



## POLICY

Adopted: 26 March 2002  
Minute No: 104  
Amended: 9 December 2014  
Minute No: 337

**FILE NO:** PSC2014-0391

**TITLE:** CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** COMMUNICATIONS SECTION MANAGER

### BACKGROUND

Port Stephens Council recognises the social, economic and educational benefits cultural diversity offers the local community. A diverse community is considered to be a strong and sustainable community. Council plays an important role in ensuring that people from all backgrounds have equitable access to community services, facilities and resources, and that everyone can take part in community life.

The NSW and Federal governments have policies to respond to the changing composition of the Australian people. *The People of Australia–Australia's Multicultural Policy (2011)* is the primary vehicle for ensuring that Australian government programs and services are responsive to the needs of Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population.

Similarly agencies in NSW, as one of the most culturally diverse states, are guided by the *Community Relations Commission and Principle of Multiculturalism Act (2000)*. The legislative frameworks provided by the NSW and Federal governments inform this policy and guide Port Stephens Council's service delivery.

This policy affirms Port Stephens Council's commitment to supporting this cultural diversity as it enriches the lives of all people in our community.

### OBJECTIVE

- 1) To ensure the provision of Council information, services and facilities does not discriminate those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through the provision of key principles to guide Council's decision making.

## **PRINCIPLES**

The following principles will support Council to achieve its objective to support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- 1) Council will endeavour to ensure all residents have equitable access to Council services and facilities regardless of race, language, religion or culture.
- 2) Council's consultative and decision making processes will recognise and encourage the participation and contribution of residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- 3) Council will seek to develop appropriate communication strategies to inform people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds about participation in its services, programs and facilities.
- 4) Council will ensure that community, social, recreation, environmental and infrastructure planning shall incorporate the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as required.
- 5) Council will work collaboratively where appropriate with fellow members of the Hunter Region of Councils (HROC), regional multicultural, interagency and government organisations to ensure an integrated and strategic approach is taken to the planning and delivery of services for residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- 6) Council will encourage and promote opportunities for residents and visitors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in the economic and cultural life of the Port Stephens community.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy affirms Port Stephens Council's commitment to three key concepts:

- 1) cultural identity: the right of all Australians, within defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion;
- 2) social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and
- 3) economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilize effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.

## **RELATED POLICIES**

- 1) Social Impact Policy, minute no. 241;
- 2) Tenancy Policy, minute no. 212;
- 3) Community Engagement Policy, minute no. 318;
- 4) Disability Access and Inclusion Policy, minute no. 321;

- 5) The People of Australia–Australia's Multicultural Policy, Australian Government, 2011.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Cultural Diversity Policy provides the framework for acknowledging, valuing and celebrating the social, economic and educational value of cultural diversity in the Port Stephens. It ensures that residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have equitable access to Council services and facilities and are provided with opportunities to participate and contribute in Council's decision making processes.

The policy encourages communication and the community understanding that the rights and responsibilities of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are recognised as an integral part of the Port Stephens community.

### **ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

Effectively utilizing the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background, has significant economic benefits for the region.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no significant environmental implications.

### **RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS**

- 1) Ethnic Affairs Commission Amended Act (1997);
- 2) Local Government Act (1993);
- 3) Local Government Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation (1998);
- 4) NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977);
- 5) The Community Relations Commission & Principles of Multiculturalism Act (2000);
- 6) Nationality & Citizenship Act (1948).

### **IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY**

The policy shall be implemented on an organisational wide basis.

### **PROCESS OWNER**

Communications Section Manager

### **REVIEW DATE**

December 2016