BOROONDARA

Boroondara Multicultural Action Plan 2024–26

September 2024

Responsible Directorate: Community Support
Authorised By: Council
Date of Adoption: 9 September 2024
Review Date: 2026

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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Introduction

Boroondara is an increasingly multicultural city. People from over 150 countries, speaking more than 120 languages and practising more than 39 religions call Boroondara home. Our diverse community includes newly arrived migrants, as well as second and third generation migrants who contribute a wealth of ideas, experiences, cultures and traditions, which are shared across the municipality.

Multiculturalism has long been celebrated and recognised as an asset in Australia and Boroondara. Since 2007, the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute's Mapping Social Cohesion surveys have contributed to Australia's understanding of social cohesion, providing a benchmark to monitor the cohesiveness of the nation. The 2023 'Mapping Social Cohesion Report' identifies that in Australia there is support for multiculturalism (89%) and a belief that immigrants are good for the economy (86%). However, recent overseas events and conflicts have challenged notions of social cohesion within Australia, with the Scanlon Report also identifying a decline in their social cohesion index.[1]

At a local level, consultation undertaken for this plan identified strong community support for multiculturalism in Boroondara. Similarly, the Victorian 2020 Population Health Survey found 77% of Boroondara adults agreed that multiculturalism 'definitely' makes life in their area better.[2]

In light of wider recent trends, this plan does not take social cohesion for granted. The Boroondara Multicultural Action Plan 2024-26 (the plan), as Council's fourth multicultural action plan, builds on over a decade of work, as well as recent research and consultation. The plan responds to Council's role in section 8 of the *Local Government Act 2020* to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. It commits Council to fostering social cohesion through tangible and grassroots actions designed to bring our community together and make our municipality more welcoming for everyone. It aims to build greater understanding and awareness of the different multicultural communities in Boroondara, which is fundamental to social cohesion.

In line with recently released reports from the Australian Government and the Australian Human Rights Commission, the plan recognises Council does not operate in isolation and that other tiers of government, organisations and the community play a role in fostering social cohesion and addressing racism. Council has an important role to play in promoting and supporting community organisations and groups to implement programs that contribute to social inclusion in Boroondara.

The actions and programs in the plan are consistent with insights from the Australian Government's report on the Multicultural Framework Review. These insights include the pivotal role of cultural celebrations, interfaith dialogues, vibrant arts and culture industries, English language acquisition, and effective translation services in ensuring all Australians

can fully participate in and benefit from the nation's diversity and help build a more cohesive society.[3]

In this plan, the term ‘multicultural’ describes the racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse people who live in Boroondara.[4] It is important to note that this term does not encompass Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Council acknowledges and celebrates the rich histories, cultures, and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26. Together, these documents aim to foster a more inclusive and connected community within Boroondara.

The City of Boroondara would like to thank the people who took part in the consultation for this plan. In particular, we would like to thank people from multicultural communities and faith groups who completed the community survey and participated in meetings and workshops. We appreciate their time, experience, and feedback that has helped guide the development of the plan.

Corporate framework

The Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 (BCP) includes the:

- Community Vision
- 4-year Council Plan
- 4-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The BCP sets the strategic direction for the City of Boroondara. It outlines how we will deliver our community’s aspirations, and protect, improve, and promote our community’s health and wellbeing.

Both the BCP and the Boroondara Multicultural Action Plan 2024-2026 are guided by our community’s vision for:

‘a sustainable and inclusive community’.

The plan demonstrates Council’s ongoing commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive community where people from all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life. It is linked to the BCP as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Council's planning framework



Background

The role of multiculturalism in Australia

At a broader level, the role of multiculturalism has been recognised as one of the 'three stories of Australia'[5] which includes:

- **Indigenous heritage**: This story recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations of Australia, and acknowledges their ancient laws, customs, and connection to the land, which date back over 65,000 years. Council's role and response to this story is outlined in our Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-2026.
- **British institutions**: The second story relates to the institutions, cultures and rule of law (legal and political systems) that were established as a result of British colonisation, and continue to shape modern Australia. Council's system of governance (including the *Local Government Act 2020*) is a result of this heritage.
- **Multicultural migration**: The third story celebrates the waves of immigrants from various parts of the world who have contributed to Australia's cultural diversity. This story highlights the contributions of these communities to the social, economic, and

cultural fabric of the nation. The Boroondara Multicultural Action Plan 2024-26 supports efforts at the local level for a peaceful community with high levels of cohesion, understanding and vibrancy.

