocate for services that are accessible, inclusive and promote participation especially for those with significant barriers to access (socioeconomic, status, language barriers etc.).	Action to be developed in Year 2	
3.4 Collaborate with the community and partners leveraging our community's strengths and experience in cross cultural interaction	Action to be developed in Year 2	

Appendix 2: Definitions

Term	Definition
Multicultural	A society that contains a number of different cultural or ethnic groups.
Intercultural	A society where there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. It supports active participation, and the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms, promoting the understanding of others. In an intercultural society, everyone learns from one another and grows together.
Intercultural city	A city of people with different nationalities, origins, languages or religions/ beliefs. An intercultural City is where leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and enables connection and respect.
Migrant/s:	The United Nations Migration agency (IOM) defines “migrant” as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and businesspersons would not be considered migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products. ¹ Descendants of migrants are sometimes wrongly referred to as migrants or persons with a migrant background to indicate their multiple belonging. In this strategy principles of interculturalism apply to all, the term “migrant” does not include descendants of migrants. ²
Refugee	A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. The refugee definition can be found in the 1951 Convention and regional refugee instruments (including the Organization of African Unity or the 1984 Cartagena Declaration), as well as UNHCR’s Statute. ³
Asylum seeker	A person seeking safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaiting a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international, regional and national instruments. ⁴

¹ Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

² IOM International Migration Law, Glossary on Migration, 2nd edition, 2011.

³ Guiding principles of internal displacement, The UN Refugee Agency (hereafter, UNHCR).

⁴ See [UNHCR](#)

Appendix 3: Legislative and Policy Context

Maribyrnong City Council Policies and Plans

- Maribyrnong City Council Plan 2021-2025 (including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- Community Engagement Policy
 - City of Maribyrnong Festivals and Activation Framework
- Maribyrnong 2040: Community Plan. Growing the Future Together
- Putting Customers First Strategy 2021-2024
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Towards Gender Equity 2030

Victorian Legislation:

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Local Government Act
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Victoria's Multicultural Policy Statement 2021

Commonwealth Legislative Context

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Multicultural Statement 2017
- Carers Recognition Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999
- Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

International context

- Covenant on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women 1979
- Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief 1981
- Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959
- Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons 1975
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2008
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1976
- International Covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights 1976
- International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008
- Millennium Development Goals 2000–2015
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948