

**ITEM 8 POST EXHIBITION - DRAFT DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING POLICY**

Throughout Our Wollongong 2028, there are a significant number of strategies and actions that are related to Council's approach to diversity, inclusion and belonging for both our community and the organisation's workforce. The introduction of a Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy is an overarching document which articulates Council's commitment and leadership in this area. It will be enacted through our Values, as well as the various strategies and actions from across our Community Strategic Plan. The draft Policy was endorsed for exhibition in June 2020 and is now presented to Council for adoption.

### RECOMMENDATION

The draft Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy be endorsed.

### REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Leila Hogan, Organisational Development Manager  
Authorised by: Renee Campbell, Director Corporate Services - Connected + Engaged City

### ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy
- 2 Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy Public Exhibition Engagement Report

### BACKGROUND

Our Wollongong 2028 contains several strategies and action that have a direct line of sight to matters relating to improving or impacting on Council's approach to diversity, inclusion and belonging.

The draft Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy [the Policy] is an enabler towards the realisation of our Goals and sets out Council's commitment to creating a place where diversity is valued, people are included and feel they belong. The Policy will guide decisions on the services Council provides for the community and how the organisation will shape and support the workplace in the delivery of those services.

The Policy will also provide an overarching 'whole of Council' approach and assist Council in embedding the principles of diversity, inclusion, access and equality into its many plans, policies, systems and activities, as well as demonstrating the organisation's values in action.

The introduction of this Policy demonstrates Council's commitment and leadership in this area.

The draft Policy was placed on public exhibition for the period 1 July to 5 August 2020 with nine submissions and one story received. Respondents generally support the draft Policy and felt it was clear how it underpins the everyday work that Council does, and they believe Council needs to be demonstrating the sentiment and commitment of this draft Policy through its actions.

The community also provided feedback relating to actions they would like to see arise from the draft Policy. Suggestions included:

- creating opportunities for community members to connect in meaningful ways
- make information accessible to multicultural communities
- supporting inclusion through inclusive policies
- Council staff training
- non-gender specific toilets
- 'raising' voices and
- promoting the business of marginalised groups.

All feedback was carefully considered and subsequently informed the following changes to the Policy:

- 1 Acknowledging religion and cultural background in the definition of diversity, along with recognising that diversity exists in and between communities, as well as individuals.
- 2 Reviewing the definition of 'inclusion' while maintaining plain English.
- 3 Acknowledging that the draft Policy will also inform Council's various policies, strategies and actions that align with diversity, inclusion and belonging.

## PROPOSAL

The report seeks endorsement of the draft Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy.

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

A working party was established from across the organisation who possessed a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, as well as representing various backgrounds, ages and gender to develop the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement of Commitment. The working party will continue to provide a reference point to the organisation. Feedback on the Statement of Commitment was sourced from across the organisation and helped to further refine the Statement.

The draft Policy was placed on public exhibition from 1 July to 5 August 2020. Notification of the exhibition included:

- Provision of information to stakeholders from the disability, multicultural, LGBTQIA+, children and youth services, and Aboriginal communities.
- Notification to registered Engagement HQ participants and Neighbourhood Forums.
- Notices published in The Advertiser, social media and an Illawarra Mercury story.
- Engagement HQ online platform.

Nine submissions and one story were received during the exhibition period. The Public Exhibition Engagement Report [Attachment 2] provides details of the engagement methods and results.

## PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of the following Our Wollongong 2028 Goals. It will assist in the delivery of the following:

Goal 3 – *'We have a creative, vibrant city'*

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2022	Operational Plan 2020-21
Strategy	4 Year Action	Operational Plan Actions
3.2.3 Local groups and communities are actively supported to provide community-based programs, events and festivals that celebrate cultural traditions and contemporary practices	3.2.3.1 Support the coordination of an externally funded calendar of activities delivered across the city	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Facilitate events occurring for NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day.</li> <li>2 Collaborate with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities [CALD] community to support community events and celebrations.</li> <li>3 Deliver library programs that recognise and reflect the cultural diversity of our community.</li> <li>4 Delivery National Youth Week calendar of events across the Wollongong LGA.</li> </ol>
3.3.2 Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and culturally and linguistically diverse communities and schools	3.3.2.1 Deliver and support a range of projects and programs which building harmony, understanding and cultural awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Support newly arrived and refugee communities through the delivery of the Illawarra Refugee challenge with community partners.</li> </ol>

**Goal 4 – ‘We are a connected and engaged community’**

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2022	Operational Plan 2020-21
Strategy	4 Year Action	Operational Plan Actions
4.1.1 Provide residents with equitable access to information and opportunities to inform decision making	4.1.1.1 Ensure an effective community engagement framework that connects the community to Council decision making	2 Resource and support a range of engagement options to provide advice across identified target groups.  6 Actively engage people with disability and carers in the delivery, evaluation and monitoring of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016-20.
4.1.3 Government continue to partner with our local Aboriginal community	4.1.3.1 Council continue to partner with our local Aboriginal community	2 Identify additional opportunities for working in partnership with the local Aboriginal community.
4.3.1 Positive leadership and governance, values and culture are built upon	4.3.2 Build a workplace culture that is safe, engaged, responsive and professional	3 Implement the Workforce Strategy 2018-22.

**Goal 5 – ‘We have a healthy community in a liveable city’**

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2022	Operational Plan 2020-21
Strategy	4 Year Action	Operational Plan Actions
5.1.1 We work in partnership to build on opportunities to strengthen vulnerable communities	5.1.1.1 Partner with community based organisations in the provision of services	3 Deliver the funded actions of the Ageing Plan 2018-22.  4 Support newly arrived and refugee communities through sector development and coordination, community awareness and education.
	5.1.1.2 Continue to undertake social, land use and environmental planning activities that assists in service planning	1 Assess the changing profile of the community to inform service delivery.  2 Continue to engage children and young people in planning and design processes.
5.1.3 Involvement in lifelong learning, skills enhancement and community-based activities is promoted	5.1.3.1 Deliver a diverse suite of projects to the community that foster and enhance community strengths and participation	1 Deliver a range of youth services with a focus on youth participation and community development, target programs, music, culture, and sector development and coordination.  3 Offer a program of activities in libraries to celebrate and engage with our diverse community.  4 Deliver tailored library programs to facilitate access and participation of people with a disability.  5 Support the delivery of programs that provide social connection for frail aged people and their carers.  6 Implement, monitor and report on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2025.

5.1.4 Urban areas are created to provide a healthy and safe living environment for our community	5.1.4.1 Provide an appropriate and sustainable range of quality passive and active open spaces and facilities	9 Implement the Beach and Foreshore Access Strategy 2019-2028. 13 Investigate and deliver an all ages and abilities play space.
5.2.1 Provide a variety of quality public spaces and opportunities for sport, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community	5.2.1.3 Use data to assess the current community infrastructure available, community demand and develop a strategic framework and policies to either rationalise, enhance or expand to meet community needs	9 Install fitness equipment stations throughout the city that cater to people of all ages and abilities.
5.2.2 Healthy, active ageing programs are promoted in partnership with government agencies	5.2.2.1 Deliver a range of programs and recreational pursuits for older people	1 Provide a variety of affordable senior programs at the leisure centres. 2 Deliver Community Transport Services across Wollongong and Shellharbour Local Government Areas to connect older people to social and recreational activities.
5.4.1 Partnerships continue to strengthen and achieve a safe, accessible and resilient community	5.4.1.2 Facilitate a range of partnerships and networks to develop community safety initiatives	2 Incorporate child-friendly and age-friendly principles in design, planning and service delivery with the community.
5.5.1 Public facilities in key locations and transport routes are maintained and clean, accessible and inviting to our community and visitors	5.5.1.3 Coordinate an access improvement program through pre-planning and renewal activities	1 Provide advice on access related matters that reflect the priorities in Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-25. 2 Establish a program to ensure Disability Discrimination Act compliance is integrated with Council asset management plans.