Waves of settlement and migration

To understand how multiculturalism has come to underpin our identity, the city's history provides us with insight into the community we are today.

As noted in the Australian Government's report on the Multicultural Framework Review, successful multiculturalism starts with greater understanding and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.[6] The area that is now Boroondara is on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people whose ancestors had lived on this land for millennia. The City of Boroondara's name comes from the Woi-wurrung language, which means 'where the ground is thickly shaded'.

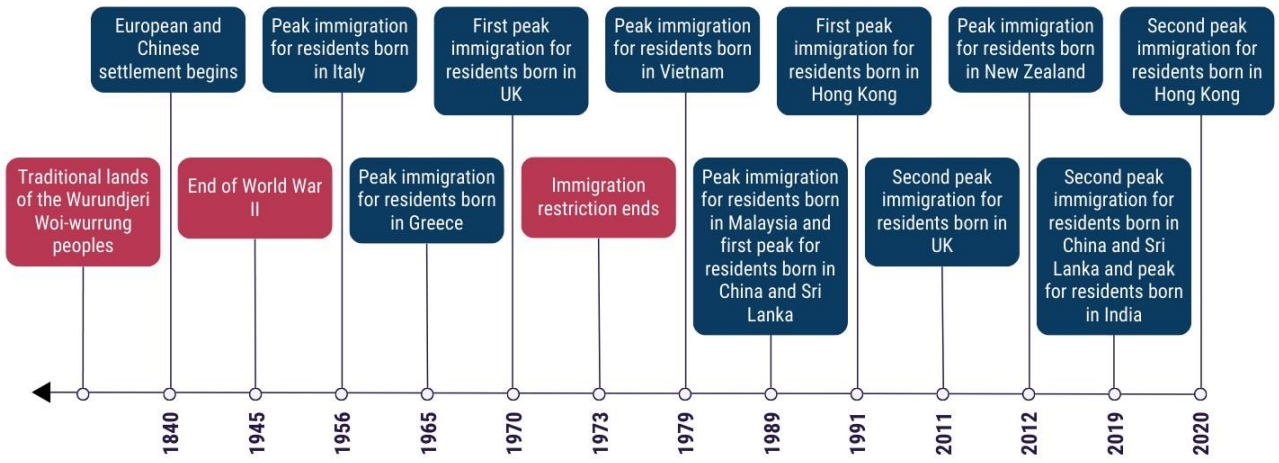
European settlement in the Boroondara area began from 1840, with the first settlers arriving from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as well as China.

Immigration to Australia from Italy and Greece increased dramatically after World War II, with 81% of Boroondara's Italian and Greek communities arriving prior to 1975.

The end of immigration restrictions in 1973 saw increasing numbers of settlers from Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Malaysia and China.

Among Boroondara residents who settled in Australia during the 18 months prior to the 2021 Census, most were born in China (33.6%), India (12.4%) or Hong Kong (6.7%).

Figure 2: Waves of settlement and migration



The shifting pattern of cultural diversity in Boroondara has resulted in different age profiles among different cultural groups. The median age of residents born in Greece and Italy (from which peak migration was in the 50s and 60s) is much higher than the median age of residents born in India (from which peak migration was in 2019).

Over half of Boroondara residents are now second-generation Australians with 56.2% or 94,338 residents having one or both parents born overseas compared with 60.6% of Greater Melbourne residents.

