



diversity

Social Outcome

A community that encourages, recognises and respects diversity.



Importance to Quality of Life

“Acceptance of diversity and inclusiveness are important in contributing to community harmony and social cohesion. A society that does not accept or include diversity can lead to the creation of marginalised groups which become isolated from others in the community, and are unable to access opportunities to fully participate in social, economic and political spheres of society. A lack of social inclusion may also lead to individuals and groups being disadvantaged through a lack of access to resources and information. This may lead to discord within or between communities, and the fracturing of community spirit, linkages and connections.”

Source: Measuring Social Capital, An Australian Framework and Indicators, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004, p.38.

Acceptance or tolerance of diversity, as well as inclusiveness demonstrate an individual's or community's acceptance and respect for a broad range of social norms, lifestyles, and beliefs. This contributes to feelings of inclusion, acceptance and belonging.

Current Context

The Wyong Shire community is one in which a variety of many different communities exist together, creating a vast mix of interests, attitudes, skills, abilities and challenges. Not only is there a variety of cultural mixes, there are every day differences such as age, family type, socio economic status etc. that make the Shire a place in which a diversity of different people live, work and play together.

Social Indicators

% of Indigenous population.

% of population from CALD background.



The Community Profile of the Shire shows a range of ages and family types living in the Shire ranging from families with young children to older residents. There is also a great range of income levels which brings many opportunities and challenges.

Whilst the majority of Shire residents are Australian-born and of Anglo-Celtic origin the Community Profile has identified that there is a small but growing population of over 3,800 people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in the Shire and over 5,800 people from non-English-speaking backgrounds. With the arrival of new residents to the growth areas of the Shire, many from Sydney, this diversity will grow.

The concept of diversity is based on individual acceptance and respect. It is an understanding that individuals are unique and different and that all people have different strengths and abilities that can contribute to creating a good community. Diversity includes race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, culture, age, physical ability and religious, political and other beliefs.

During the consultations when speaking of "diversity" people defined diversity in terms of the elements described above and also meant everything from diversity in business type, attracting a mix of people, welcoming and including people from different backgrounds and a diversity in education.

Residents had mixed experiences of "Diversity." The majority of people felt that there was not enough diversity (on all levels) in the Shire and that Council needs to do a lot more to encourage it.

When asked what makes up a good community most residents stated that a mix of people is essential in making a good community. By a 'mix' of people, residents meant a range of ages, family mixes, interests and ethnic groups:

"We need a mix of people from different backgrounds."

"Communities need a mix of different people, ages and backgrounds."

"It's really important to not just have a clump of the same people in a community e.g. all older people living in the same street – we need families, single people, older people all living together."



A significant number of residents (from both a CALD and non CALD background) felt that Wyong Shire was still quite backwards in its approach to encouraging diversity:

“There needs to be a cultural shift in the Shire. We are still so old fashioned in the way we do things and treat different people.”

“Wyong Shire is still so ‘Anglo’. It is quite hard to fit in when you’re from a different background.”

People also felt that Wyong Shire Council and elected Council representatives as a whole were not proactive, encouraging or interested in developing, supporting and connecting with diverse communities:

“Council needs to be more user friendly to multicultural residents i.e. language links on Council’s website, interpreter services, welcome kits in other languages, etc.”

A minority of people expressed the word “diversity” in a negative light as a fear of people from different cultures, and were very racist in their comments and approach. This type of attitude is reflected in some of the experiences of people from a culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background.

As well as attracting a diverse range of people, residents also expressed the need to attract a diverse range of businesses and shopping options.

“A nice deli would be great.”

“Everywhere you go it’s the same type of shops – it’s so boring.”

“It would be fantastic to have even a fruit and vegetable shop in The Entrance.”

“When we first moved to the area [from Sydney] my husband and I decided that we felt like Japanese food for dinner we drove around for about an hour and ended up having pizza as that was the only thing around.”

“I really miss the variety that Sydney offers – lots of choice and things like fresh produce markets.”



"I would entice more contemporary businesses to the local region. The right types of cafés boutiques, hairdressers and cinemas."

