

Positively

PENRITH

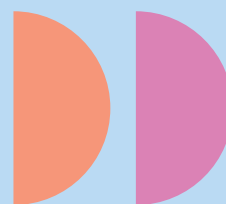


Penrith

Multicultural

Action Plan

2024–2027



A photograph of three children on a paved sidewalk. A young boy in a light blue shirt is kneeling and painting a large, stylized red lizard with yellow and white patterns. A girl in a yellow and white striped dress stands to the left, watching. Another girl with long dark hair is partially visible on the right, also engaged in the activity. The sidewalk is decorated with white dotted lines and other colorful patterns. The background shows green grass and some foliage.

Statement of Recognition

Council values the unique status of Aboriginal people as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters, including the land and waters of Penrith City.

Council values the unique status of Torres Strait Islander people as the original owners and custodians of the Torres Strait Islands and surrounding waters.

We work together for a united Australia and City that respects this land of ours, that values the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

Interpreting assistance

ENGLISH	If you do not understand this, please contact the Telephone Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to contact Penrith City Council on your behalf on (02) 4732 7777. Or come to the Council offices and ask for an interpreter.
ARABIC	إذا لم يكن بإمكانك قراءة النص أعلاه، الرجاء الاتصال بخدمات الترجمة الفورية الهاتفية (TIS) على الرقم 131 450 والطلب منهم الاتصال بدورهم بمجلس مدينة بنريث نيابة عنك على الرقم 4732 7777 (02). أو يمكنك الحضور إلى المجلس وطلب ترتيب مترجم فوري لك.
CHINESE	如果您无法阅读这些文字，请致电 131 450 联系电话传译服务中心，请他们代您拨打 (02) 4732 7777 联系 Penrith 市议会。您也可以亲自到市议会来并要求获得口译服务。
GREEK	Αν δεν μπορείτε να το διαβάσετε αυτό, τηλεφωνήστε στην Τηλεφωνική Υπηρεσία Διερμηνέων στο 131 450 και ζητήστε τους να επικοινωνήσουν με το Δήμο Penrith (Penrith City Council) για λογαριασμό σας στον αριθμό (02) 4732 7777, ή ελάτε στη Δημαρχία και ζητήστε διερμηνέα.
HINDI	यदि आप इसे नहीं पढ़ पाते हैं, तो कृपया 131 450 पर टेलीफोन दुभाषिया सेवा से संपर्क करें और उनसे कहें कि आपकी ओर से पेनरथि सिटी काउंसिल से (02) 4732 7777 पर संपर्क करें. या आप काउंसिल आएँ और एक दुभाषिया की माँग करें.
ITALIAN	Se non riuscite a leggere questo, contattate il servizio telefonico di interpretariato al numero 131 450 e chiedetegli di contattare da parte vostra il comune di Penrith City al numero (02) 4732 7777 oppure venite in comune e richiedete un interprete.
MALTESE	Jekk ma tistax taqra dan, jekk jogħġbok, ikkuntattja lit-Telephone Interpreting Service fuq 131 450 u itlobhom biex jikkuntattjaw Penrith City Council f'ismek fuq (02) 4732 7777. Jew ejja l-Kunsill u itlob għal interpretu.
PERSIAN	اگر نمی توانید این مطلب را بخوانید، لطفاً به خدمات ترجمه تلفنی به شماره 131 450 زنگ بزنید و از آنان بخواهید با شورای شهر پنریت Penrith City Council به شمار ه 4732 7777 (02) از جانب شما تماس بگیرند. یا اینکه به شهرداری Council آمده و مترجم بخواهید.
PUNJABI	ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਸਿ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 131 450 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੀਟਿੰਗ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ (02) 4732 7777 'ਤੇ Penrith City Council (ਪੈਨਰਥਿ ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ) ਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।
SINGHALESE	ඔබට මෙය කියවීමට නොහැකි නම්, කරුණාකර දුරකථන අංක 131 450 ඔස්සේ දුරකථන පරිවර්තන සේවාව (Telephone Interpreting Service) අමතා ඔබ වෙනුවෙන් දුරකථන අංක (02) 4732 7777 අමතා පෙන්රිත් නගර සභාව (Penrith City Council) හා සම්බන්ධ කර දෙන ලෙස ඉල්ලා සිටින්න. නැතිනම් නගර සභාව වෙත පැමිණ කාන පරිවර්තකයකු ලබා දෙන ලෙස ඉල්ලා සිටින්න.
TAGALOG	Kung hindi mo naiintindihan ang dokumentong ito at kailangan mo ng isang interpreter, mangyaring tumawag sa Telephone Interpreting Service sa 131 450 at hilingin sa kanila na tumawag sa Penrith City Council sa (02) 4732 7777.
TAMIL	இதை உங்களால் வாசிக்க இயலவில்லை என்றால், 'தொலைபேசி உரைபெயர்ப்பு சேவையை 131 450 எனும் இலக்கத்தில் அழைத்து 'பென்ரீத் நகரவையுடன் (02) 4732 7777 எனும் இலக்கத்தில் உங்கள் சார்பாக தொடர்பு கொள்ளுமாறு கேளுங்கள். அல்லது நகரவைக்கு விஜயம் செய்து உரைபெயர்ப்பாளர் ஒருவர் வேண்டுமெனக் கேளுங்கள்.
VIETNAMESE	Nếu quý vị không thể đọc được thông tin này, xin liên lạc Dịch Vụ Thông Dịch Qua Điện Thoại ở số 131 450 và yêu cầu họ thay mặt quý vị liên lạc với Hội Đồng Thành Phố Penrith ở số (02) 4732 7777. Hoặc hãy tới Hội Đồng và yêu cầu có thông dịch viên.

Refugee Welcome Zone

We support our community's diverse groups and neighbourhoods to shape a safe, attractive and vibrant City. Penrith City is a Refugee Welcome Zone - in 2008 we signed a declaration welcoming refugees and supporting their human rights. We're involved in community engagement, social planning, grants programs, place-making and community events and initiatives. Penrith has a proud community spirit and loves to celebrate its people and strengths. We work together in partnership with a positive, 'can do' attitude to achieve shared goals.



**refugee
welcome
zones**

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Definitions

Cultural diversity

For the purpose of this Plan, cultural diversity refers to people born overseas with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, including people who speak a language other than English at home (LOTE), people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), migrants, refugees, and people with culturally and linguistically diverse ancestry.

Multicultural

Multiculturalism refers to the co-existence within one society of many different cultural groups that can be identified through differences in country of origin, language or culture. The multicultural world view is that people have a right to cultural expression, inter-generational transmission of culture and equal access to services and opportunities within a national framework.

Intercultural

Interculturalism focuses on fostering interaction between different cultural groups and the benefits that are produced in dialogue, exchange and collaboration for social cohesion.