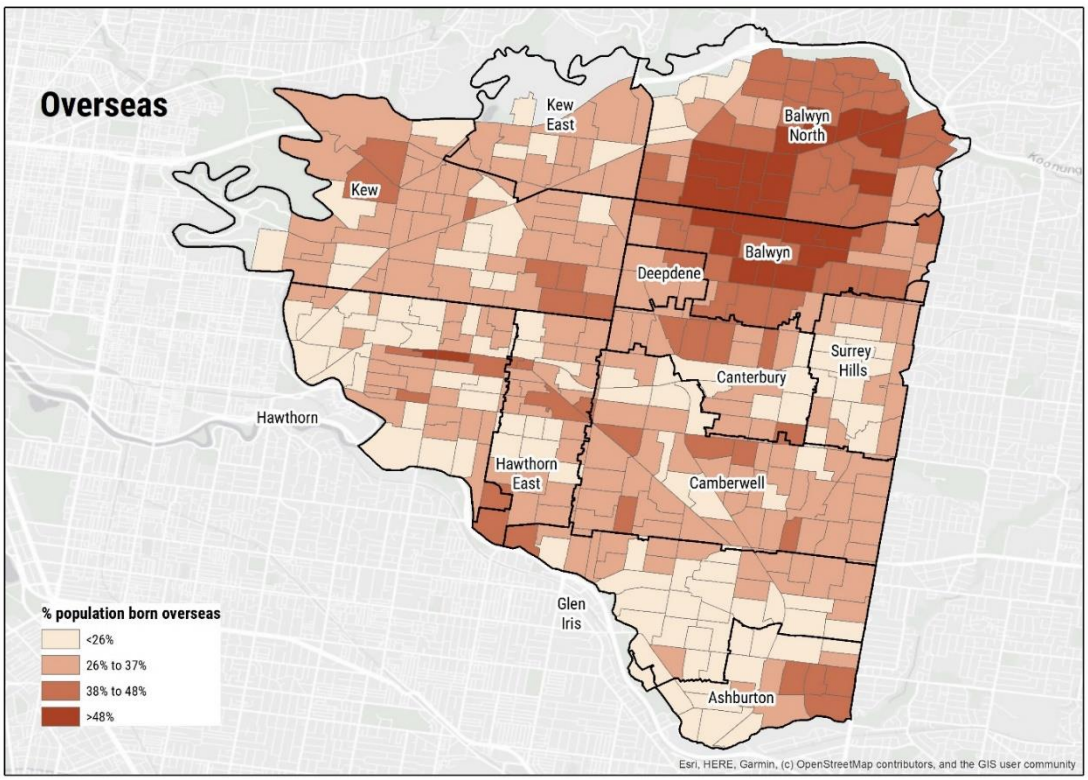
Community snapshot

Our community has told us they value cultural diversity. The Victorian 2020 Population Health Survey found 77% of Boroondara adults agreed that multiculturalism 'definitely' makes life in their area better. This was the seventh highest result of 79 Victorian Local Government Areas and higher than the rate for metropolitan Melbourne (66%).[7]

Boroondara's overseas born population has steadily increased from 23.6% of the total population in 1991 to almost a third of our total population in 2021 (32.5% or 54,522 Boroondara residents). This is a lower proportion of overseas born residents than Greater Melbourne (35.7%), but the 3.2% gap in 2021 has closed considerably since 1991 when the gap was 5.7%. Australia and Victoria have also seen growth in overseas born residents over the past 30 years (+26.5% and +25.6% respectively), but not to the same extent as Boroondara (+37.7%).

There is variation in the diversity of the population across Boroondara as shown in Figure 3. For example, in the northeast of Boroondara (the suburbs of Balwyn, Balwyn North and Deepdene), there is a greater concentration of residents who were born overseas (43.6%) and who speak a language other than English at home (46.2%) than across the rest of the municipality. Residents who were born in China and/or speak Mandarin are the predominant culturally diverse groups within this area.

Figure 3: Distribution of overseas born residents in Boroondara[8]



Outlined below is a snapshot of Boroondara's multicultural community based on 2021 Census data.[9]

Country of birth

- 32.5% (54,522) of Boroondara residents were born overseas, compared with 35.7% of Greater Melbourne residents.
- Boroondara residents named more than 150 countries as their place of birth.
- The top three overseas countries of birth in Boroondara in 2021 were:
    - China (8% or 13,393 Boroondara residents)
    - United Kingdom (3.4%)
    - India (2.4%).
- The largest increases in country of birth between 2016 and 2021 were:
    - China (+2,330)
    - Malaysia (+416)
    - Hong Kong (+283).