## CONCLUSION

Council is currently engaged in exploring, developing, implementing or delivering services, infrastructure and processes that support diversity, inclusion and belonging. The draft Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy supports and aligns the multiple strategies and actions that demonstrate Council's desire to create a place where diversity is valued, people are included and feel they belong.



## DIVERSITY INCLUSION + BELONGING COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Council's commitment to creating a place where diversity is valued, people are included and feel they belong.

### POLICY INTENT

The Policy will guide decisions on services we provide for the community and how we will shape and support our workplace.

The Policy will also inform Council's various policies, strategies and actions that align with diversity, inclusion and belonging.

### WOLLONGONG 2028 OBJECTIVES

*Our Wollongong 2028* outlines the community's main priorities for the future and includes strategies for achieving them. This Policy guides the way we deliver on our commitments in the Plan. The Policy also supports the delivery of the Workforce Strategy 2018 – 2022, that says "we will ensure our workforce is inclusive and engaged".

### DEFINITIONS

Diversity recognises our differences such as what we look like, what we can or can't do, what we know, and our beliefs. Diversity also relates to our age, sex, gender, sexuality, religion, race, cultural background, marital status, health and ability. Diversity exists not just in and between individuals, but within and between communities.

Inclusion is about everyone having equal access and opportunities to participate and contribute.

Belonging is when people feel safe, respected and accepted.

Equity is when people have the level of support they need, based on their individual situation, to access services and opportunities.

### POLICY

Statement of Commitment:

**Our strength is the diversity of our people.  
Together our responsibility is to create an inclusive place where  
everyone is welcome, valued and belongs.  
We lead with courage, openness and curiosity.  
Our conversations and actions celebrate diversity, inclusion and belonging.**

We will:

- Use the Statement of Commitment to inform our decisions and the way we work.
- Welcome diversity and provide an inclusive place for everyone that lives, works in or visits our local government area.
- Strive for equity in access to services, infrastructure and open spaces.



## Diversity Inclusion + Belonging

## COUNCIL POLICY

- Support opportunities to celebrate diversity within our community.
- Advocate for and work with our community to create a place where they feel they belong.
- Listen to the community to understand their needs and involve them in decisions that affect their lives.
- Work with our staff to develop and implement policies, strategies and programs that promote equity for our staff

### POLICY REVIEW AND VARIATION

- 1 Council is to have opportunity to review and adopt, at least once during its Term, each Council policy.
- 2 A resolution of Council is required to adopt any variations to this policy, with the exception of minor administrative changes, such as updates to legislative references, which may be endorsed by the Executive Management Committee (EMC). Endorsement of administrative changes made to this policy by EMC does not alter the requirement for it to be reviewed and adopted by each Term of Council.

### REPORTING

- 1 Organisational Development Manager will monitor the scope and currency of this policy.
- 2 Programs and action plans directly linked to this Policy will be reported on annually.
- 3 The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated every three (3) years and measured by qualitative and quantitative data.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW		
Responsible Division	[Name of Division]	
Date/s adopted	<i>Executive Management Committee</i> [updated by policy owner]	<i>Council</i> [DD Mmmm YYYY]
Date/s of previous adoptions	[Dates of previous adoptions]	
Date of next review	[Two years from last adoption]	



# OUR WOLLONGONG

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

**Engagement Report**

**Draft Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy**

**August 2020**

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## Executive Summary

The draft Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Council Policy (the Policy) has been developed to guide and support a diverse and inclusive workplace and community. The Policy is a document that will guide the services Council provides for the community and shares our Statement of Commitment to support a diverse and inclusive City. Ongoing community feedback has helped us develop the draft.