Intersectionality

Experiences can be intersectional, in that we know that members of multicultural communities can include people of different ages, genders, sexualities and abilities, all of whom have all been shaped by their unique life experiences and may experience additional disadvantage.

Inclusion

The Diversity Council of Australia defines inclusion as occurring when a diversity of people (e.g. of different ages, cultural backgrounds, genders) feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents¹.

Resilience

The 100 Resilient Cities program defines resilience as the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. Research shows that communities that are more connected, inclusive and cohesive are also more resilient¹.

Social cohesion

The Scanlon Foundation defines social cohesion as “the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper”¹. A cohesive society values the contributions of all its members, rejects prejudice and inter-group hostility, and builds commitment to core democratic values and wide participation in decision making.

Social capital

Social capital refers to connections among individuals in society. It focuses on our social connections, and the benefits and resources these bring to the wellbeing of individuals and the community.



1. Introduction and purpose

The Penrith Multicultural Action Plan extends Penrith City Council's commitment to building a welcoming, inclusive and cohesive community where people of all cultures and faiths can belong and thrive.

Setting the scene

Located in Western Sydney at the foot of the Blue Mountains, Penrith City (our City) is home to a growing multicultural community built on more than 60,000 years of First Nations Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia is made up of many different and distinct groups, each with their own culture, customs, language and laws. They are the world's oldest surviving culture; cultures that continue to be expressed in dynamic and contemporary ways.

Today, our Penrith community comes from more than 110 countries, speaks more than 80 languages and practices many different faiths and cultural traditions.

Multicultural diversity is a growing source of strength for our community. Penrith City Council (Council) recognises that a diverse and inclusive community is a more resilient community. We are committed to facilitating mutual understanding between people of diverse cultural backgrounds and between established communities and newer ones.

Work to establish our City as a place of welcome and strong intercultural bonds dates back to June 2008, when Council signed a declaration to become a Refugee Welcome Zone.

Outcome 2 of our Strategic Plan '*We are welcoming, healthy, happy, creative and connected,*' underpins our commitment to celebrating and supporting people of all cultures and faiths to participate in community life.

Purpose

The Penrith Multicultural Action Plan 2024-2027 (the Plan) outlines Council's commitment to **building a welcoming, inclusive and cohesive community where cultural diversity is valued and people of all cultures and faiths can belong and thrive.**

The Plan sets out the actions we will take over the next three years, in conjunction with the community, to support, celebrate and promote the value of cultural diversity in our City. It meets our obligations under the *NSW Multicultural Act 2000* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

This plan recognises and acknowledges the resilience and generosity of spirit of First Nations people. In addition to this plan which focuses on our multicultural community, Council is working on a range of plans to guide our future work alongside First Nations people.

Developed in collaboration

We are proud that this Plan was developed through consultation and collaboration with more than 400 community members including over 25 service providers, the Penrith Multicultural Working Party, the Penrith Multicultural Interagency and Council staff. It calls upon our whole community to play a role in creating a more welcoming and inclusive multicultural Penrith.



Vision and Focus Areas

Vision

Penrith City is a welcoming, inclusive and cohesive community where cultural diversity is valued and people of all cultures and faiths can belong and thrive.

Focus Areas

This Plan has four focus areas that outline how Council alongside community can lead, advocate and support actions that directly address the aspiration and priorities identified through meaningful engagement with our community.

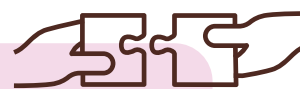
Focus area 1: **Bonding**

Supporting and enabling strong social bonds and a sense of belonging within our cultural and faith communities.



Focus area 3: **Linking**

Linking culturally diverse communities to the services and opportunities they need to live a good life.



Focus area 2: **Bridging**

Building bridges and understanding across all groups in our community.



Focus area 4: **Leadership and collaboration**

Delivering culturally responsive services and working in collaboration towards shared outcomes for our multicultural community.



Where does this plan fit

This Plan delivers on the Penrith Community Strategic Plan, which sets out our community's shared vision that "our regional city is inclusive and prosperous and offers the best in urban living and a sustainable rural environment", and includes the outcome to be a "welcoming, healthy, happy and connected" community.

This Plan also aligns with other key Council plans including the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Youth Action Plan, Resilient Penrith Action Plan, as well as our forthcoming Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy, Community Safety Plan and Cultural Strategy.

Figure 1 – Council's strategic document hierarchy



Why we need this plan

We are proud to be a culturally diverse community that includes First Nations people, and residents from many different backgrounds, speaking different languages, adhering to many different religious beliefs and maintaining various cultural practices. We need this Plan to assist us to:

Plan for our growing multicultural community

Our residents born overseas has increased from 21% in 2011 to 24% in 2021. This growth in our multicultural community will continue with higher proportions of people from culturally diverse backgrounds living in our higher density urban centres and new suburbs.

With a growing number of people from culturally diverse backgrounds choosing to call Penrith home, we recognise the importance of Council's planning processes to consider multicultural communities' aspirations, priorities and barriers. This will ensure we are providing equitable services and a liveable and inclusive community for all. This Plan serves as a guide for more culturally responsive service delivery into the future.

Foster a fair and inclusive community where everyone can thrive

Under the *NSW Multicultural Act 2000*, Council is committed to observing and promoting the principles of multiculturalism. This includes recognising the rights of diverse communities to maintain their cultural practices, languages and religions within a national framework of rights and duties; creating opportunities for all people to participate in community life; and ensuring all people have fair access to our programs and services.

Celebrate and value diversity so everyone can belong

Council recognises that cultural diversity is one of the greatest strengths of our multicultural community, playing a role in our prosperity, enriching our schools and workplaces and deepening our connections with the world. As our community becomes more diverse, we want to make sure that everyone can have a sense of belonging, recognising that this will contribute to wellbeing outcomes for all people in our community. As a growing community, we are committed to ensuring that newcomers of all cultures and faiths feel welcome in Penrith City.

Create strong intercultural bonds for a more resilient community

A socially cohesive community is a more resilient community. Studies show that strong social connections are what enable us to come together and support one another during challenging times. When we lack cohesion and mutual understanding, we are more likely to experience social challenges and unrest.

The Australian Government's national wellbeing framework *Measuring What Matters* (2023) recognises that valuing diversity is central to building a more cohesive society. This Plan aims to strengthen social connections, both within and between different cultural groups, and to build trust between communities and Council.

Building Intercultural Understanding

Council stands against racism and discrimination in all forms. We also recognise many of our culturally diverse community members still experience racism and discrimination in their everyday lives. This Plan will help address this and make Penrith City a more welcoming place for everyone.

Council's roles

Council has a range of roles to play in supporting and celebrating multicultural communities over the next three years. These roles include:

Leader

We will identify key community issues and mobilise stakeholders to respond. Our leadership can include advocacy, facilitation or negotiation.