- The top three ancestries in Boroondara in 2021 were:
    - English (29% or 48,730 Boroondara residents)
    - Australian (24%)
    - Chinese (18.2%).
- 56.2% or 94,338 residents have one or both parents born overseas compared with 60.6% of Greater Melbourne residents.
- 43.6% or 73,149 Boroondara residents had both parents born overseas, compared with 49.3% of Greater Melbourne residents.

Language

- In 2021, 20,446 Boroondara households used a language other than English. This makes households where a non-English language is used less frequent in Boroondara (32.6%) than across Greater Melbourne (37.7%) but more frequent than across Victoria (30.2% of households) and Australia (24.8% of households).
- More than 120 languages other than English are used in Boroondara households.
- The top three languages used at home other than English in Boroondara in 2021 were:
    - Mandarin (10.4% or 17,412 Boroondara residents)
    - Cantonese (3%)
    - Greek (2.7%).
- Language communities who had fewer speakers in 2021 than the previous Census include Italian, Gujarati, Greek and Arabic.
- 4.1% or 6,801 residents speak English not well or not at all. This is lower than the Greater Melbourne rate (5.4%) and a little lower than the Victorian rate (4.4%).

Religion

- 50.5% (84,843) of Boroondara residents report a religious affiliation.
- 45% (75,571) of Boroondara residents reported no religious affiliation.
- In 2021, the three most common religions were:
    - Western (Roman) Catholic (19.9% or 33,419 Boroondara residents)
    - Anglican (7.9%)
    - Greek Orthodox (4.1%).
- The proportion of residents reporting a Christian religion has been in decline and the proportion reporting no religion has been increasing.

Settlement data

Based on Department of Home Affairs 2022-2023 settlement data, a total of 2,205 individuals settled in Boroondara. Skilled Visa arrivals were the most predominant (1,746 people) followed by Family Stream Visas (443 people) and Humanitarian Visas (16 people). This is a trend reflected in the settlement data from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2022 showing that during this time 15,415 people arrived via the Skilled Visa Stream, 4,875 people arrived by the Family Stream Visas and 145 people arrived by Humanitarian Visas.[10]

For further demographic data about our multicultural community, see the separate Community Profile of Multicultural Boroondara Report.

Policy context

The plan is informed by international, national, and state legislative frameworks and policies. These work together to uphold and protect the rights of people from multicultural communities and to support diversity and inclusion. These legislative frameworks and policies relate to the areas of human rights, racial discrimination, and multicultural policy. A full list of these documents can be found in the **Appendix 1** of this plan.

Methodology

The development of this plan was informed by a staged consultation and research approach including:

- evaluation of the previous Plan
- research and benchmarking
- community and service provider consultation
- plan development
- second stage of community consultation on the plan.

The opportunity to participate in the community consultation to inform the development of the plan was promoted through Council's communication channels, multicultural community groups and organisations, and Council's networks including the Boroondara Interfaith Network and the Cultural Champions. To maximise our reach to people from multicultural communities, a variety of accessible communication methods and tools were used so people could participate in the community consultation.

Key engagement methods for the community consultation to inform the development of the plan included an online and paper plain language survey conducted in 2023 with 216 responses, with 63 completed in a language other than English. We also had 33 organisations providing services to multicultural communities and those for the wider community complete an organisational survey. An additional 13 representatives from a range of faith and cultural groups participated in a workshop with key stakeholders in April

2023. Further consultation was also undertaken in early 2024 with seven members of the Boroondara Interfaith Network and 25 representatives from services, community organisations and faith groups. In mid-2024 community members were then invited to comment on the plan through the second stage of community consultation.

The evaluation of the Boroondara Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23 informed the development of the plan. A summary of the research and consultation methodology that informed the development of the plan can be found in the Consultation Report.

