




GREATER SHEPPARTON

Multicultural Action Plan Findings Report

OCTOBER 2023 TO OCTOBER 2026



GREATER
SHEPPARTON



We, the Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Yorta Yorta People of the land which comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to tribal Elders, past, present and emerging and we celebrate their continuing culture and acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.

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Background

The 2019-2022 Multicultural Strategy was Council's third strategy aimed at supporting and promoting Greater Shepparton's multicultural communities. The Strategy was guided by three themes of **enabling contribution and participation, accessing opportunity and valuing cultural diversity**.

At the December 2022 Council meeting, Greater Shepparton City Council noted the success made through the implementation of the Greater Shepparton Multicultural Strategy 2019-2022 and voted to develop a three year Multicultural Action Plan moving forward.

An extensive community consultation process was conducted, commencing January 2023 and concluding March 2023. The feedback from this consultation will inform the development of the Greater Shepparton Multicultural Action Plan 2023-2025 (MAP). The MAP will provide a strategic framework for the delivery of actions that reflect the feedback from the community consultation.

The MAP will be supported by an Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) which establishes actions that directly respond to the key themes of the MAP.

Engagement Methods

A Community Engagement process was conducted from January 2023 to March 2023 using the following methods:

- 8 public drop in sessions conducted in various locations including small towns within the Municipality
- 13 targeted consultation sessions conducted with:
 - › Cultural Community Leaders
 - › Sessions held at Tatura and Merrigum
 - › Events such as Converge on the Goulburn and launch of Culture Diversity Week
 - › Shepparton English Language School and St Georges Road Community Hub
 - › Greater Shepparton Secondary College and Sirius College
 - › Service organisations including Ethnic Council, Door Bell Migrant Women and Wise Well Women
 - › Four (4) Council Advisory Committees
 - › Greater Shepparton City Council staff
- promotion at Council led major events including Illuminate
- an online survey published on Council's community engagement platform *Shaping Greater Shepparton*
- social media advertising and promotion
- the distribution of media releases
- direct email distribution advising of the consultation and opportunities to be involved, including online survey, hard copy submissions and/or telephone over forty (40)
- Council databases across the areas of community including education, access and inclusion, multicultural, small towns, volunteers, health, youth, business, environment, arts and culture

Consultation sessions were conducted in various formats, some via online platforms such as TEAMS, with the majority conducted via face to face presentations and conversations.

Purpose of Consultation

Identify key themes to inform the development of a three (3) year action plan that supports multicultural communities in Greater Shepparton.

What Was Asked?

The survey was brief, with two key questions posed:

1. How can Greater Shepparton be a more welcoming place?
2. What barriers exist in Greater Shepparton?

Who We Heard From

During the consultation period a total of 329 individuals provided feedback and comments, with an age range of between 12 – 70 years.

Community Groups and organisations that represent and/or work directly with multicultural communities in Greater Shepparton were engaged in the consultation. The following local groups were directly engaged during the consultation and provided valuable insight into the needs and wants of the group they represent. These groups represent the cultural diversity, as well as the top ten (10) cultural groups across our region:

- Ethnic Council of Shepparton & District
- Pakistani Association
- Nepalese Association
- Sudanese Association
- South Sudanese Association
- Malaysian Association
- Macedonian Community
- Malayalee Association
- Iraqi Community
- Indonesian Association
- Filipino Association
- Congolese Association
- Burundian Community
- Afghani Association
- Turkish Association
- Albanian Association
- Sri Lankan Association
- Indian Community
- Malaysian Association
- Ukrainian Community
- Samoan Community
- Nigerian Community
- Door Bells Ring: Migrant Women's Network
- Wise Well Women - Community Health Educators
- Headspace
- Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE – staff & students
- Greater Shepparton Secondary College – staff & students
- Sirius College – staff & students
- Shepparton English Language Centre – staff and students
- St Georges Road Hub
- Point of Difference Studio
- Victoria Police
- Centre for Cultural Diversity
- Uniting

What We Heard

The consultation identified a range of issues, in particular around access to:

- education, workforce and training opportunities
- preserving and celebrating cultures, and
- Council and Community Services

Consultation respondents spoke strongly about Greater Shepparton being a welcoming place for multicultural communities and acknowledged the arrival of new settlers to our region is not new. A number of opportunities for change were identified by respondents to assist multicultural communities to engage fully in community. Further explanation of the barriers to engagement are provided below.

