
Policy Title:	Community Diversity and Social Cohesion
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Policy Subject:	Diversity and Social Cohesion
Directorate:	Community & Cultural Services
Department:	Diversity and Social Cohesion
Responsible Officer:	Director Community & Cultural Services
Authorised by:	North Burnett Regional Council
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Authorities:	Australian Government – The People of Australia - Australia’s Multi-Cultural Policy 2011 Queensland Government – Queensland Multicultural Policy 2011 North Burnett Regional Council Corporate Plan 2011-2013 North Burnett Regional Council Community Plan 2011-2022 North Burnett Regional Council Cultural Mapping Report 2010-2013 North Burnett Regional Council Arts and Cultural Strategy 2010-2013 North Burnett Regional Council Policy 101 – Equal Employment Opportunity Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry 2011

INTRODUCTION:

North Burnett Regional Council is proactively working to introduce policy to compliment the pending State Government legislation to support multicultural principles.

North Burnett Regional Council acknowledges and respects the Traditional Owners and custodians, past and present, of the land within the region and values the importance of this culture.

Council recognises that people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds can bring many benefits to the community such as:

- Cultural experiences – including traditions/customs/festivals
- Song, dance, art
- Food, drinks and clothing/dress

- Language and literature
- Religion and philosophies
- Different perspectives and skills which can help with creative or new ways of problem solving
- Helping the community broaden their thinking and perspectives to compete on local and global markets
- Economic benefits such as increased business and tourism.

With a large agricultural industry, the North Burnett experiences significant seasonal influxes of CALD people in addition to permanent migration to the region. Labour-supply shortages have seen significant increases of CALD people in not only agriculture and labouring areas, but also trades and healthcare fields.

Council and the community's ability to welcome and facilitate a well connected community with strong relationships, help support the economic development and attraction of the area. Businesses and service providers who employ CALD people who have an increased sense of belonging in the community, will appreciate these benefits with improved attraction and retention of staff. Seasonal workers who have improved links to the community will be more likely to stay for longer periods and buy locally rather than travelling to other centres for social interaction, and are more likely to speak favourably of our region and its communities. This has been demonstrated on social media websites and publications such as 'The Lonely Planet'.

North Burnett Regional Council aims to foster a strong and cohesive community that welcomes all people, including those from CALD backgrounds, into the region. This can be done by providing high level customer service and implementing strategies and projects to welcome and encourage inclusiveness and understanding between community members and newcomers, including CALD people.

OBJECTIVES:

This policy aims to outline Council's commitment to:

- implement strategies to identify CALD (itinerant and permanent) people entering the North Burnett and provide ways to welcome them, provide information about the region, services and community participation
- promote access to services available such as library LOTE (languages other than English), translation and interpreter services
- allow all members of the community to be treated fairly and with mutual respect and understanding, regardless of cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds
- actively engage with whole of community including youth, community groups, business and people from CALD backgrounds to identify issues and implement community based strategies for inclusiveness
- ensure that appropriate disaster preparedness material is implemented that is relevant to the region and provide advice to CALD community
- implement training and information that is suitable for CALD people

- ensure recruitment is according to Equal Employment Opportunity requirements and that if CALD applicants are the best candidate for the job, a position is offered to that person
- ensure that staff engage with all clients including CALD people in a culturally appropriate manner
- implement community based strategies to foster improved understanding and awareness of multi-cultural issues
- support community based events that celebrate diversity in the community
- support initiatives which encourage cultural exchange through food, dance, arts and language
- identify ways to encourage CALD people to participate in community groups and events
- provide ways to link CALD people to local church, sport and social groups – and have opportunities to participate in and contribute to the economic, social, cultural and political life of the North Burnett
- assist with the accurate collection of data to reflect the changing population and ethnicity of the community
- promote an improved sense of worth, inclusiveness, sense of safety and community in the North Burnett.

PRINCIPLES:

The Council believes that we should never under-estimate the greatness of our accomplishment in building a tolerant, inclusive and diverse society of which we can all be proud.

In achieving these aims and objectives North Burnett Regional Council will strive to:

- ensure equitable access to services for CALD community members and ensure information is accessible to all residents
- identify issues and implement specific location based responses to ensure community cohesion
- make available the appropriate resources within Council budgetary constraints to facilitate and support cultural activities, such as festivals, sporting events, and community events that promote inclusiveness
- promote and develop networks between community, community groups and CALD people
- promote and support multicultural events throughout the year
- celebrate the cultural diversity of the region
- develop methods to ensure that economic benefit of diversity is realised and maximised
- pursue and secure funding to provide community based events to promote diversity and social cohesion
- ensure that this policy is reviewed annually to ensure it's relevance.