Research and trends

While studies show support for multiculturalism continues to be strong in Australia, people continue to experience discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping and racism. In 2023, the Scanlon Report found 18 per cent of Australians said they had been discriminated against in the last 12 months based on their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.[11] The Australian Government also found in the consultation for the Multicultural Framework Review that of the top 10 themes identified in submissions to the Review, second on the list were experiences of discrimination and racism.[12]

The Multicultural Framework Review also highlighted how a person's identity is made of several interrelated dimensions, including ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, disability and sexual orientation. It noted the need for increased awareness of how these interconnected aspects of identity can expose a person to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation and impacts their ability to connect and feel a sense of belonging.[13]

The Scanlon Report also found social cohesion in Australia is under pressure and declining on several fronts, straining the fabric of our communities. The Report showed that in the last 12 months, the Scanlon-Monash Index of social cohesion declined by four points to 79, which is the lowest score on record.[14]

These findings highlight the importance of initiatives that foster social cohesion, create a welcoming and inclusive environment, and reduce racism and discrimination.

Over the past decade, Welcoming Cities has been developed as a framework to promote social cohesion. The Welcoming Cities initiative is a national network of cities, shires, towns, and municipalities in Australia committed to creating communities where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic, and civic life. The initiative provides a framework for local councils to benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices, identify areas for improvement, and assess progress over time.[15]

Initiatives that create welcoming public spaces and places for multicultural groups are also important for fostering inclusivity, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging and are emerging as a key consideration for local government. There is a focus on creating an environment where there is mutual respect and appreciation of the similarities and

differences that make people and groups unique within the community, which is important. This helps in recognising, supporting, and celebrating community diversity.

Other initiatives that have been found to create welcoming and inclusive communities are supporting campaigns such as the Australian Human Rights Commission's campaign 'Racism. It stops with me.' or offering programs to provide practical tools to take action against racism and prejudice. Cultural awareness training and holding activities to celebrate diversity have also been shown to help foster a sense of belonging and inclusion within communities. The need for a whole-of-government strategic approach to addressing racism has been identified by the Australian Human Rights Commission, as often the burden to addressing it sits with those who are impacted by it.[16]

Community consultation

The findings from the consultation with the community, community organisations and service providers that informed the development of the plan largely indicated support for multiculturalism in Boroondara and for the work Council is already doing to make Boroondara more welcoming and inclusive. The findings from the consultation also identified challenges faced by multicultural communities and opportunities to build on the work Council is already doing.

Emerging themes

Three key themes emerged through the research and consultation, which are outlined below.

Theme 1 – Celebration and belonging

Research consistently emphasises the significance of embracing cultural diversity to enhance social cohesion.[17] Cultural celebrations and recognition events not only instil a sense of belonging and pride, but also foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation and can help reduce racism and discrimination. Music, performances, and visual art are vibrant mediums for sharing cultural traditions and connecting people. Artistic expressions have the capacity to transcend language barriers, evoke emotions, and create bridges between cultures, fostering understanding and unity. Food also serves as a universal language in multicultural communities. Through shared meals and culinary exchanges, communities can celebrate their heritage, foster understanding, and build bridges of appreciation and respect.

Research also suggests that a successful strategy to reduce racism is through cultural celebrations that facilitate interfaith and intercultural dialogues, reducing tensions within communities and strengthening cohesion and harmony.[18]

Feedback during the consultation emphasised the importance of having platforms and opportunities for multicultural communities to showcase their traditions, customs, and heritage. There was a desire for more cultural festivals and events to be held within the broader community and for the sharing of information about cultures, faiths and traditions between groups. The importance of intergenerational events was also highlighted as an opportunity to pass on customs and traditions and bridge the gap between generations in terms of values and perspectives. The community also expressed a desire for events and celebrations to be organised and led by multicultural community groups, as it was highlighted that by doing this community organisations and groups play a key role in fostering social connections and cohesion within Boroondara.