Collaborator

We will partner with community organisations and government organisations to improve outcomes for Penrith's multicultural community.

Planner

We will research and consult with community to develop and evaluate ways to resolve challenges faced by our multicultural community.

Provider of facilities and programs

We will provide a range of facilities and programs to meet the social, cultural and recreational needs of Penrith's multicultural community.

Capacity builder

We will work with community groups and agencies to meet the needs of our local multicultural community. We will mentor and assist community groups to obtain resources.

What we are already doing

While this is Council's first Multicultural Action Plan, we have a long-standing commitment to supporting cultural diversity and inclusion in Penrith City in collaboration with our communities and local stakeholders.

Council is proud of our ongoing initiatives, including:

- Formal declaration as a "Refugee Welcome Zone" in 2008.
- Convening the Multicultural Working Party and actively participating and supporting the Penrith Multicultural Interagency.
- Delivering community and cultural grants.
- Using interpreters and translations in customer service centres.
- Celebrating Harmony Day.
- Providing information in language
- Support and programming through our Children Services, Libraries and Community Programs.
- Providing spaces for community organisations to deliver multicultural programming.
- Citizenship ceremonies.

2. Our multicultural community

The wealth of cultural diversity in Australia includes the diversity of First Nations culture and languages which are more than 60,000 years old and pre-date European colonisation.

Since colonisation, Australia's multicultural community has been growing and changing. Waves of migration and settlement have shaped the culture, identity, places and institutions of Penrith City today. Our multicultural community includes our residents, community groups and services.

Our multicultural residents

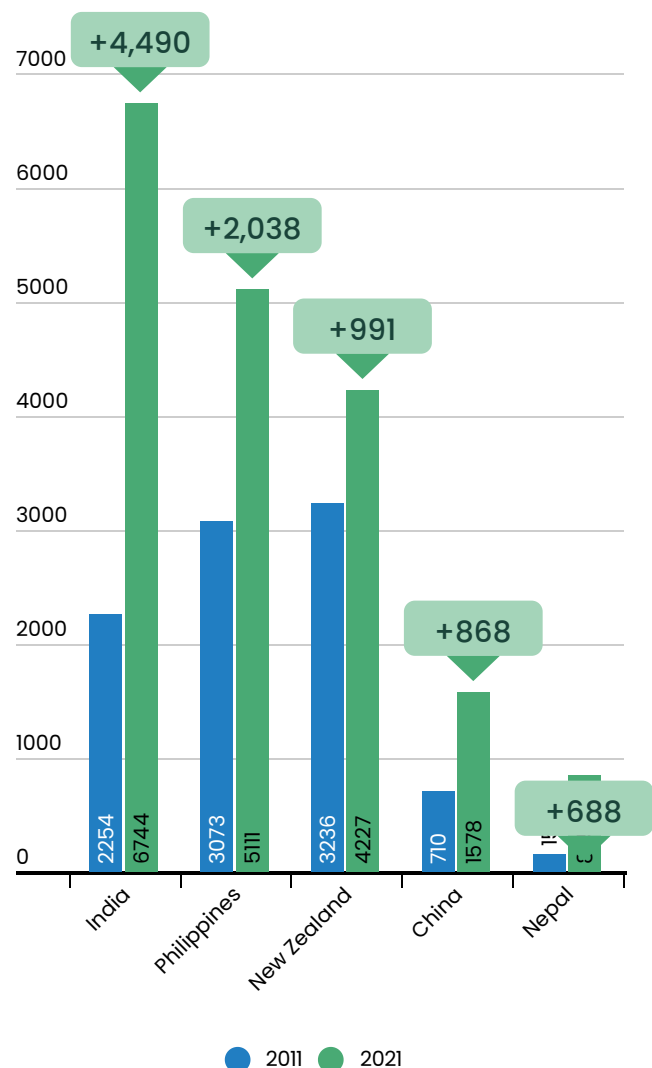
One in four of us are born overseas

In 2021 24% of our population (or 50,798 people) were born overseas. This is an increase from 21% (or 37,251 people) in 2011.

Prior to 2011, most new arrivals to the Penrith area were from the United Kingdom and European countries, such as Malta, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Croatia and Poland

As shown in Figure 2, since 2011 there has been a growing number of new arrivals from Asia-Pacific. In particular, 4,500 more people from India, and 2,000 more people from the Philippines have called our City home since 2011.

Figure 2 - Countries of birth with the most change between 2011 and 2021 in Penrith City (Source: Profile.id)

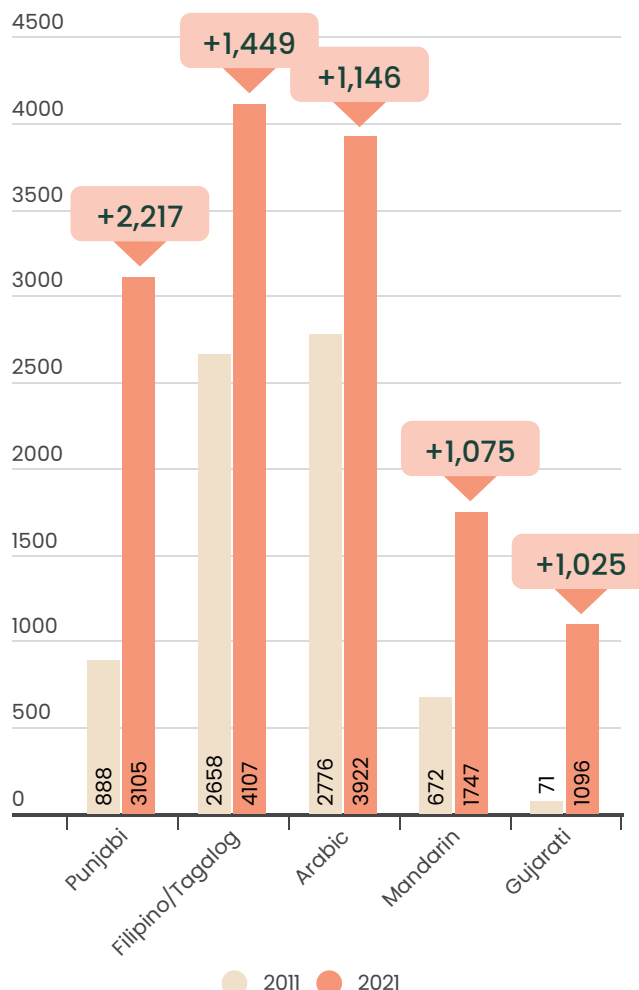


One in five of us speak a language other than English

In 2021 20% of our population (or 42, 723 people) spoke a language other than English at home. This is an increase from 15% (or 25, 912 people) in 2011.