The community consultations highlighted that there are four groups in particular in the Shire that are cause for attention in promoting inclusiveness and accepting diversity. These four groups are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, People from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background, People with a Disability and Young People.

- **Indigenous People**

Many people from an Indigenous background participated in the consultations. Residents from an Indigenous background had mixed feelings about living in the Shire. For some Aboriginal People living in the Shire their experience is a more positive one, but for others they experience significant negative attitude and disrespect from the wider community.

"We are constantly dealing with judgements from the wider community."

Aboriginal people involved in the consultations outlined the positive aspects of living in Wyong Shire as follows:

- The open space and natural environment of the area;
- Good neighbours who are open to learn about the Stolen Generation and challenges that affect Aboriginal People;
- Lots of Aboriginal children integrated into local schools;
- The Shire allows the opportunity to live in a house as opposed to a unit;
- The Eleanor Duncan Community Health Centre; and
- Wyong Shire Council - *"Events at Council help to put Aboriginal Issues on the agenda. The Community Development staff are very welcoming which I have never felt at another Council."*



The challenges of living in Wyong Shire include:

- Lack of respect and pre judgement by the wider community;
- Racism experienced by the Aboriginal Community;
- Ineffective public transport system on the Central Coast;
- Lack of affordable and accessible activities for children and youth;
- Bullying inside and out of school;
- Lack of OOSH care;
- Lack of affordable medical and dental facilities;
- The increasing over development of the area;
- High number of single parent families and lack of male role models;
- Grandparents raising grandchildren with no support; and
- Lack of affordable entertainment for all ages.

“There is still significant racism experienced by the Aboriginal Community on the Central Coast.”

The preservation of open space and the natural environment of the area is very important to the Aboriginal People, especially the beaches, birds and trees. The protection of key sacred Aboriginal sites in the area was seen as a priority to be addressed by Council in conjunction with the local Aboriginal People.

People expressed that in their ideal future, the area would have lots of green open spaces, that bushland would be protected, that sacred Aboriginal Sites would be retained and the beaches and waterways would be pristine. There would be an understanding and respect for Indigenous culture in the wider community and acknowledgement and recognition of the Indigenous community and its leaders by local government.



Did You know?**NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony**

The NAIDOC Flag Raising ceremony is based around showcasing and celebrating the diversity of personal experiences within our local Aboriginal community and creating a positive and vibrant environment using displays of contemporary Aboriginal artworks, traditional Indigenous foods and personal histories.



- **People from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Background**

Did You Know?**Central Coast Multicultural Project**

The Central Coast Multicultural Project is conducted to assist people on the Central Coast who are from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). This includes new arrivals, refugees and migrants.

Managed by the Wyoming Community Centre the Project provides information, referrals, support, advocacy, community development and casework and is funded by the Department of Community Services and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The Project is an acknowledgement of the diverse cultures living on the Central Coast of NSW and the contributions and benefits derived from the sharing of these cultures within the whole community.

There were a significant number of people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background involved in the consultations. People from a CALD background have had various experiences of living in Wyong Shire, both positive and negative.



The positive experiences are:

- Celebrations of different cultures/people coming together;
- Friendly neighbours (immediate);
- Linking with those from a common background;
- Development and progress of the Shire;
- The beauty and cleanliness of the natural environment; and
- The laid back and less stressed lifestyle of the area.

The negative experiences related to:

- Lack of bi lingual information (including welcome kits and Council's website);
- Lack of inclusiveness on the Central Coast;
- Lack of multi cultural acceptance;
- Poor transport system;
- Lack of Infrastructure keeping up with population growth;
- Not enough local jobs;
- Poor communication from Council to its CALD residents;
- Community safety; and
- Lack of medical services.

The social and cultural attitudes, values and norms of some mainstream residents make it difficult for people from a CALD background to feel welcome and a part of the community:

"I went into Coles after school with my friend and there were adults walking behind us saying horrible things because we were wearing the head scarf."

"The growth of the Shire is good in a way as there are more people here [in Wyong Shire] from different cultures now so our culture is more visible – other people can see that there are a range of different cultures here, which is good."