1. Barriers to Education, Workforce & Training Opportunities

- a lack of transport – both around Greater Shepparton and to Melbourne
- limited access to essential services due to language and literacy issues
- information to services not available via alternative languages or shared through methods multicultural communities have access to. E.g. social media
- limited education options and opportunities
- a lack of support for new businesses
- safety and racism

Community suggestions to address identified barriers:

- provide support for new multicultural business
- provide information in formats other than English and via platforms multicultural communities use. E.g. Social media
- share the resources available to help multicultural communities understand how to prepare for a disaster and what to do in an emergency situation via languages that reflect the Greater Shepparton community
- provide governance training opportunities for multicultural leaders
- introduce and update Council Services to multicultural community via multicultural groups and leaders

2. Barriers to preserving and celebrating cultures

- the public community does not represent the true cultural diversity of Greater Shepparton. There are more cultures in Greater Shepparton than what is often recognised and celebrated across community
- not enough multicultural diversity reflected in businesses and services
- limited small town reflection of cultural history and appreciation
- not enough activities for young people from multicultural communities

Community suggestions to address identified barriers:

- embrace, celebrate and recognise all cultures that live, work, study and play in Greater Shepparton in a positive way in all Council's communication and promotion information
- art exhibitions in community and at SAM that reflect multicultural communities
- small towns to include information and welcome signage in languages other than English
- celebrate cultural diversity through arts and events which honour our multicultural communities for their contribution to our community and help foster inclusion, understanding and mutual respect
- empower and co-design with community. E.g. Women's Shed or Hub with sewing machines, cooking classes, arts and child care provided.

3. Barriers to Council and Community Services

- Council events, activities and programs do not always support multicultural communities to be service providers.
- it's hard to fill out Council paperwork due to language and literacy issues
- understanding Council information is difficult when it is only online and in English
- services are not always welcoming and multicultural communities become frustrated if they cannot understand English.

Community suggestions to address identified barriers:

- provide information about Council services, programs and activities in alternative formats. E.g. oral, imagery, written and via alternative platforms and using various forms of social media
- provide a voice for Greater Shepparton's multicultural community to lead ideas for social and cultural development at Council
- Council offices to be hub of community information
- Council staff to have training in how to welcome, be patient and an understanding of multicultural communities
- provide training opportunities for multicultural communities to obtain the qualifications and certificates needed to be service providers
- events training for multicultural communities.

The identified barriers and opportunities have been themed into the following areas and form the basis of the MAP.

- 1. Respecting and recognising the value and contribution of multicultural communities of Greater Shepparton.**
- 2. Providing opportunities for multicultural communities to maintain healthy and active lifestyles and be well connected in the Greater Shepparton community.**
- 3. Advancing Council services, places and activities to respond to the needs of multicultural communities.**

Strategic Alignment

The MAP has strong strategic alignment with a number of key Council plans and strategies and State and Federal policy direction.

Strategy/Plan	Alignment
Greater Shepparton Council Plan 2021 -2025	<p>Community Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to work with stakeholders to support leadership within our multicultural communities <p>Social Responsibility & Wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave no one behind • Welcome and embrace multicultural communities and their culture
Greater Shepparton Health and Wellbeing Plan 2018 - 2028	<p>Arts and Culture - Greater Shepparton residents can safely identify with their culture and identity</p> <p>Community Participation - Greater Shepparton residents are socially engaged and live in inclusive communities</p> <p>Crime and Safety - Greater Shepparton residents live in a community that is safe and secure</p> <p>Health and Social Services - Greater Shepparton residents have good physical health</p>
Greater Shepparton 2030 Plan	<p>Community Life - Whole of life, local education and opportunities for participation are seen as important, and the establishment of a university precinct in Shepparton and the community hubs are landmark project initiatives in this respect. Community safety and acknowledgement of the diverse needs arising from age, cultural or ethnic difference, are also on our agenda.</p> <p>Environment - A renewed interest and attention to the conservation and enhancement of our significant natural environments and natural resources such as water, fostering the biodiversity of our region and protecting and conserving our cultural heritage.</p> <p>Economic Development - Continued investment, diversification and excellence in our business and industrial base, and a greater range of job opportunities for residents of the municipality are among our goals. We will focus particularly upon strengthening the region's agricultural sector and processing strengths, especially though our commitment to the establishment of the Goulburn Valley Freight Logistics Centre.</p> <p>Infrastructure - Our infrastructure and how it is developed to support our growth is critical, recognised through our commitment to key infrastructure projects to enhance the safety and functioning of the municipality throughout its rural and urban areas, particularly in areas of transport, accessible public open spaces, recreation and community services.</p>

<p>Greater Shepparton Universal Access and Inclusion Plan 2022 -2026</p>	<p>Social – Our people feel connected, included and valued.</p> <p>Built and Natural – Our people can participate in our built and natural environment.</p> <p>Economic – Our people have a better choices of pathways that lead to education, employment and volunteering opportunities</p> <p>Leadership & Governance – Our people have a role in leading the way and are supported through good governance and policy direction.</p>
<p>Greater Shepparton Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 -2025</p>	<p>The Gender Equality Principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. 2. Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender. 3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice. 4. Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria. 5. Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls. 6. Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender. 7. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community. 8. All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices. 9. Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes. 10. Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.
<p>Greater Shepparton Sport 2050 Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Recommendation 9 - Community Consultation: CALD Groups engagement - Work in collaboration with appropriate organisations and agencies such as Valley Sport, Local Sports, Peak Bodies, the Ethnic Council and others to develop methods for both Council and the sports clubs to increase engagement opportunities with CALD groups. This item is to include specific and culturally appropriate ways to facilitate communication to further enhance the potential for their participation in sport. Develop an implementation plan based upon the options investigated.</p>