As shown in Figure 3, there has been increases in people speaking Punjabi (+2,217 people), Filipino (+1,449) and Arabic (+1,146) in Penrith City since 2011.

Figure 3 – Languages spoken with the most change between 2011 and 2021 in Penrith City (Source: Profile.id)



For more detailed analysis and findings, see Appendix 2: Multicultural diversity in Penrith.



Some areas in Penrith City are more culturally diverse than others

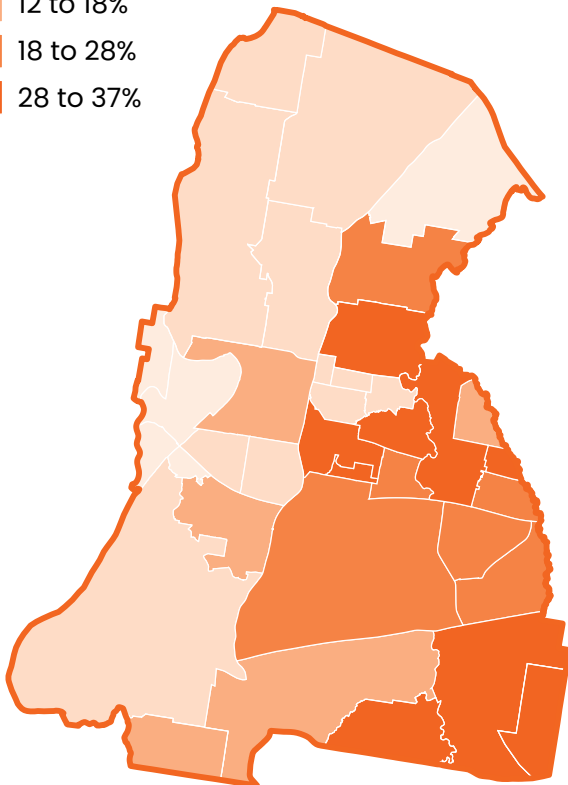
Culturally diverse people are more likely to live in our urban and suburban areas. As shown in Figure 4, suburbs with a high proportion of residents speaking a language other than English at home include:

- Oxley Park (37%).
- Mount Vernon – Kemps Creek – Badgerys Creek (36%).
- Jordan Springs (33%).
- Werrington (31%).
- St Marys (31%).

Figure 4 – Residents who speak a language other than English 2021
(Source: Profile.id)

Legend

- 6 to 9%
- 9 to 12%
- 12 to 18%
- 18 to 28%
- 28 to 37%



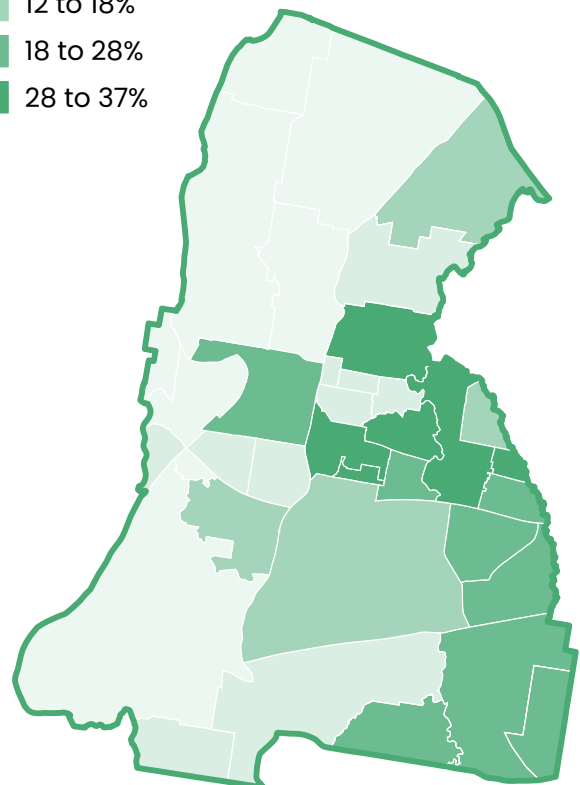
As shown in Figure 5, suburbs with a high proportion of residents born overseas include:

- Oxley Park (37%).
- Werrington (34%).
- St Marys (33%).
- Jordan Springs (32%).
- Kingswood (32%).

Figure 5 – Overseas born residents 2021
(Source: Profile.id)

Legend

- 6 to 9%
- 9 to 12%
- 12 to 18%
- 18 to 28%
- 28 to 37%



Our social connectors

Across Penrith City, there are many places, spaces, groups and organisations that help people to feel welcome and connect us to our friends, neighbours and communities. These are called our social connectors.

In developing this Plan, we identified the following important social connectors for our multicultural communities (Figure 6). This ranges from the community facilities where communities host cultural celebrations, through to the local schools, cafés and playgrounds that enable daily interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Figure 6 – Places multicultural communities connect in Penrith



3. How we developed this Plan

This Plan was developed in collaboration with our community, service providers, community and cultural leaders and Council staff. We are proud that this was one of Council's most popular consultations, reaching more than 500 people.

How we engaged

We used inclusive engagement methods which resulted in high participation. Our approach included:

- Using plain English.
- Designing culturally relevant materials and using images of local community members.
- Promoting the Translation and Interpreting Service on the Have your Say page.
- Tailoring questions to specific cultural groups.
- Distributing a promotional flyer to services and community and faith leaders.
- Incentivising survey participation with a gift card.
- Preparing a Discussion Guide that could be used by community leaders to have discussions with their community.

Our engagement activities included:

- Online survey. 45% of people who completed the survey were born overseas.
- Four pop-up engagement events, including during NAIDOC Week and Refugee Week.
- Penrith Have Your Say web page.
- Information flyer distributed to residents and community leaders.
- Community discussion guide delivered via service providers.
- Workshop and eight in-depth interviews with service providers.
- Workshop and eight in-depth interviews with community leaders.
- Meetings with the Penrith Multicultural Working Party, Penrith Multicultural Interagency and Penrith Youth Interagency.
- Council staff survey and workshop.

Who we heard from

Community input has been central to understanding the strengths, challenges and aspirations to belonging, inclusion and participation for Penrith's culturally diverse communities.

We heard from more than 350 community members and community leaders, including First Nations community members and people born in more than 36 different countries and speaking more than 38 different languages.

We talked with more than 25 different local services supporting our multicultural community including health, youth, ageing, disability, children and families, refugee and settlement services.

We also spoke with staff across Council teams to identify opportunities for more culturally responsive planning and service delivery.

For detailed outcomes of engagement, see Appendix 3: Multicultural Action Plan Engagement Outcomes Summary Report.



Key themes and findings

Visibility and celebrating diversity

Penrith City is home to a growing number of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including established migrant populations who have lived in Penrith City for decades and emerging communities that have recently moved to the area.

