Sunshine Coast Council
Multicultural Action Plan 2017-2020
April 2017 edition

Supported by
Queensland Government

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Acknowledgements

Council wishes to thank all contributors and stakeholders
involved in the development of this document.

Disclaimer

Information contained in this document is based on
available information at the time of writing. All figures
and diagrams are indicative only and should be referred
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document it does not warrant or represent that it is
accurate or complete. Council or its officers accept no
responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person
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material contained in this document.

Acknowledgement of Country

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the traditional
Country of the Kabi Kabi and the Jinibara Peoples of the
coastal plains and hinterlands of the Sunshine Coast and
recognises that these have always been places of cultural,
spiritual, social and economic significance. We wish to pay
respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging – and
acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people continue to play within the Sunshine Coast
community. The *Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2019*
outlines the practical actions Council and its partners will take
to foster meaningful partnerships and relationships, enhance
respect, and provide equitable opportunities between the
Region's Kabi Kabi and Jinibara First Nation peoples and our
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Descendants of the Australian South Sea Islanders (DASSI)
are a distinct cultural group with a unique history and position
on the Sunshine Coast.

DASSI and Aboriginal people together have had an extensive
history and strong physical and spiritual connection to the
land along the Maroochy River where they lived, fished and
sought respite and healing.

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Message from the Mayor

Our Sunshine Coast is a dynamic and diverse society with many cultures, languages and religions.

Our people and their diversity contribute to the vibrancy of our community and help to make our region so enjoyable to live in and visit.

Last year, I was very proud to launch Council's *Sunshine Coast Social Strategy 2015* which provides us with a long-term social direction for our region. This includes a commitment to recognising the value and mix of people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The Social Strategy also highlights the value of celebrating and building our region's cultural communities and ensuring cultural development contributes to social wellbeing, place, and identity and sector resilience.

The need to value diversity and provide opportunities for people from a multicultural background to contribute and participate fully in community life is a key to strengthening our community.

With this in mind actions which recognise, value and support people from culturally diverse backgrounds have been developed, in partnership and collaboration with the community centres and agencies on the Sunshine Coast who work with our multicultural community members and groups. These actions are part of Council's *Multicultural Action Plan 2017 – 2020, a* project supported by the Queensland Government through the *Celebrating Multicultural Queensland Grants Program.*

This action plan demonstrates that by working together we will ensure we build and support an even stronger Sunshine Coast community. One that is smart, healthy and creative.

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Partnership Acknowledgement

Council acknowledges that the Sunshine Coast Multicultural Action Plan 2017-2020 is the result of significant contribution and dedication by individuals, community organisations and government agencies.

Council extends its sincere thanks to the Working Group comprising:

- University of the Sunshine Coast
- TAFE East Coast
- Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland
- Caloundra Community Centre
- Nambour Community Centre
- Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre
- Maleny Neighbourhood Centre
- Diversicare
- Carers Queensland
- Volunteering Sunshine Coast
- Primary Health Network
- Buddies Refugee Support Group
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Human Services

for the provision of their expertise, and technical support throughout the four phases of the project.

Council is appreciative of and grateful for the financial support and resources provided through the *Celebrating Multicultural Queensland Grants Program*, the assistance of a community engagement facilitator and the in kind support provided by the project partners.

It has enabled the development of a plan based on in depth conversations with people from diverse backgrounds and collaboration with partners on its delivery.

Council looks forward to working with its partners and other key stakeholders in its implementation.

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About this action plan

The *Sunshine Coast Multicultural Action Plan 2017 - 2020* contributes to achieving the intent of the *Sunshine Coast Social Strategy 2015* and relevant policies pertaining to valuing diversity and equal opportunity for all. It builds upon council's commitment for "A strong community – In all our unique communities, people are included, treated with respect and opportunities are available to all".

Why do we need a multicultural action plan?

The Sunshine Coast has a diverse and growing multicultural population. One in every five people are born overseas (19.3% of the population) representing 156 countries, 45 faiths and 96 languages.

Welcoming and embracing cultural diversity among residents and tourists will enhance the social cohesiveness of the Sunshine Coast community.

These actions build positive social relationships that are important for the integration of people moving here or visiting our region. They create a sense of belonging and attachment and a willingness to participate and share the values and outcomes of the Sunshine Coast community.

Mutual obligation and working collaboratively and in a coordinated manner fosters an environment that supports the achievement of these outcomes.

This action plan coordinates, builds relationships and strengthens networks and partnerships between council, sector agencies and community centres. It details actions that recognise, value and support people from a multicultural background and that strive to create equal opportunity for all. Actions that will help the Sunshine Coast community thrive.