<p>Victorian Government Multicultural Policy Statement</p>	<p>One Law for all - Everyone is equal under the law. All Victorians have the same legal rights, responsibilities and protections. As Victorians, we all have rights and responsibilities under the law and towards each other. By respecting our mutual rights and responsibilities, we can ensure a safe and cohesive society.</p> <p>Freedom to be yourself - Everyone is free to be themselves and to feel safe in being true to themselves. The Government wants every Victorian to be able to celebrate their culture with pride and practice their traditions in peace. The freedom to be yourself includes freedom of speech, expressions of gender, sexuality and religion, and peaceful assembly; it does not allow people to break the law or to impinge on the safety or freedom of others.</p> <p>Discrimination is never acceptable - We want to live in a society that promotes inclusion and participation and rejects exclusion, all forms of violence, and discrimination. A society free of discrimination is better able to tackle problems like economic and social disengagement and improve health and wellbeing for all.</p> <p>A fair go for all - Everyone deserves a fair go in life. That means giving every Victorian – no matter where they live, their circumstances, or their background – the support they need to enjoy the Victorian way of life. These include quality education and healthcare, accessible transport, opportunities in employment and a safe place to live.</p> <p>It is up to all of us to contribute to a Victoria we can be proud of - We all want similar things – the opportunity to thrive, for our successes to be recognised, and for our families and loved ones to be safe, secure and happy. That’s why it’s important for people to be able to belong and contribute to a society they are proud of.</p>
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<p>Australian Government's Multicultural Statement: United, Strong, Successful</p>	<p>Shared values - Our values unite us and create social bonds between us. They provide the foundation for our society and a shared future in which everyone belongs based on Respect, Equality and Freedom.</p> <p>Shared rights and responsibilities - We recognise the importance of mutual respect and mutual responsibility. Our success as a multicultural society is due to a balance of rights and responsibilities that ensure a stable, resilient and harmonious society where we seek to give everyone the opportunity to contribute to-and benefit from our prosperity.</p> <p>A safe and secure Australia - Underpinning a diverse and harmonious Australia is the security of our nation. The Australian Government places the highest priority on the safety and security of all Australians.</p> <p>Shared vision for the future - Australia is united by a shared commitment to our nation and our democratic institutions and values. We are all encouraged to promote acceptance and understanding, and ensure our society continues to be safe, cohesive and harmonious.</p> <p>Encouraging economic and social participation of new arrivals - Australia has a rich history of migrants contributing to our social and economic fabric. This continues today with our inclusive multicultural society providing opportunities for new migrants to contribute to the success of our nation.</p> <p>Harnessing the advantages of our diversity and shared national interest - English is and will remain our national language and is a critical tool for migrant integration. At the same time, our multilingual workforce is broadening business horizons and boosting Australia's competitive edge in an increasingly globalised economy.</p> <p>Continuing to build harmonious and socially cohesive communities - Our shared Australian values are the cornerstone of our economic prosperity as well as our socially cohesive society. Sharing our cultural heritage is part of celebrating what it means to be Australian and helping everyone to feel included in our society. Community harmony builds national unity. Common experiences create shared histories and shape shared futures.</p>
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Victorian Equal
Opportunity & Human
Rights Commission
2018 - 2022

1. Deepening our partnerships and engagement with multicultural and multi-faith organisations

- Increased initiatives to protect targeted, minority or vulnerable multicultural and multi-faith communities
- Stronger and deeper dialogue established with key multicultural and multi-faith organisations across Victoria who represent targeted, vulnerable, impacted communities to address racism

2. Empowering multicultural and multi-faith individuals to understand and exercise their rights

- Tailored and interactive events and education sessions that empower individuals and groups who have experienced racism
- Deeper engagement with vulnerable communities in targeted geographic areas to address racism
- Accessible resource in relevant format, language and design supporting communities to understand their rights and to access the Commission's services
- Community 'ambassadors' are empowered to inform their communities about their rights, responsibilities and remedies under our laws, and the Commission's services
- Our knowledge is shared to address racism through statutory reform or policy change

3. Adopting digital strategies to encourage increased reporting of racism

- Increased understanding of the barriers and solutions to reporting racism
- An evidence-based digital campaign that deploys messages or narratives that address these barriers to reporting racism, discrimination and vilification
- Increased community awareness of individual experiences of racism and increased reporting of racist incidents to the Commission
- The Commission's data on racism is strengthened to contribute to state and nation-wide racism evidence base

Conclusion

The findings of the consultation provided input to the development of the Multicultural Action Plan (MAP) 2023 - 2026 and offer insight into the wants and needs of multicultural communities in Greater Shepparton.

Local issues arising from the consultation are consistent with issues raised at a State and National level. Strategic alignment with key Council, State and National documents that aim to support multicultural communities, will assist in developing an Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) to the MAP. Solutions developed by community as part of the consultation will strongly inform and be included in the Annual Implementation Plan.

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