We heard through engagement that this diversity brings vibrancy and different skills and perspectives to the community. Events and festivals, such as during NAIDOC Week and Refugee Week also provide a platform for sharing and learning about different cultures and faiths. 58% of survey participants want to see more events and festivals celebrating our diversity in Penrith City.

While these events and festivals celebrate cultural diversity, community members told us they think there is limited visibility of cultural diversity in Penrith City, including recognition of culturally significant days such as Diwali, Holi and Ramadan. Some community members told us they travel to other areas such as Parramatta and Blacktown to enjoy cultural celebrations there.

We also heard that compared to other areas, there are fewer cultural shops in Penrith City which means residents have to travel to other areas for groceries and clothing (e.g. Asian grocery stores, Halal butchers etc).

"Looking forward to the yearly St. Mary's festival where all communities are involved. There are lots of multicultural stalls & food."

– Survey participant born in the Philippines

Lived experiences of discrimination

Across our engagement we heard many positive stories about intercultural interactions between our community members. Penrith City is an inclusive place that stands against racism.

However, our community surveying found that only 63% of people who speak a language other than English agree that Penrith City is welcoming and inclusive for people of all cultures and faiths compared to 70% of people that speak English only. We also heard stories of personal experiences of racism, discrimination and feeling unwelcome in Penrith City, with several indicating they think the area has a way to go before it is an inclusive and welcoming place.

"There's a lot of work needed to be done around inclusivity."

– Survey participant born in Croatia.

"Lack of representation of ethnic minorities in positions which impact accessibility to resources. There is also a lack of cultural safety training. Still many instances of racial abuse in the area."

– Survey Participant born in Philippines

"There are some people around with racist prejudices. I know because people talk to me about other races in a derogatory manner."

– Survey participant speaking Spanish at home

Social connections and isolation

Penrith City is home to independent, resilient and resourceful multicultural communities that are actively coming together in community-led networks to support each other and help newcomers settle in the area. We heard there is a strong motivation within multicultural communities to pass on culture and traditions to the next generation through organising cultural celebrations and community gatherings.

We heard connections to local community organisations make people feel at home in Penrith City. These organisations also provide important opportunities for people from different cultures to connect and learn from each other.

However, our community surveying found that only 59% of people who speak a language other than English agree they feel part of their neighbourhood compared to 67% of people who speak English only. We also heard that some cohorts in Penrith City are at risk of social isolation, which can make them more vulnerable. We heard that some older people living in outer suburbs as well as grandparents on temporary visas that are caring for grandchildren with limited or no English rely on their families and neighbours for support and have limited opportunities for social connection.

We also heard that there is a growing number of young South-East Asian families moving to new suburbs, including mothers with limited English skills and limited social connections.

“Penrith has lots of events for kids but not much for teenagers or young adults.”

– Survey participant born in Malaysia

“St Mary & St Marina’s Coptic Orthodox Church is a Christian place of worship that helps me to connect with hundreds of fellow Penrith-ers.”

– Survey participant born in Sudan



Young people

Penrith City is home to young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

We heard that while there are plenty of activities for children in Penrith City, there aren't many opportunities or places for young people including teenagers to gather and connect. This can result in what is negatively perceived by some to be loitering in public spaces.

We also heard that young people need access to culturally appropriate services, including mental health services, that understand intergenerational expectations and pressures on young people in different cultures. Service providers told us it can be hard to engage culturally diverse staff members that can build trust.

Productivity and liveability

Access to meaningful employment and affordable housing are essential components for quality of life. We know that our diverse communities experience places in different ways. However, their needs are not always understood and are often under-represented in planning processes. This means employment and housing are not always delivered equitably.

We heard through engagement that it can be harder for migrants including refugees to access employment opportunities in Penrith City. Reasons for this include language barriers and difficulties converting qualifications obtained overseas to Australia.

We also heard that housing affordability is a challenge for Penrith City's multicultural communities. Specific to Penrith City, we also heard that refugees find it hard to settle in the area because they cannot access rental housing without a rental history.

"Events and festivals make me feel part of my community but when you leave you're back to feeling isolated again."

– Survey participant born in New Zealand

"I would like see services, leisure, job or volunteering opportunities for young adults (18-35), but not sure whether such services exist."

– Survey participant born in Armenia

"I feel this place as home, and I have almost everything I need for our family."

– Survey participant born in India

"I feel for lucky and blessed that I was given the opportunity to come to Australia, study at University of Western Sydney and find work. Now my kids are born here and growing."

– Survey participant born in Afghanistan

Access to community facilities

Our community survey showed that 33% of participants want to see more places for our multicultural community to connect.

Penrith City has many community facilities available for community use.

However, we also heard there are a number of barriers to using the current community facilities in Penrith City. This leads to community groups leaving the area for community meetings and celebrations.

These barriers include:

- Some facilities are too small to accommodate large community gatherings.
- Some facilities are often booked out.
- Community facilities can be costly to hire.
- Some booking processes requiring bookings to be made far in advance and requiring expensive insurances.

"I came to community centre for some query, and they offered me services that I didn't even know existed. I really felt good for that."

– Survey participant born in India



"We don't have enough parks and happy places for gatherings in our Penrith council."

– Survey participant born in Samoa

Access to services

Penrith City has a number of community and health services available to support our multicultural community. Our multicultural services sector is highly driven and passionate. Services and Council staff noted there is strong collaboration, information sharing and referrals between service providers which leads to better outcomes for the community.

However, our community survey found that only 44% of people who speak a language other than English agree they can get help from organisations and services that understand their experiences compared to 55% of people who speak English only.

We heard through engagement there are a number of challenges multicultural communities face in accessing services and opportunities in Penrith City. This includes:

Environmental barriers

- Poor transport connections from outer suburbs to urban centres where services are located, which can also contribute to social isolation.
- Perceived services gap in Kingswood/Werrington where there is a growing multicultural community.
- Appointments not available at suitable times, with working families requiring appointments outside of work hours and on the weekend.
- Services in Penrith CBD are not located on main street and can be harder to locate for newcomers.

Social and cultural barriers

- Poor health literacy and stigma around issues such as disability, mental health and domestic violence in some cultures means that people do not seek help from services.
- Lack of awareness about what services are available, particularly for newcomers to the area.
- Lack of culturally responsive services (e.g. staff lack skills, knowledge and experience working with multicultural communities; lack of culturally diverse staff; women of Islamic faith need female doctors).
- Language barriers, with limited services offering plain English and in-language resources and support.
- Lack of trust in authority in some cultural groups.

Economic barriers

- Cost of accessing community facilities, housing and medical appointments.
- Cost of transport to access services.

"I volunteer in the community in sports & community services so see people from all backgrounds assisting and being assisted."

– Survey participant born in the UK

"I have no problem accessing services but no doctors, hospitals and government departments speak my language so it can be hard to communicate my needs sometimes."