"Hey everyone – We exist, we are part, we belong."

"It was really hard at first to live here because of racism. We weren't accepted in the broader community, but a few people accepted us right from the start."



"There are still small pockets of racism here, especially from older people."

'We need acceptance of all people regardless of race and disability.'

Many people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background talked about their increasing worry of the loss of their traditional celebrations, languages and customs as people age and pass away. This worry was specifically linked to the passing on of knowledge and experiences from one generation to the other.

"Our community is getting older and older. Our families have moved away and there is no one here every day to make sure our traditions are kept alive."

Another impact on individuals from a CALD background in terms of age is the social isolation and loneliness of older people, especially those older people who revert back to the language of their birth with the onset of illnesses like dementia:

'We go visiting people from our community at the nursing homes up here – they no longer know how to speak English and no one can understand them which makes them feel scared and lonely.'

"We try really hard to pass on our culture to our children, it's really important to use not to lose our heritage."



Did You Know?**Wyong Shire Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS)**

In March 2008, Council implemented an Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement which will address the key ethnic affairs initiatives and priorities of Council.

In developing the EAPS, Council consulted widely with culturally and linguistic diverse (CALD) communities and agencies.

EAPS is a measure of Wyong Shire Council's performance where the needs of culturally diverse clients are fully integrated into core business, which in turn results in quality service delivery within the framework of the principles of multiculturalism and social justice obligations.

Outcomes from the EAPS will include improving internal processes which will provide improved support for CALD communities through information sharing and bi-annual community days, provision of a translator service and staff cultural awareness training.

- ***People with a Disability***

People with a disability expressed a view that they were often not included, and that Council had a significant role to play in community education and building connections to better include and respect this group. People with disabilities had both positive and negative experiences of living in the Shire.

The positive aspects of living in the Shire included:

- The sense of community, the connections and linkages with people in the community;
- The importance of good neighbours;
- The natural environment of the area – the lakes, the river, the sounds of bird life;
- The area is quiet and peaceful; and
- The village feeling the Shire has.



The challenges of living in the Shire included:

- Not enough public transport options for people with a disability;
- Increasing busyness of the Shire;
- Environmental degradation;
- Inadequate parking for people with a disability;
- Lack of interesting places for young people to go;
- Feeling unsafe while out at night;
- Not enough organised social events; and
- Young people with disabilities living in nursing care for older people.

Analysis of the discussion of residents with a disability has identified the following key requirements:

- Integrated information and communication strategy and the provision of information in formats that are accessible to people with a disability;
- Appropriate and affordable socialisation and recreational activities and spaces for people with a disability;
- Addressing of accessibility issues in the Shire;
- Advocating and lobbying for the provision of disability services in Wyong Shire;
- Increased respite care and services for families and carers;
- Affordable and accessible transport options;
- Supporting and promoting education, employment and training for people with disabilities; and
- Greater community acceptance of people with disabilities.



Did You Know?**Central Coast Disability Network - Working to Develop Better Opportunities for People with Disabilities**

The Central Coast Disability Network (CCDN) is a registered charity and a not for profit organisation that has been providing support to people with a disability since 1979. CCDN delivers several disability focussed programmes and provides an information, referral and support role to people with disabilities, families, carers and service providers on the Central Coast.

CCDN is committed to, and practices social justice principles of rights, equity, access and participation. These principles are informed by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons. CCDN's vision is for all people with disabilities to be fully included in the life of their communities. CCDN's philosophy is based on the belief that people with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of society.

What We Can Do**What Council Can Do:**

A significant number of residents from all backgrounds suggested that more work could be done to further promote multicultural awareness and education. There was a feeling from residents that the Shire is still quite "backwards" when it comes to supporting people from a different background and not motivated to provide education to the wider community.

Most residents felt that Council had a significant role to play in supporting cultural community groups to promote and educate the wider community by holding festivals, activities, programmes and events. Many groups indicated that their festivals and celebrations have ceased because of the burden of insurance and liability issues.