On 29 June Council endorsed the public exhibition of the Policy. The community were invited to provide feedback from 1 July to 5 August 2020. The Policy was exhibited at the same time as the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020 – 2025 with the documents promoted together. The community were invited to provide feedback through the engagement website, email or phone. The engagement website included the Policy, Frequently Asked Questions and a simple graphic explaining how the Policy fits with other Council plans and our day to day work. An online feedback form asked community members if they had any ideas or thoughts about the draft Policy and how they would like to see the Policy in action. We invited people to share their stories of inclusion and belonging in our City through the stories tool. Due to Covid 19 safety restrictions, no face to face engagement activities occurred.

Public exhibition was promoted through a notice in the Advertiser, social media and an Illawarra Mercury story. Identified stakeholders from the disability, multicultural, LGBTQIA+, children' and youth services and Aboriginal communities were notified of the exhibition through email. All neighbourhood forums were notified of the exhibition via email and an e-newsletter was sent to all registered Engagement HQ participants.

Nine submissions were received via the online survey and email and one story shared. Responses included questioning why the community was not involved in the development of the Policy, suggestions for additions to the Policy and questions about how the Policy will be monitored and evaluated. Concern was raised about the timing of the Policy, suggesting that it is time for meaningful action and the time for documents such as the Policy had passed. Ideas for putting the Policy into action include creating opportunities for meaningful connection, making information accessible to multicultural communities, Council staff training, non-gender specific toilets and raising the voices and promoting the businesses of marginalised groups.

## Background

The existing Workforce Diversity Policy has been redesigned to encompass three pillars - diversity, inclusion and belonging. It is the combination of these three pillars that will enable the creation of an extraordinary place to live, work and play.

To guide and support a diverse and inclusive workplace and community the Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Council Policy has been developed. The Policy is a document that will guide the services Council provides for the community and shares our Statement of Commitment to support a diverse and inclusive City. Council staff have had considerable input into the development of the Statement of Commitment and policies.

We have been committed to diversity and inclusion for many years. This is evident through examples of our ongoing work including providing all ability playgrounds; incorporating child and age-friendly principles in design; delivering programs for young people, LGBTQI activities, Reconciliation and NAIDOC events, story time program and Refugee Week celebrations.

The Policy was presented to Council on 29 June 2020 and was endorsed for public exhibition from 1 July to 5 August 2020.

## Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified prior to the commencement of the engagement period included:

- Members of Aboriginal community
- Aboriginal organisations
- Department of Education
- Disability organisations
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
- Children's services
- Youth services
- Community Centres
- Multicultural organisations
- LGBTQIA+ networks

## Methodology

A project page published on Council's Engagement HQ website on 1 July 2020 provided the draft Policy, Frequently Asked Questions, important links, survey tool and stories tool. Google translator was also available on the project page. Community members were invited to provide feedback about the Policy through the engagement website, engagement email or phone. Due to Covid 19 safety restrictions no face to face engagement activities occurred.

A media release was issued on 2 July 2020; notice was placed in the Advertiser on 8 July 2020; and, social media postings on 2 July 2020. The promotion of the public exhibition of this project was shared with the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020 – 2025 that was on public exhibition at the same time. Emails promoting the public exhibition were sent to key stakeholders including all Neighbourhood Forums, with the invitation to share through their networks. An e-newsletter was sent to all registered Engagement HQ participants.

## Results

This section of the report provides details on the engagement activities (Table 1), the on-line participation summary (Table 2), feedback on the Policy and ideas of how to put it in action.

### Engagement Participation Results

Nine submissions and one story were received during the engagement period. Details of the number of participants for each engagement activity are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Engagement participation results**

Engagement activity	Participation
Stories Tool	1
Survey Tool	7
Email submissions	2

## Online Engagement Results

Table 2 presents the usage statistics for the project page on Council's website.

**Table 2: Summary of online participation**

Measure and Explanation	Usage
Unique Site Visits – Total number of visits to the project page	347
Aware – Total number of users who viewed the project page	254
Informed – Total number of users who opened a hyperlink or read a document	131
Engaged – Total number of users who have actively contributed to the project via the project page	8

## Results

We are asked the community to share their thoughts or ideas about the Policy.