– Survey participant born in Tonga

Council's leadership

Council is committed to building a welcoming, inclusive and cohesive community where cultural diversity is valued and people of all cultures and faiths can belong and thrive.

We heard through engagement there is more we can do to realise this vision. Our community survey found that only 64% of people who speak a language other than English agree that Penrith City provides opportunities for all people to participate in community life compared to 72% of people who speak English only.

Community leaders and Council identified a need for improved translation of information around Council services, events and programs to help our multicultural community better

participate in community life. We also heard it is important for Council staff to be trained in culturally safe and inclusive practices. This is particularly important to better support newcomers to connect with their community and access information about services and activities, particularly with language barriers.

Another challenge identified through engagement is community groups struggling to access funding. This includes a lack of information, knowledge or skills to access Council grants and grant criteria only allowing funding of a specific event once. We heard Council can help build capacity of our multicultural community through grant writing and leadership workshops.

"Employ people of ethnic minorities within Penrith City Council and other leadership areas so that representation is visible, experienced and practiced."

– Survey participant born in the Philippines



"I haven't seen many or any culturally diverse initiatives being offered by the council."

– Survey participant born in the Philippines

4. Our Action Plan

This Plan identifies the priority actions that Council will take over the next three years to build a welcoming, inclusive and cohesive Penrith community where people of all cultures and faiths can belong and participate.

Social capital focuses on our many social connections, and the benefits and resources these bring to the wellbeing of individuals and our community. The links and networks that make up social capital can take three forms:

Bonding: Social capital characterises social groups where people are connected or have relationships through shared experiences, values and backgrounds.

Bridging: Social capital focuses on extending interaction between people from different networks, backgrounds and social, economic and cultural resources providing a “bridge” to opportunities to achieve their aspirations and meet their needs.

Linking: Social capital refers to connections and networks that link individuals to government institutions, and decision making that facilitates the exchange of knowledge leading to collective action.

To create a healthy, connected, equitable, inspiring and socially cohesive Penrith City this Plan is focused on actions that can be undertaken in each of these areas. The fourth focus area called Leadership and Collaboration focuses on the collaboration with services in Penrith City to achieve shared outcomes.

Our focus areas are:

Focus Area 1: Bonding

Supporting and enabling strong social bonds and a sense of belonging within our cultural and faith communities.



Focus Area 2: Bridging

Building bridges and understanding across all groups in our community.



Focus Area 3: Linking

Linking culturally diverse communities to the services and opportunities they need to live a good life.



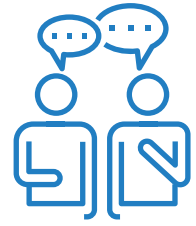
Focus Area 4: Leadership and collaboration

Delivering culturally responsive services and working in collaboration towards shared outcomes for our multicultural community.





Focus Area 1: Bonding



Supporting and enabling strong social bonds and a sense of belonging within our cultural and faith communities.

Why this is important

The importance of having strong social bonds within Penrith's multicultural communities cannot be overstated. When multicultural communities are connected this supports a sense of identity and belonging and enables mutual support and collective resilience.

Our community told us that there are many formal and informal community-led groups and organisations in Penrith City that are dedicated to celebrating and maintaining cultural traditions and practices, and are actively supporting vulnerable people and newcomers to the area.

However, we also heard there are many smaller, emerging cultural communities in Penrith City. A that don't have resources or structures in place yet and need support to sustain and grow their activities.

Council recognises the invaluable contributions of and strong connections in our multicultural communities. We want to see a community in which cultural diversity is celebrated, and where everyone, regardless of their background, feels valued, respected and empowered to freely express and share their cultural identity.

We are committed to strengthening social and cultural bonds by supporting community-led initiatives, fostering community leadership and improving access to spaces for community gatherings and celebrations.

What we will do

- Support and build the capacity of multicultural community groups.
- Build relationships with diverse community leaders.
- Improve access to spaces where cultural groups can connect and celebrate.

"I love taking my boys to story time at the library - it's always inclusive and they have cultural events."

"I liked the Lion Dancing performance at Westfield during Chinese New Year. It was nice to meet families and friends and feel like we belong and are included."

– Survey participant born in China

Focus Area 1: Bonding – Actions

1.1 Build the capacity of multicultural community groups to harness resources and deliver community-led events and initiatives.		
Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Increase participation of community leaders, including young people, in capacity building activities such as grant writing and leadership workshops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of participants in CALD specific capacity building activities 2024-2027 Number of CALD participants in generalist capacity building activities 2024-2027 Number of young people participating in leadership development activities 	Medium
b. Work with CALD services and community groups to actively disseminate information and opportunities, including trialling of new online communication tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a targeted dissemination list for the promotion of these opportunities Impressions and reach of disseminated information Uptake by CALD community members and services on opportunities promoted 	Medium
c. Support community groups to build skills in event management and how to access facilities to support connection with one another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and pilot training for community members (volunteers) seeking to build their capacity to organise events Number of community groups applying for funds over three years 	Long

1.2 Build the capacity of the multicultural community to participate in council planning and decision making.

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Actively promote ways for culturally diverse communities to participate in planning processes and decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation in Have Your Say by CALD residents 2024-2027. 	Long
b. Deliver training for community members, to support understanding of all levels of government, government services and available local community services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training developed and delivered. Number of participants and their level of satisfaction with training. Increased awareness of Have Your Say by participating community members. Increase in diversity of participants in Have Your Say engagement between 2024 and 2027. 	Medium
c. Develop easy to read and 'in language' resources to support CALD community to access Council facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources developed. Number of resources displayed at key community contact points. Number of resources disseminated directly to community groups. Number of training sessions delivered promoting the use of Council's online booking system for facilities once implemented. 	Medium
d. Consider the community space needs and requirements of the multicultural community in the development of Council's Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy. 	Short

1.3 Support multicultural communities to celebrate cultural observances and to connect through shared culture and experiences.

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Promote Council's community grants and other programs to new and emerging multicultural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of instances that Council directly promote Council grants to multicultural stakeholders Develop and disseminate a translated resource promoting Council's Community Grants Program 	Medium
b. Develop and deliver a pilot communications project for the promotion of cultural observances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot project developed in consultation with key stakeholders. Online impressions, reach and engagement with the project. 	Short
c. Deliver a program of activities and community events celebrating and building awareness of diverse cultures, in partnership with community stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of activities/attendees. Community feedback. Council stakeholder feedback. Review the program after 2 years and produce a paper for the consideration of relevant Managers. 	Medium

Focus Area 2: Bridging



Building bridges and understanding across all groups in our multicultural community.

Why this is important

Penrith City has very rich diversity, with residents born in more than 110 countries and speaking more than 80 different languages at home. As our community continues to become more culturally diverse, building social connections and understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds is a priority to ensure cohesion and safeguard us from social divides.