Council's Role is to:

- Provide equal access to services, resources and facilities for all residents;
- Practice and implement non-discriminatory service provision;
- Seek broad and inclusive, active community consultation and participation;
- Promote and lead community harmony and cultural expression;
- Continue to promote a respect for diversity in Council strategic plans, operational plans, policies, programmes and projects;
- Continue to provide adequate facilities and to use materials and methods that are culturally appropriate; and
- Further develop initiatives that promote mutual respect, harmony, co-operation and opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.

Council supports cultural diversity, cultural expression and the arts through the provision of:

- Wyong Shire Cultural Plan (2005);
- Library services;
- Youth services;
- Cultural programmes, events and activities;
- Support for a number of events and activities; and
- Cultural grant provision.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Provide support, programmes and services that are inclusive.
- Provide advice and guidance about best practice approaches to working with diverse communities.
- Continue to celebrate diversity.
- Work in partnership with Council and others to promote the benefit of living in a diverse community.

What the Community Can Do:

- Ensure that there is broad representation in your group, committee, etc.
- Don't discriminate against people who are different.



What I Can Do:

- Respect others.
- Attend a cultural event.
- Take part in a recognised day of celebration e.g. International Day of People with a Disability.
- Accept people who are different.
- Learn about people from different backgrounds by participating in activities and programmes.
- Get to know different people.
- Speak out against discrimination of any type.
- Volunteer to spend time with a person with a disability.
- Learn about the traditional owners of the land where you live.



Diversity Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
Acceptance of diversity and recognition of members of the community regardless of background, disability etc	Negotiate with the Aboriginal Community to seek ways to establish a permanent Aboriginal Community Development Worker position within Council to work in partnership with the Aboriginal community to develop positive relationships and programmes. (Link to Cultural Plan Action 20)	Commencing Year 3 2010/11 & ongoing.	Future Planning , Community Development	Aboriginal Community, DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations	\$80K per year (salary & programme \$)
	In consultation with the Indigenous community, develop an Indigenous Strategy to promote access and inclusion for the Indigenous community including a Council protocol for acknowledgement of and involvement of the traditional custodians at meetings and functions organised by Council.	Year 4 2011/12	Future Planning , Community Development	Aboriginal Community, DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations	\$5K
	Implement recommendations and review the Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS) annually to ensure equity and recognition of cultural differences by Council and the community.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development , Libraries, Customer Services, Future Planning	Central Coast Multicultural project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community	\$2K per year (Cultural Plan budget)
	Support multicultural organisations and groups within the community to assist in providing programmes and services to the growing multicultural community.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Central Coast Multicultural Project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community	Within existing
	Develop a Disability Action Plan to promote access and inclusion in our community for people with disabilities.	Year 3 2010/11	Community Development	People with Disabilities	\$5K
A Celebration of diversity	Support the provision of festivals, events and other community projects that celebrate and build diversity – (link to Cultural Plan Action 23)	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning , Community Development, Events Co-ordinator	Community & Cultural organisations, Central Coast Tourism	Cultural Grants Programme
	Co-ordinate activities on recognised days of celebration of diversity within our community e.g. Harmony Day, International women's day Reconciliation Day, Sorry Day, International Day PWD, Senior's Week, Youth Week to show appreciation of the positive impacts and key role diversity plays in shaping our community.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development , Events Co-ordinator	NGO'S, Community Groups, Cultural Groups	\$5K per year (Community Development budget) & grant funding
	Continue to conduct Citizenship Ceremonies and examine ways to enhance the event memento provided to new citizens.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Office of the Mayor	-	Within existing



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of other sections	Community Partners	Resources
Inclusiveness, Participation and Involvement	Provide mechanisms which encourage people from diverse backgrounds to participate in Council planning, decision making and services to ensure wide representation.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Future Planning	Aboriginal Community, DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations Central Coast Multicultural Project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community. People with Disabilities	Within existing
Improved Cultural Awareness	Encourage and support programmes that raise awareness and educate residents of the cultural diversity and heritage of the Shire.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development.	DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations Central Coast Multicultural Project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community. People with Disabilities, Community Groups, Community Members	Cultural Grants Programme