With the changing demographics in Boroondara, there is also the opportunity to grow existing celebrations in areas with high concentrations of culturally diverse communities, such as Lunar New Year celebrations in the northeast of Boroondara where there is a high concentration of people born in China and who speak Mandarin.

It was identified that by coming together to celebrate and recognise our diverse backgrounds, particularly through intercultural collaboration, we can create stronger, more inclusive communities where everyone feels valued, understood and a sense of belonging.

Theme 2 – Communication and welcoming environments

Effective communication is vital for fostering inclusivity and building strong connections with multicultural communities. Research shows that language barriers, cultural differences in communication styles, and a lack of intercultural understanding can hinder meaningful interaction, participation and collaboration.[19]

Feedback from the consultation highlighted language barriers for community members with low English proficiency and a lack of culturally sensitive communication channels as challenges faced by multicultural communities. This can make connecting with others and accessing services and activities difficult. The importance of using Plain English in Council's communications was stressed along with promoting the availability of interpreter services and using a variety of communications channels. It was also acknowledged that for some communities with low English proficiency, translated information is also crucial.

Research also found that creating welcoming public spaces and places for multicultural groups is important for fostering inclusivity, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging. Flags and other symbols such as inclusive signs can contribute to creating a culturally safe environment where people feel they will be respected and are confident to access services and public spaces. The use of languages other than English in signage can also create a welcoming environment by demonstrating the diversity of the languages spoken in the community. As public spaces are an extension of communities, when designed and managed well, they offer places where residents can interact with each other, experience cultural activities, access nature, and gain a sense of belonging.[20]

Theme 3 – Accessibility and participation

Research shows that multicultural communities face disparities in accessing services, volunteering opportunities, and civic participation. This can be due to factors like socioeconomic status, discrimination, lack of participation opportunities and a lack of culturally appropriate services.[21]

The consultation feedback highlighted some multicultural community members are experiencing social isolation and loneliness. This can include those with limited English proficiency, networks and family support.

The importance of programs provided by Council and the community for newly arrived migrants, such as English conversation classes and first parent groups in languages other than English, was noted. These programs were seen as an opportunity to meet new people, develop skills and increase confidence so community members could participate in the community. In addition, second generation community members highlighted programs that encourage intergenerational connections such as storytime at libraries and inclusion of grandparents in parent and playgroups as important for keeping cultural traditions and languages alive.

Factors that can improve the social inclusion and integration of multicultural communities and especially newly arrived migrants include participating in volunteering opportunities and membership of a sporting club or community organisation. For example, for members of newly arrived communities, volunteering can offer opportunities to experience Australian workplace culture, practice language skills, increase their social and community connections and understand Australian systems.

By addressing these disparities and providing support, it was noted that we can empower multicultural communities, ensuring equal opportunities and active engagement in Council services, programs and activities.

For a high-level overview of the findings of the consultation, see the separate Consultation Report for this plan.

Plan objectives, programs and actions

The findings from the research and community consultation provided the foundation for the development of the themes, strategic objectives, programs and key actions in the plan.

The 3 themes of the plan are:

- Theme 1 - Celebration and belonging
- Theme 2 - Communication and welcoming environments
- Theme 3 - Accessibility and participation.

For each theme below there is:

- a strategic objective, which reflects what the community told us they want achieved for our city
- a list of Council's programming that responds to the theme.
- key actions that respond to the community and research findings.

Council recognises that there is an extensive range of programs and activities provided by community organisations, groups and services specifically to build social connections within Boroondara. However, for the purpose of this plan, only Council programs and actions are listed.

Theme 1 – Celebration and belonging

Strategic Objective 1: Boroondara's multicultural communities are celebrated and feel a sense of belonging.

Programming

- **Libraries and learning**
  - Our libraries and learning programs acknowledge and celebrate culturally significant days through displays and story time sessions and holding resources on different faiths and cultures at the libraries.

- **Arts and Culture**
  - Our arts and cultural programs celebrate cultural diversity through Council's Arts and Culture activities such as musical performances, theatre, dance and exhibitions.

- **Grants**
  - Our grants programs support community organisations such as neighbourhood houses, seniors groups and sporting clubs to deliver projects that celebrate and recognise our multicultural communities through Council's Community Strengthening Grants and Community Arts Venue Grants.

