



VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
MULTICULTURAL ISSUES NETWORK

December 2017

## Welcoming Cities and Intercultural Cities

### INTRODUCTION

Welcoming Cities and Intercultural Cities are both initiatives that work towards achieving greater social cohesion in Australia and are available for local governments to join. Local government has an important role to play in fostering social cohesion because it is best placed to understand individual communities at a local level. Although there is no agreed definition of social cohesion, the Scanlon Foundation adopts an eclectic, wide-ranging approach, influenced by the work of social scientists Jane Jenson and Paul Bernard, to incorporate five domains:

- Belonging
- Social justice and equity
- Participation
- Acceptance and rejection, legitimacy
- Worth.

Both Welcoming Cities and Intercultural Cities are looking to support Australian local governments to intentionally, via policies and practice, welcome newly arrived migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum into local communities and to develop long-term strategies for inclusive relationships that bring different cultures together. This creates stronger, more cohesive neighbourhoods, cities and shires. Welcoming Cities and Intercultural Cities both do this by setting specific standards – documents setting out guidelines that are designed to ensure products, services and systems are safe, reliable and consistent. Councils can benchmark themselves against these.

**Welcoming Cities** works cooperatively with a broad range of international organisations that have been consulted and have informed the development of The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities, with significant feedback and input from an Australian audience.

**Intercultural Cities** works cooperatively with the Council of Europe's **Intercultural Cities Programme** and has developed the Australian Intercultural Standards and Index written by Australian intercultural experts, with input from a range of government and non-government stakeholders across Australia.

Councils can choose to become a member of either initiative or choose to become a member of both.

**The purpose of this paper is to provide VLGMIN members with information about both initiatives.** It has been prepared in response to VLGMIN members being asked to write briefs and other documents to inform their local council and community about both Welcoming Cities and Intercultural Cities. It has been written with input from representatives from both Welcoming Cities and Intercultural Cities.

It is strongly advised that readers seek information from representatives of each initiative (see contacts below) and read the documents provided as directed by the links on the following pages.

## OVERVIEW TABLE

	Welcoming Cities	Intercultural Cities
Standard	Yes	Yes
Benchmarks	Yes	Yes
Principles	Yes	Yes
Fees	<p>No fees to join the network.</p> <p>No consulting or other fees for support.</p> <p>If the council decides to become accredited a fee to recover the costs of the accreditation process is required.</p>	<p>No fees to join the network.</p> <p>Fee begins one year after signing membership Agreement with Council of Europe.</p> <p>Not all Councils pay membership fees or the maximum membership fee (5,000 euro) – many pay no fee.</p> <p>If fees are payable, fees are annual as Councils can withdraw membership at any time.</p> <p>No fee for benchmarking comparison with other cities.</p> <p>No consulting or other fees for support.</p>
International endorsements	Yes	Yes
Australian endorsements	Yes	Yes
Standard opened to public consultation	<p>Yes</p> <p>Launch, 3-month public consultation, 150 + submissions, second consultation through network.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Shaped by discussions with elected members and officers from federal, state and local governments around Australia. They reflect discussions that occurred at ‘IntercultureAdelaide – Cultural Adaptability for the Asian Century’ and with local governments around the country.</p>
Standard peer reviewed	Yes	Yes
Financially supported by an Australian organisation	<p>Yes</p> <p><a href="#">Scanlon Foundation</a></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p><a href="#">iGEN Foundation</a></p>
Financially supported by government	Yes	No

Current member cities in Australia	14 <a href="#">List of member cities</a>	2 <a href="#">List of member cities</a>
Independent international accreditation process	Yes	No
How were Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island people consulted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through peak bodies – local and national</li> <li>• Targeted community leaders</li> <li>• Open consultation to all community members.</li> </ul>	Yes. Through local and state networks.
Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island people included in Standard	<p>First and foremost in benchmarks. ‘Welcoming Cities respectfully acknowledge the past, present and future traditional owners of the land, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the traditional custodians of this land, and respect their culture and identity which has been a continuum with the land and sea for generations.’</p> <p>‘Welcoming Cities seek to engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as leaders in welcoming activities’.</p>	Interculturalism sees Indigenous people of all countries as central to interculturalism – no individual benchmark required.
Reconciliation included in benchmarks	Yes. Member councils will be actively working towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.	Yes. The purpose of interculturalism is reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and a framework for the creation of future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian-born people and migrants.
Expert Australian advisory committee overseeing the Standard	Yes	Yes
Independent auditors engaged	Yes	Yes. Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Experts
Knowledge sharing platform	Yes	Yes
Webinars with international and Australian guests	Yes	Yes
Annual Symposium	Yes	Yes

## WHAT IS WELCOMING CITIES?

Welcoming Cities is an initiative that supports local councils, and their communities, to become more welcoming and inclusive. They are creating a national network of cities, shires, towns and municipalities who are committed to an Australia where everyone can belong and participate in social, economic and civic life.