Summary of feedback is set out in under the following themes:

### Action

There was general agreement with the Policy and a belief that we need to be demonstrating the sentiment and commitment of this Policy through our actions.

*'Too often I see council's commit to celebration, but not take action to facilitate real conversation and change. I would love to see Wollongong Council put itself out there and really lead the charge on what transformational policies can look like.'*

### Community engagement

It was noted that the community was not engaged in the development of the Policy and that this was a disappointment. It was suggested that engaging the community in the development of the draft would have been a demonstrated action of inclusion.

### Changes and/or ideas

Suggestions for additions to the Policy included adding 'religion' and 'culture' into the definition, including information about the diversity of our Local Government Area (LGA) and acknowledging that diversity exists in and between communities as well as individuals. It was suggested that the definition of 'inclusion' be reviewed to include *'a universal human right, that aims to remove systemic and individual discrimination, and which encompasses equal access, resources and opportunities to participate and contribute as members of the community, economy and society.'*

It was requested that the knowledge and connection to community that Neighbourhood Forums provide to support Council needs to be acknowledged in the Policy.

Concerns were raised about a Policy that attempts to capture all marginalised communities and that in taking this approach, the specific challenges and strengths of each group maybe overlooked. It was proposed that several sub-policies would need to be created to ensure the specific challenges and experiences of specific groups are met and that commitment to engaging and working with those communities to design and deliver services is included.

*'We are observing a diminution of the recognition of individual community needs, interests, and experiences faced by some cohorts that such policies typically seek to address (e.g., CALD, disability, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders, LGBTIQ+ communities).'*

### Evaluation and monitoring

It was questioned how the Policy will be evaluated, what data will be collected and who will monitor the ongoing implementation of the Policy.



### Positive attributes

Feedback included comments about being pleased to see that LGBTQIA+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities being recognised and that it was clear how the Policy underpins the everyday work that Council does.

We also asked the community how they would like to see the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy in action. A summary of feedback is set out under the following themes:

### Connection

Providing opportunities for community members to connect in a meaningful way was raised as an important strategy in actioning the Policy. Community conversations, forums and events were identified as being able to support this action. Providing opportunities for connection in the southern suburbs of our city was requested as well as more multicultural events. Information was shared about an initiative in Sydney where community members were encouraged to share their story at an event. Through story telling about their lived experiences, community members would have a deeper understanding of people in their community that they would not get through traditional opportunities such as large community events. It was commented that being able to connect at a deeper level through more intimate settings is important.

It was commented that Council should not allow development in areas that do not have the infrastructure to support the community (such as shops, services and public transport).

The story submitted through the Stories Tool speaks to the need for opportunities for social connection for people to feel valued and safe. The author believes that this is done well in Wollongong and that people from multicultural backgrounds are celebrated in our LGA.

### Amplifying marginalised voices

It was requested that Council implement services and programs that raise the voices of those people in our community that are often not heard. The story submitted through the engagement website commends Council on its Australia Day Awards where people from a diverse range of backgrounds are acknowledged for the contribution they make to our LGA.



**Promote businesses**

Promoting the businesses of people from marginalised groups (and those that support them) was suggested to demonstrate the Policy in action.

**Accessibility and Inclusion**

A request was made for interpreters at community events as well as events and services being promoted in different languages. Another suggested that a welcome statement for all residents, ratepayers and visitors would be a way to put the Policy into action. Supporting inclusion of LGBTQIA+, multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Council activities and services through inclusive policies and staff training, providing information in many languages and displaying connections to cultures (such as flags) was suggested.

The story shared on the engagement website speaks to the need for further acknowledgement and support of Aboriginal people in the Wollongong LGA. The author acknowledges that further actions need to be taken to ensure that people who identify as LGBTQIA+ feel safe and that non-gender specific toilets would be an action that could support this.

**Other comments:**

One respondent said they feel comfortable in Wollongong and hope that everyone else feels the same way.