Building 'bridges' between different cultures can take many forms, whether this be multicultural festivals that bring people together around a shared love of food and music, programs and activities that encourage cultural exchange and learning, or friendships formed during a chance encounter at a local library or cafe.

Council is committed to providing and promoting opportunities for intercultural connection and understanding. We want to see a community in which cultural diversity is seen as our strength that unites us. Importantly, we want to ensure that people of all cultures and faiths feel like they belong and are a part of Penrith City, and can live free from discrimination.

What we will do

- Promote the value of cultural diversity
- Promote intercultural connection and understanding, including between established communities and newcomers.
- Stand against racism and discrimination
- Improve information and promotion of existing programs and events to multicultural communities.
- Celebrate the contributions and stories of Penrith's multicultural communities.
- Ensure newcomers are welcomed, engaged and participating in community life.

"When people are exposed to culture, they get a better understanding of different people around them."

- Survey participant is Māori, born in New Zealand

Focus Area 2: Bridging – Actions

2.1 Increase visibility of our culturally diverse communities to build awareness and sense of belonging.

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Develop and implement a Cultural Strategy and Action Plan, supporting the use of art, culture, and creativity to share the stories of multicultural Penrith in the public domain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Strategy and Action Plan delivered and implemented. 	Long
b. Update Council communications, marketing, and service promotions to reflect the cultural diversity of the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to support Council staff to understand current and future local diversity. Produce a suite of images reflecting local diversity. Number of items and campaigns featuring CALD people increases over the life of the plan. 	Short Medium
c. Support and promote community-led events of cultural significance through Councils Community Grants Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of multicultural community-led events funded through Council community grants. Analysis of instances of promotion of relevant activities. 	Medium
d. Explore opportunities to grow culturally diverse business offerings in the local economy through the implementation of programs identified in Council's Economic Development Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Strategy delivered and implemented. 	Medium

2.2 Promote intercultural understanding.

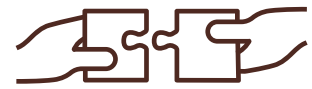
Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Work in partnership with the Penrith Multicultural Interagency and other stakeholders to deliver cross-cultural, inter-faith and intergenerational activities, with specific consideration for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope and pilot a collaborative program specifically for young people. Seek funding for programming through Multicultural NSW and other sources. 	Medium
b. Facilitate discussions with local stakeholders to explore opportunities for intercultural exchange between First Nations and migrant communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participating First Nations and multicultural stakeholders engaged in discussions. Subsequent initiatives developed. 	Medium
c. Continue to deliver Library programming that reflects and responds to the diverse needs of the multicultural community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs and activities delivered. 	Long

2.3 Strengthen culturally responsive practice within local community services.

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Deliver training and development activities which strengthen culturally responsive practice of local community services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training delivered. Attendance at training. Feedback on participant experience and retention of information. 	Medium
b. Develop opportunities for local community services and interagencies to share understanding and seed intersectional programs and partnerships addressing community needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities explored and documented in project scope. Activities within budget delivered. Funding submissions developed as appropriate. 	Long



Focus Area 3: Linking



Linking our culturally diverse community members to the services and opportunities they need to live a good life.

Why this is important

Building an inclusive Penrith City means ensuring that every resident, regardless of their cultural background, has fair access to the services and opportunities they need to live a good life, and can fully participate in the community.

While our culturally diverse community members have many skills and strengths, we also recognise some may experience unique needs, aspirations and barriers to accessing services and opportunities. Barriers may range from language barriers and a lack of culturally responsive services to limited awareness of available opportunities and trust issues.

Council is committed to ensuring a fair and equitable community by working to reduce barriers and supporting connections to services and opportunities, including health, housing and employment. In particular, we recognise that some groups may experience additional needs and barriers, including newcomers, refugees, older people, young people, international students, women and gender and sexually diverse individuals. As our community grows and diversifies, we will continue to monitor and plan for changing service needs.

What we will do

- Promote and raise awareness of the services and opportunities that are available to people of all cultures and faiths.
- Build capacity of mainstream services sector to be more culturally responsive.
- Provide information and signage in community languages where required.
- Collaborate with services to increase digital, health and civic literacy in our multicultural communities.
- Advocate to ensure people of all cultures and faiths have equal opportunities to access services and opportunities, including health, housing and employment.

"I came to community centre for some query, and they offered me services that I didn't even know existed. I really felt good for that."

– Survey participant born in India

Focus Area 3: Linking – Actions

3.1 Promote information, programs, services, and events to multicultural communities.		
Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Undertake outreach and engagement with community leaders and groups to provide information about Council and community services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of outreach sessions delivered. Sector and Council feedback on service utilisation. 	Short
b. Develop a targeted 'Welcome' resource for newcomers, including refugees, providing information, and linking them to Council and other local support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome resource developed. Number of distribution points across City. Anecdotal feedback on usefulness and take up. 	Medium
c. Increase access to information on emergency preparedness for Penrith's local multicultural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted emergency preparedness information disseminated to local multicultural community by Council staff and emergency services. 	Medium
d. Scope and seek funding for a digital equity program for multicultural communities including training to support digital literacy and connecting online.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope program in partnership with Penrith Multicultural Interagency. 	Medium

3.2 Support multicultural interagencies and advisory groups to strengthen collaboration.		
Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Coordinate and participate in multicultural networks, including advocacy and collective responses to emerging issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of and attendance at interagency meetings. Satisfaction of interagency participants. Number of partnership or advocacy activities. 	Short
b. Provide current demographic information about Penrith's multicultural residents and build the capacity of community stakeholders to understand our community and make use of these resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic profile 2023 (number of downloads and reach of promotions). Capacity building activities delivered. Number of participants/recipients. Participant feedback. 	Short

Focus Area 4: Leadership and collaboration



Delivering culturally responsive services and working in collaboration towards shared outcomes for our multicultural community.

Why this is important

As the custodian of our City, Council has an important leadership role to play in championing and planning for a diverse and inclusive community, and to ensure that our services are equitable and accessible for all residents, regardless of their cultural background.

This Plan aims to bring together all the work that Council is already doing, and establish a strong foundation for more culturally responsive planning and services into the future.

We recognise that we can achieve more by working in partnership with our culturally diverse communities, service providers, businesses, not for profits and State and Commonwealth Governments to promote the value of cultural diversity and strengthen our social cohesion.

Council has long been committed to bringing together the diverse organisations, community groups and agencies that serve our multicultural community, including through the Penrith Multicultural Working Party and the Penrith Multicultural Interagency. Through this Plan, we will continue to foster a collective commitment to our shared goals.

What we will do

- Embed consideration of cultural diversity in strategic planning for Council places, spaces and services.
- Use plain English language in Council communications and connect to translation and interpreting services.
- Increase diversity and inclusion in Council's work.
- Continue to build partnerships and co-deliver projects and programs alongside local organisations and community leaders.