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Developing the Action Plan

The four phases involved in development of the Multicultural Action Plan 2017 – 2020 are detailed below:

Forming Partnerships

Collaborated with community partners who provide services, projects, programs and activities for multicultural clients to:

- determine key issues
- formulate engagement plan

Understanding the challenges

Connected with 351 people from a diversity of cultural backgrounds gathering comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data via:

- Online survey;
- Eight group conversations to enable focused discussions, raise issues and suggest solutions;
- Twenty in depth one-on-one interviews provided an opportunity to hear personal experiences of migration;
- The production of the Multicultural Conversations booklet and videos which celebrate diversity on the Sunshine coast and highlight the contribution multiculturalism provides to our community, economy, arts, music and education sectors; and
- Sector mapping provided a wider and deeper perspective of the multicultural sector by identifying existing levels of service delivery, strengths, gaps and opportunities within the multicultural sector.

Developing responses

Council held a Multicultural Sector Forum which brought together government agencies, peak bodies and community organisations that considered local engagement outcomes and exchanged information to inform the development of this multicultural action plan.

Engagement outcomes and draft actions were presented to a Community Showcase for feedback and prioritisation.

Formulating the Action Plan

Using the outcomes from the earlier phases developed the delivery framework and refined the actions that will recognise, value and support the multicultural community on the Sunshine Coast.

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Strategic alignment of this action plan

The Sunshine Coast Multicultural Action Plan is aligned with the intent of the *Sunshine Coast Corporate Plan 2017-2021*, *Sunshine Coast Social Strategy 2015* and other relevant council policies and strategies. The actions within this Multicultural Action Plan implement the intent of these strategic documents.

Sunshine Coast Corporate Plan

A goal of the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2017-2021* is the attainment of "A strong community – In all our communities, people are included, treated with respect and opportunities are available to all". Four strategic pathways have been identified in the corporate plan in relation to this goal:

- Safe and healthy communities
- Resilient and engaged communities
- A shared future that embraces culture, heritage and diversity
- People and places are connected

Whatever our origins, we strive for equal opportunity to shape our region, to become active members of our community, to show tolerance and respect, and to stand up for those who are not getting a 'fair go'. The Australian values and traditions that have shaped the Sunshine Coast of today are embraced and respected and form the basis of an integrated and cohesive community into the future.

Sunshine Coast Social Strategy

Council's *Sunshine Coast Social Strategy 2015* (Social Strategy) identifies a number of aims that respond to the corporate goal of "A strong community". The aims most applicable to the development of a Multicultural Action Plan include:

- Retain high perceptions and levels of safety.
- Partner with key stakeholders and state agencies to develop effective and appropriate local responses to underlying social issues.

- Build the capacity and resilience of the region's community organisations.
- Recognise the value and mix of people from a culturally diverse background.
- Develop an overall framework to guide the identification, protection, conservation and management of the region's heritage.
- Recognise the value of celebrating and building the region's creative and cultural communities and ensure cultural development contributes to social wellbeing, place identity and sector resilience.
- Strengthen the focus on social inclusion, building social capital and connection within communities.

In response to these aims the Social Strategy identifies a number of initiatives. A specific initiative is:

"Develop actions and partnerships which recognise, value and support people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background."

Sunshine Coast policies, strategies and plans

The intent of council's policies are embodied in the Social Strategy and have informed the development of the Multicultural Action Plan.

The key policies, strategies and plans pertaining to multiculturalism are:

- *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2017-2021* embraces the Australian values and traditions that have shaped the Sunshine Coast of today as the basis of an integrated and cohesive community;
- Sunshine *Coast Cultural Development Policy 2012* guides council's contribution to cultural development and details the position and key priorities to enrich the cultural vitality of the region;
- *Sunshine Coast Events Policy* 2010 articulates council's role in community events and celebrations that enliven and reflect the diversity of the region;
- *Sunshine Coast Heritage Plan 2015-2020* details actions which guide the identification, protection, conservation, management, celebration and communication of the region's heritage;

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- *Sunshine Coast Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2019* promotes the understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other Australians living in the region; and

- *Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-2033* identifies the pathways that are enablers to a new economy and the priorities and actions up to 2018.

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Roles in Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism encompasses a range of initiatives that respond to cultural diversity. These initiatives support a cohesive multicultural society. It requires government agencies, organisations and the community to work together.

Who does what?

The Federal Government manages cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and matters that affect Australia. It supports a culturally diverse and socially cohesive nation through:

- a focus on cultural identity
- social justice
- economic efficiency
- the settlement of new arrivals to Australia

In addition, the Australian Human Rights Commission seeks to ensure freedom from discrimination and works towards an Australia in which human rights are respected, protected and promoted across the community.