- **Capacity building, planning and partnerships**
  Our capacity building, planning and partnerships programs:
  - Convene the Boroondara Interfaith Network and partner with its members to hold events for all the community to nurture and promote social cohesion.
  - Continue to hold regular Citizenship Ceremonies for new Australian Citizens.
  - Host and promote the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's community reporting tool for racism on Council's website so community members can report incidents of racism.

Key Action

Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures
Action 1: Partner with members of the Boroondara Interfaith Network and multicultural community groups to deliver a series of events to celebrate and recognise Cultural Diversity Week (including International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) and the United Nations International Day of Peace.	Community Development	People from multicultural communities feel they belong in Boroondara. The broader community has a greater understanding of Boroondara's multicultural communities.	• Number of people from multicultural community groups engaged by Council to partner/deliver on events. • Number of participants at events. • Participant feedback from events.

Theme 2 – Communication and welcoming environments

Strategic Objective 2: Boroondara's multicultural communities easily access information and share feedback and ideas with Council and feel welcome in spaces and places in Boroondara.

Programming

- **Customer service**

Our Customer Service programs:

- Promote the ability to use an interpreter to access Council's services and programs.
- Provide interpreter services when requested by community members accessing Council's services and programs.

- **Communications**

Our Communications programs:

- Translate information into languages other than English when a community need is identified.
- Improve accessibility, navigation and readability of information on Council's website.
- Use plain English language in Council's communication materials.
- Use images on Council's website that reflect the diversity of the community.

- **Community engagement**

Our community engagement programs:

- Provide advice in engagement plans for projects about how to engage with multicultural communities.
- Provide the opportunity for community members to view information and complete surveys in 9 languages other than English on Council's consultation webpage.
- Engage with the community members who are part of the Cultural Champions initiative to seek feedback and input on projects and to assist with promoting opportunities within their networks to have a say on Council projects.

- **Capacity building, planning and partnerships**

Our capacity building, planning and partnerships programs:

- Provide training for staff about how to use interpreters.
- Provide cultural awareness training for staff to enhance communication with multicultural communities.
- Annually update the multicultural services and organisations directory on Council's website.

Key Actions

Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures
Action 2: Develop a set of organisation wide protocols to improve accessibility and consistency of Council's communication so it is welcoming and inclusive for multicultural communities.	Customer and Communication Community Development	People from multicultural communities can easily access information they need and feel welcome in Council facilities.	• Communications protocols developed including guidelines on translating information and using translation tools.
Action 3: Work with members of multicultural groups to develop a resource for residents that provides information about key Council services, programs and facilities and promote the use of interpreters.	Community Development Customer and Communication	People from multicultural communities easily access information about Council's programs, services and facilities.	• Number of multicultural groups engaged to inform the development of the resource. • Number of times the resource is promoted to the community. • Number of times the resource is downloaded from Council's website.

Theme 3 – Accessibility and participation

Strategic Objective 3: Boroondara's multicultural communities participate in all aspects of Boroondara community life.

Programming

- **Early years**

Our early years programs:

- Hold Chinese facilitated playgroups at North Balwyn and Greythorn Maternal and Child Health Service for parents who speak Chinese as their first language.
- Support an Arabic speaking playgroup in North Balwyn.
- Respond to community requests for parent groups and playgroups in languages other than English.
- Hold weekly Chinese storytime sessions in English and Mandarin for children 0 to 5 years at Greythorn Library Lounge.

- **Libraries and learning**

Our libraries and learning programs:

  - Provide library collections in languages other than English.
  - Hold weekly English conversations classes facilitated by a qualified tutor at Balwyn and Kew Libraries.

- **Youth**

Our Youth programs:

  - Support newly arrived international students with life skills, connections to services and opportunities to meet other people through activities at the Boroondara Youth Hub.
  - Attend Swinburne University of Technology's international student's orientation open day to share information about Council services, programs and facilities.