"We have recently moved to Penrith and have had a great experience so far. Our neighbourhood is helpful and kind."

- Survey participant born in India

"While I think Penrith has come a long way in the last 10 years, we still have to make more progress so everyone feels safe, welcome and included in our community."

- Survey participant born in Australia

Focus Area 4: Leadership and collaboration – Actions

4.1 Strengthen culturally responsive practice across Council.		
Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe
a. Develop a Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to reflect and meet the needs of our growing and increasingly diverse community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy delivered in 2025. 	Medium
b. Develop Community Engagement Guidelines to support the inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Councils engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines developed. 	Medium
c. Develop a procedure to support Council staff in responding to racism and discrimination should it arise through the course of their work. Promote the procedure to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedure developed. Number of activities promoting the procedure to Council staff. 	Medium
d. Participate in multicultural regional collaborations, communities of practice and broader issues-based campaigns relevant to local government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council joins the Welcoming Cities Network. Council continues active participation in the Local Government Multicultural Network. Council continues active participation in the NSW Local Government Aboriginal Network. Relevant campaigns identified. 	Medium
e. Seek funding to deliver training in culturally responsive and trauma informed practice across customer facing roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding sought. Training delivered if funding secured. 	Long
f. Create a Council Staff language register to support customer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register developed. 	Short
g. Review accessibility functions of Council's website through a user experience study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User experience study delivered. 	Medium
h. Implement a cross-functional working group to support implementation and monitoring of the Multicultural Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group established. Quarterly meetings conducted. 	Short

Implementation and reporting

Council is committed to delivering a Plan that contributes to building a community where diverse cultures, languages and faiths are celebrated and embraced. Where everyone feels welcomed and proud to call Penrith their home.

With the Multicultural Working Party's guidance, and support from local services and community leaders we will implement this Plan over the next three years. We will document our progress annually and share this information with the Multicultural Working Party and the wider community via our website and interagencies.

The Plan has clear performance measures to provide a baseline for tracking change and progress over time. Meaningful change cannot be achieved without the perspectives of multicultural communities who will be involved on a project level to provide specific advice throughout the implementation of the Plan. We will monitor emerging needs in an annual "pulse check" to ensure we are responsive to changing needs in the community.

Appendix 1: Policy context

This Plan was informed by legislation and policy documents from international, federal, state levels as listed below:

International

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – United Nations
- The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)

National

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- The Racial Hatred Act (1995)
- The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy (2011)
- It Stops With Me – Human Rights Commission National Anti-Racism Strategy (2012)
- Australia's Multicultural Statement (2017)
- Australia's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy (2017)
- Australia's Human Rights Framework (2010)
- National Anti-racism strategy (forthcoming)

NSW

- Anti-Discrimination Act (1977)
- Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse society (1997)
- Multicultural NSW Act (2000)
- Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan (2021–2025)
- NSW Settlement Strategy (2023)

Greater Sydney

- Resilient Sydney Strategy (2018)
- Greater Sydney Region Plan and Western City District Plan

Penrith City

- Penrith 2036+ Community Strategic Plan
- Penrith Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Penrith Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Library Services Strategy
- Penrith Community Safety Plan (forthcoming)
- Penrith Resilience Plan (forthcoming)
- St Mary's Place Plan (forthcoming)
- Penrith Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy (forthcoming)
- Penrith Cultural Action Plan (forthcoming)
- Penrith Youth Action Plan
- Penrith Sport and Recreation Strategy
- Penrith Our River Masterplan
- Penrith Advocacy Strategy 2023

Appendix 2:

Community profile

Pop. born overseas by suburb (Source: ABS Census 2021)

Area	# born overseas 2021	% born overseas 2021	Increase 2016–2021
Berkshire Park	430	20.0	2%
Cambridge Park	1,145	16.3	6%
Castlereagh – Agnes Banks	246	14.2	11%
Claremont Meadows	1,344	26.0	12%
Colyton	2,464	28.1	10%
Cranebrook	2,386	15.1	1%
Emu Heights	421	13.1	3%
Emu Plains	1,250	15.4	–10%
Erskine Park	1,657	25.6	8%
Glenmore Park	5,195	20.8	12%
Jamisontown	973	18.3	–7%
Jordan Springs	3,750	31.9	57%
Kingswood	4,444	31.5	33%
Leonay	441	17.1	0%
Llandilo	295	18.3	–1%
Londonderry	579	14.4	10%
Luddenham – Wallacia	404	16.0	17%
Mount Vernon – Kemps Creek – Badgerys Creek	459	26.3	4%
Mulgoa	310	15.2	5%
North St Marys	886	21.5	1%
Orchard Hills	413	23.0	–4%
Oxley Park	1,546	36.8	39%
Penrith	4,388	24.4	28%
Regentville	121	14.4	12%
South Penrith	2,162	18.0	4%
St Clair	5,403	27.1	6%
St Marys	4,418	33.3	14%
Werrington	1,814	34.0	36%
Werrington Downs – Werrington County – Cambridge Gardens	1,422	15.9	3%
Penrith City	50,798	23.3	17%
Greater Sydney	2,021,083	38.6	12%

Pop. speaking a language other than English (LOTE) by suburb (Source: ABS Census 2021)

Area	# LOTE 2021	% LOTE 2021	Increase 2016-2021
Berkshire Park	188	8.7	0%
Cambridge Park	838	11.9	22%
Castlereagh - Agnes Banks	183	10.5	21%
Claremont Meadows	1,319	25.5	16%
Colyton	2,431	27.7	13%
Cranebrook	1,529	9.7	8%
Emu Heights	176	5.5	17%
Emu Plains	540	6.6	-3%
Erskine Park	1,464	22.6	5%
Glenmore Park	4,214	16.8	19%
Jamisontown	608	11.4	4%
Jordan Springs	3,842	32.6	60%
Kingswood	4,297	30.4	41%
Leonay	197	7.6	2%
Llandilo	363	22.4	-3%
Londonderry	482	12.0	23%
Luddenham - Wallacia	372	14.7	23%
Mount Vernon - Kemps Creek - Badgerys Creek	630	36.1	0%
Mulgoa	231	11.3	3%
North St Marys	731	17.7	0%
Orchard Hills	432	24.0	-4%
Oxley Park	1,530	36.5	41%
Penrith	3,272	18.2	31%
Regentville	56	6.8	2%
South Penrith	1,382	11.5	15%
St Clair	4,873	24.4	9%
St Marys	4,068	30.7	16%
Werrington	1,638	30.7	40%
Werrington Downs - Werrington County - Cambridge Gardens	848	9.5	16%
Penrith City	42,723	19.6	23%
Greater Sydney	1,957,409	37.4	12%

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

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