The State Government response to multiculturalism is through the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* and the *Multicultural Queensland Charter.*

The Charter is focussed on building a united, harmonious and inclusive Queensland. The key focus areas for the state include:

- Increasing ability for people from a multicultural background and multicultural community groups to participate positively in their community;
- Increasing public awareness of the needs and issues experienced by vulnerable people from a multicultural background; and
- Improving liveability, cohesion and inclusion in Queensland communities.

What does council do?

Council supports a cohesive and diverse community through the provision of services in keeping with its responsibilities such as:

- Providing a community grants program for one off community projects, events, programs and activities such as Festuri.
- Organising and/or supporting festivals and events such as Harmony Day.
- Providing leadership through community messaging such as "racism it stops with me".
- Designing and maintaining streets and neighbourhoods so they are safe and encourage social interaction and physical activity.
- Establishing dialogue, collecting and disseminating information and coordinating resources in the community.
- Programs and initiatives that support the growth of a regional economy.

Council can have varying roles as depicted below.

Leader- Lead by example, community messaging on important matters

Service Provider - Fully fund a service or provide a service

Partner - Contribute funds and/or resources towards an initiative or service that is delivered with or by other parties

Information provider - Develop resources to promote a common understanding; provide information; distribute and display community information provided by others

Facilitator/Initiator – Bring together stakeholders to collectively pursue a shared interest or service or to resolve an issue

Regulator - Specific role in response to legislation which may be direct, specific or general in nature

Owner/custodian - Manage community assets including buildings, facilities, public space and reserves

Advocate - Make representation or seek to influence the outcome on behalf of the community

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It is council's intention through these roles to fit in with the multicultural sector network and complement existing activities by others in particular those activities where people are included, treated with respect and opportunities are available to all.

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What's happening in the community?

Community organisations undertake a range of activities that support multiculturalism, including:

- Cultural diversity training
- Volunteering
- Lobbying and advocacy
- Community education and awareness
- English language/conversation classes
- Business and work skills programs
- Settlement services
- Support group for migrant women
- Multicultural lunches and dinners
- Culturally appropriate community services
- Emergency and 'one-on-one' support
- Multicultural Excellence Awards
- Harmony Day and Festuri Festival

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The Action Plan

This action plan complements the significant range of activities that already contribute to building social cohesion through existing council policies, strategies and plans. This plan identifies a direction and actions where a collaborative effort (involving all levels of government and non-government organisations, groups and individuals) jointly deliver outcomes that enhance the social cohesiveness of our community.

Multicultural intent statement

To recognise, respect and embrace diverse cultures, and to strive to strengthen the resilience and prosperity of our multicultural Sunshine Coast.

Guiding principles

The following five principles will guide the implementation of the Multicultural Action Plan.

Respect and recognition

Recognise that diverse cultures enrich our community.

Access to services and resources

Equal access to appropriate services and resources and to economic and life opportunities.

Inclusive community

Everyone has the opportunity to participate and contribute equally and in productive ways.

Collaborative approach

Multicultural initiatives respond, as part of an integrated, collaborative and problem solving approach to current and future cultural diversity.

Ongoing engagement

Council and its partners continue to engage with community to ensure the action plan is effective.

Valuing cultural diversity

Acceptance and recognition of diverse cultures enriches experiences for people from all walks of life. Taking steps to settle and engage new residents and visitors in a manner that makes them welcome and connected to the Sunshine Coast community builds a sense of belonging.

Accessing opportunity

The fostering of relationships, building of business networks and involvement in business events provides for improved skills and career opportunities. The promotion and effective involvement of people from a multicultural background in these activities supports a prosperous future for all.

Enabling contribution and participation

Expanding knowledge and fostering an environment that enables people from a multicultural background to actively contribute and participate in community life strengthens the cohesiveness of our community. It improves the ability of the community to respond to cultural diversity issues and develop effective local responses.

Priority Areas

The Multicultural Action Plan will focus the delivery of actions through three priority areas.

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Priority Area 1 – Valuing cultural diversity

Acceptance and recognition of diverse cultures enriches experiences for people from all walks of life. Taking steps to settle and engage new residents and visitors in a manner that makes them welcome and connected to the Sunshine Coast community builds a sense of belonging.