- **Sport, recreation and leisure**

Our sport, recreation and leisure programs:

  - Support clubs to participate in the Inclusive Clubs Program and use the Boroondara Sport and Recreation Inclusion Guide and Assessment to make their club more inclusive for people from multicultural communities.
  - Through our partner agency, provide swimming lessons for community members at higher risk of drowning due to limited swimming ability and water safety knowledge.
  - Encourage the use of Council's sporting facilities by multicultural groups.

- **Active ageing**

Our active ageing programs:

  - Provide capacity building workshops for seniors in languages other than English where needed on topics such as governance and community grants.
  - Promote multicultural seniors clubs to the community.
  - Encourage and promote multicultural seniors clubs cultural events.

- **Grants**

Our grants programs:

  - Support community organisations and people from multicultural backgrounds to apply for grants through the Community Strengthening Grants, Individual Participation Grants and the Community Arts Venue Grants for programs and activities that promote health, wellbeing and social inclusion for people of all ages from multicultural communities.

- **Economic development**

Our economic development programs:

  - Provide free, confidential business mentoring sessions to assist new and established local business owners to address challenges and explore opportunities. The sessions can be delivered in English, Malay, Mandarin, Cantonese or Hokkien.

- **Capacity building, planning and partnerships**

Our capacity building, planning and partnerships programs:

  - Provide cultural awareness training for community groups, organisations and businesses to improve the inclusion of multicultural communities.

- Collaborate with local organisations, businesses, and government agencies to develop services and programs that meet the diverse needs of multicultural communities.
- Apply for grants for activities that improve the health, wellbeing and inclusion of multicultural communities through Council's programs and services.
- Collaborate with local services, community organisations and multicultural community members to address and advocate on issues such as family violence, mental health and elder abuse.

Key Actions

Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures
Action 4: Support community organisations to engage newly arrived migrants through programs and encourage newly arrived migrants to participate in the community through volunteering roles.	Community Development **Support**: Customer and Communication	Increased number of people from diverse backgrounds expressing interest to volunteer with community organisations.	• Number of resources provided to volunteer organisations that promote the benefits of being inclusive to volunteers from multicultural communities. • Number of volunteers from multicultural communities referred through the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre.
Action 5: Consider joining Welcoming Cities to access resources and case studies.	Community Development	The City of Boroondara is a welcoming and inclusive community.	• Report presented to Council for consideration to join Welcoming Cities to access resources and case studies.

Implementing, monitoring and evaluating

Council will regularly monitor, report, and evaluate our performance in delivering on the plan. Council is committed to working with people from multicultural communities, community groups, organisations, and the broader community to implement the plan.

The implementation of programs and key actions will be shared across Council departments and progress of key actions will be monitored annually through Council's internal corporate reporting system. An evaluation plan will also be developed to measure progress and the impact and outcomes of the plan.

The plan will be refreshed and updated in 2026 following the refresh of the Boroondara Community Plan in 2025.

Accountabilities

For all queries or feedback regarding this plan, please use the contact details for the responsible department below.

Position title	Contact number	Contact department email
Social Inclusion Policy and Project Officer (Multicultural portfolio)	(03) 9278 4017	MAP@boroondara.vic.gov.au

Supporting documents

- Community Profile of Multicultural Boroondara
- Consultation Report

Definitions

Intercultural: involves developing a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. Intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of relationships between one or more communities.[22]

Interfaith: refers to people or groups from different religious/spiritual worldviews and traditions coming together.[23]

Multicultural: describes the racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse people who live in Boroondara.[24] This includes people from non-English speaking backgrounds, migrants, refugees, and people with multicultural ancestry.

Social cohesion: refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society. It identifies two main dimensions: the sense of belonging of a community and the relationships among members within the community itself. It also refers to positive social relationships. A socially cohesive society is one which works towards the wellbeing of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility. [25]

Appendix 1- Policy and legislative context

International

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1975
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

Australian

- Australian Government, Multicultural Framework Review (2024)
- Australian Human Rights Commission, Mapping government anti-racism programs and policies (2024)
- Multicultural Australia: Australia's multicultural statement 2017
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975

State

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