

Consultation Report – Draft Multicultural Partnerships Plan 2019-2021

This report provides information on the various consultation methods used for the development of the Draft Multicultural Partnerships Plan 2019-2022. Engagement and consultation occurred throughout 2018 and includes the following:

1. Summary report of relevant Yarra consultations

Community Partnerships (CP) is developing a number of strategies currently and in the next 12 months in the following areas:

- Aboriginal Partnerships
- Homelessness
- LGBTIQ
- Multicultural Partnerships
- Social Justice
- Volunteering

Other branches of Council are currently finalising strategies that have synergies and/or similar stakeholders as the strategies that CPU are developing and updating. Extensive community consultation has occurred in the last 6-12 months in the development of the following documents:

- Active Healthy Ageing Strategy 2018 – 2024 (Aged & Disability Services)
- Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018 – 2024 (Aged & Disability Services)
- 0-25 Plan (Family, Youth and Children’s Services)
- Council Plan 2017 – 2021 (including the Municipal Public Health Plan)
- Re-Imagining Victoria Street

Rather than re-invent the wheel, these branches of Council have shared information from the various consultation processes and results with CP to ensure that there is a whole of Council approach to responding to the needs of the community. Consultations conducted in the development of the above plans were extensive and widely diverse, providing a rich resource and valuable information with application to all the upcoming plans CP is developing. The large amount and wide diversity of information was a valuable resource for use by CP.

The use of these consultation results ensures a whole of Council approach which is an efficient and effective use of resources and also avoids “consultation fatigue” of participants.

The report developed presents a summary of the key findings from the community consultation and engagement processes conducted by other branches that are pertinent to the targeted strategies CP is developing.

2. Online

The Inclusive Yarra webpage was developed inviting users to provide examples of inclusion, ideas to increase inclusion, and the opportunity to upload video or photographic footage. This was designed to incorporate the themes for all the various policies under development by CP (see above) in order to maximise efficiency.

The engagement activity was predominantly a creative, ideas generation process, aiming for narratives, suggestions and examples of inclusion in Yarra and beyond, in order to create richer

information to feed into the plan's development. The purpose of this creative approach is to encourage people to consider what it means to feel included in the community, and what role Council can play in ensuring that all people, from all cultural backgrounds and with different life experiences can be involved in the Yarra community.

The objective of understanding community views through storytelling is to unearth unique, personal perspectives about the theme of inclusiveness, providing a rich understanding of what this means to people who live, visit, work and study in Yarra, and further enriching the data from which the strategies will be developed.

Promotion of the Inclusive Yarra webpage targeted Neighbourhood houses, schools, community groups and organisations, via facebook and Yarra life eNews. It also included outreach (along with Story Pods below) at two community events and one library, St Mary's house of welcome and English as an Additional Language classes.

A sample of these entries can be found [here](#). Over 200 contributions in total were collected.

The prize of a voucher to social enterprise café Streat was offered as an incentive to participate, and over 100 people provided feedback to the webpage, providing a diverse breadth of responses.

3. In person

Opportunities to provide face to face feedback were aligned with the Inclusive Yarra web page in the form of "Story Pods" set up at the Peel St Festival, Atherton Gardens Community Day and the Richmond Library. The Story Pods are a tool for collecting information whereby community members are able to share their stories in a Storypod, with video gathered, analysed and edited for use in the development of the Plan.

Again, the engagement approach encouraged creative contributions of narratives and examples via video and / or storytelling. The data collected has use for the development of strategies as well as for future use in promotion of inclusive advocacy, initiatives and social media posts.

At these pop-up sessions, community members were also able to complete a hard copy form if they did not want to participate in providing video footage.

4. Targeted focus groups

After an analysis of the consultations and groups engaged across Council provided in the Summary Report above, a plan was developed to target conversations with groups whose voices were missing. These groups included newly arrived CALD groups with little to no English literacy.

The questions explored in the focus groups were aligned with the Inclusive Yarra page, namely "What do you like about Yarra?" and "What can be done to improve living / visiting Yarra".

Focus groups were conducted with the following groups: students from newly arrived communities studying English as an Additional Language (EAL) (four classes), Cohealth Community Liaison Advisory Panel, Yarra Multicultural Advisory Group members, Yarra Settlement Forum members, and Neighbourhood Houses.

The focus groups held with EAL students were constructed around an English language lesson, with the assistance of teachers to ensure full engagement by students with very low English literacy levels. These sessions were constructed to explore concepts of inclusion and diversity and local government in an educational setting, and enabled a deeper understanding and fuller participation from students than has traditionally been experienced in focus “conversation” groups.

Computer literacy classes were also engaged, to assist community members to provide input into the Inclusive Yarra page – an opportunity to include people who would not normally participate in such an exercise. The added benefit to this approach to incorporating EAL and computer classes, is that the engagement is a capacity building exercise for participants rather than solely information gathering for Council.

People who were engaged in this process were overwhelmingly grateful to Yarra for providing this opportunity to participate and have their voices heard - many of whom have never participated in consultations before.

Consultations Results

An analysis of all information obtained has led to the development of four Priority Areas for Council to target activities over the next four years. These four Priority Areas align with the Standards set by the Welcoming Cities Network (of which Council is a member), and will simplify Council’s journey in reaching the goal of being a Welcoming City. Yarra’s priorities over the next 4 years are:

- *Welcoming Diversity* (Welcoming Cities Standard 1)
Strategic Goal 1: Leadership and Partnerships – developing partnerships, eradicating racism, acknowledgement of Indigenous heritage.
Strategic Goal 2: Advocacy - advocating for the rights of our multicultural community to focus on building a socially cohesive and inclusive City.
- *Participation & Inclusion* (Welcoming Cities Standard 2, 3, 4)
Strategic Goal 3: Creating Opportunities – building relationships to support learning and employment opportunities for CALD communities.
Strategic Goal 4: Breaking down Barriers – ensuring programs, information and activities are equitable and inclusive.
- *Safe & Liveable Spaces* (Welcoming Cities Standard 6)
Strategic Goal 5: Safe Places and Spaces – ensuring spaces and facilities in Yarra are accessible, representative and liveable, while lowering safety concerns.
Strategic Goal 6: Cultural Expression – creating opportunities for interaction and celebration representing cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.
- *Engagement & Communication* (Welcoming Cities Standard 5)
Strategic Goal 7: Connections – supporting the development of programs which increase intercultural understanding.
Strategic Goal 8: Knowledge Sharing – providing accessible, culturally appropriate information to encourage participation in public life.

A first year (2019) Action Plan was developed using the above Priority Areas and Strategic Goals as a framework, which will be reviewed at the completion of 2019 and which will contribute to the development of subsequent Action Plans.