Action		Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Resources
1.1	Prepare a migrants kit for new arrivals to our community	Council	Community Centres	Commence by July 2017	Funding and sponsorship
1.2	Undertake social messaging that enriches the understanding and cohesiveness of our diverse community	Council	Working Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets
1.3	Provide information that improves knowledge and access to services and responds to language barriers	Council Community Action for Multicultural Society worker	Community Centres, Volunteering Sunshine Coast TAFE East Coast	Ongoing	Existing budgets
1.4	Establish an advisory group to consult with on important multicultural matters	Council	Community Centres, Department of Social Services	Establish by July 2017	Existing budgets
1.5	Develop and promote programs, projects and events that engage people from a multicultural background and builds their capacity and participation in community life	Caloundra Community Centre	Working Group	Commence by July 2017	Existing budgets

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Priority Area 2 – Accessing opportunity

The fostering of relationships, building of business networks and involvement in business events provides for improved skills and career opportunities. The promotion and effective involvement of people from a multicultural background in these activities supports a prosperous future for all.

Action		Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Resources
2.1	Promote multicultural community involvement at events and in programs focused on skills and employment	Nambour Community Centre	Working Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets
2.2	Initiate partnerships to encourage internships and the engagement of multicultural volunteers to enhance skills through mentoring and local work experience.	Volunteering SC/TAFE	Working Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets
2.3	Attend regular business network events and provide information and useful insights into the multicultural workforce.	Council	Working Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets
2.4	Partner with private enterprise to identify and smooth pathways and clear obstacles to employment for people from a multicultural background	Council	Working Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets

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Priority Area 3 – Enabling contribution and participation

Expanding knowledge and fostering an environment that enables people from a multicultural background to actively contribute and participate in community life strengthens the cohesiveness of our community. It improves the ability of the community to respond to cultural diversity issues and develop effective local responses.

	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Resources
3.1	Promote opportunities for cultural competency training for business, not for profits and government agencies	Council	Working Group	Ongoing	In kind
3.2	Empower multicultural groups and leaders through development programs that focus on their resilience	Community Centres	Working Group	Ongoing	In kind
3.3	Promote and facilitate opportunities in the community that encourage full participation and prosperity for people from a multicultural background	Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland	Working Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets
3.4	Advocate with relevant agencies and groups to seek effective local responses to social issues (i.e. health and wellbeing, education, economic opportunities, racism, discrimination, social cohesion)	Council	Advisory Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets
3.5	Explore opportunities to encourage schools to engage in cultural competency programs, projects and events that recognise and celebrate diversity and the values, strengths and benefits of a multicultural society	Community Centres	Working Group	Ongoing	In kind
3.6	Increase access and opportunities to learn literacy and IT skills for people from a multicultural background	Community Centres	Working Group	Ongoing	In kind
3.7	Promote intercultural connections within local communities and participation in clubs and community groups	Council	Working Group	Ongoing	Existing budgets

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Implementation, monitoring and review

This Action Plan has an implementation period of three years. The delivery of each priority area action is guided by the multicultural intent statement and the guiding principles.

Each action has an identified lead and partners that are involved in its implementation. The Working Group identified in the actions will operate under a Terms of Reference and meet monthly.

The working group comprises the University of the Sunshine Coast, TAFE East Coast, Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, Caloundra Community Centre, Nambour Community Centre, Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre, Maleny Neighbourhood Centre, Diversicare, Carers Queensland, Volunteering Sunshine Coast, Primary Health Network, Buddies Refugee Support Group, Department of Social Services and the Department of Human Services.

Monitoring and review of the actions within the priority areas is required to ensure:

- Responsive stakeholder engagement and problem solving

- Strong relationships with all levels of government and other key stakeholders

- Improved funding alignment and opportunities for multicultural programs, projects and events

- Enhanced opportunities for people from a multicultural background to participate and contribute to all aspects of community life

Baseline data will be established from the research and consultation work done to develop the Sunshine Coast Multicultural Action Plan.

Annual monitoring of achievements will be important to gauge the progress or success of each action. In addition, it will indicate for continuing actions if a changed approach is required to achieve the desired outcome.

The monitoring and review will require a collaborative approach involving all identified key stakeholders.

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Definitions of Terms and Concepts

Capacity building is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, processes and resources that individuals and communities need to thrive socially and economically.

Cultural diversity is the rich dimensions of cultures in our community.

Culture relates to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a group of people living in the same place and/or having a common characteristic.

Equal opportunity means that every person has the opportunity to participate freely and equally in areas of public life such as in the workplace, in education, or in accessing goods and services.

Multicultural is groups of individuals from many different countries and cultural backgrounds living in the same community.

Resilience refers to the capacity of individuals and organisations to recover from setbacks, adapt well to change, and keep going in the face of adversity.

Social cohesiveness refers to positive social relationships. A socially cohesive community is one which works towards the wellbeing of all its members, promotes integration, fights exclusion and marginalisation and creates a sense of belonging.

Social messaging is the process of communication and messaging tactics. Social messaging can be used to create a cohesive community that values cultural diversity.

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