[The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities](#) is the central element of the Welcoming Cities network and applies to all local councils in Australia. This includes cities, shires, towns, or municipalities. Councils can access, and progress through the Standard at different stages in line with their resources, capacity and desired mode of assessment. These stages (from lowest to highest) are Established, Advanced, Excelling, and Mentoring.

The Standard aims to enable local councils to:

- benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices
- identify where and how further efforts could be directed
- assess progress over time.

## WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL CITIES?

The Intercultural cities programme supports cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help them manage diversity positively and realise the diversity advantage. The programme uses a set of analytical and practical tools to help local stakeholders through the various stages of intercultural community building.

DiverCities Network Australasia (currently being established) works cooperatively with the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme and has developed [The Australian Intercultural Standards and Index](#) – an integrated set of documents and resources for promoting, implementing and evaluating intercultural practice in local government settings in Australia. They allow local governments to use a common set of criteria to evaluate their services, activities, community facilities, resources and leadership capabilities. They also enable benchmarking against regional, national and international local governments of similar size and cultural diversity.

## BENCHMARKING

### Benchmarking categories

Both the Welcoming Cities and Intercultural Cities Standards are organised into **categories** that can be applied by a local council through existing or new policies and practices.

### What are the categories?

<b>Welcoming Cities</b>	<b>Intercultural Cities 18 Standards under the following headings:</b>
Leadership	Connected Communities
Social & Cultural Inclusion	Open Governance, Open Economy
Economic Development	Public Culture
Learning & Skills Development	Anti-Discrimination
Civic Participation	
Places & Spaces	

### How do you benchmark your work against others?

#### Welcoming Cities

The extent to which local councils consider and benchmark their activity against the Standard will be based on their understanding of their community's needs and capacity. Councils can consider and benchmark their policies and practices against The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities. The first two levels of accreditation are Established and Advancing. These are self-assessed and peer assessed respectively. The second two levels are Excelling and Mentoring. These top two levels involve external assessment to gain international accreditation as Welcoming Cities.

#### Intercultural Cities

The Australian Intercultural Standards and Index is a benchmarking tool for local governments to assess themselves as a first step and then, if they choose, to submit that assessment to the Council of Europe for analysis.

Using 76 questions, Australian cities are assessed across a range of categories and local governments depending on their size, demographics etc. in relation to more than 120 Council of Europe-endorsed Intercultural Cities across more than 30 countries.

Once a Council has benchmarked their work and have decided to continue to Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme membership, they are required to work towards resolving any identified weaknesses in order to retain endorsement.

## JOINING

### How do you join Welcoming Cities?

Two executive members, usually including a Mayor or CEO, of a council, shire or city will sign a [commitment form](#) that publicly and proudly states their intent to adopt and champion the principles of Welcoming, as set out in the Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities. Committed councils join a network of like-minded peers, gaining the benefit of their support and experience to chart their progress and identify their next steps toward becoming a Welcoming City.

After that, councils can move through the different stages of welcoming, gaining new accreditation at each level. Employees of Welcoming Cities will help them implement the policies and programs required to move through the stages of being a Welcoming City. The highest stage is Mentoring, where a council is leading the way, confidently embedding its principles in all aspects of the community.

### How do you join Intercultural Cities?

Councils can join DiverCities Network Australasia (currently being developed) at any stage of their interest. The purpose of the network is to link Councils with each other and with highly experienced intercultural practitioners and academics to share experiences and learnings of intercultural practice in local governments across the region.

The Australian Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Expert has more than 20 years of experience in intercultural practice. Cities can draw on the skills and experience of this Expert and the experienced academic and practice team at no cost.

In order to ascertain that a city is able to benefit from the Intercultural Cities Programme, the admission process involves three steps:

1. Candidate cities complete the [Australian Intercultural Standards and Index](#) version of the European [Intercultural cities INDEX questionnaire](#) and receive an analytical report on the results with examples of good practice from other cities. [Examples of these documents](#) are available.
2. A report is prepared and presented to Council by staff recommending to join the Intercultural Cities Programme. Council then adopts the resolution.
3. The Mayor and CEO sign an Agreement with the Council of Europe.

## Further information

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## Further Reading

Australian Government Department of Social Services 2016, [National Settlement Framework](#).  
Centre for Multicultural Youth 2007, [Inclusive Local Government](#).  
Cities of Migration 2017, [Building Inclusive Cities](#).  
Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme, [resources](#), [policies](#), [newsletters](#), [videos](#),  
[stories](#), [list of Experts](#)  
Cultural Development Network 2016, [Framework for Cultural Development Planning](#).  
EUROCITIES 2014, [Integrating Cities Toolkits](#).  
Ballantyne, G. Ford, L., Malhi, A. 2017, [Australian Intercultural Standards and Index](#).  
Migration Council Australia 2015, [The Economic Impact of Migration](#).  
Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (Australia) 2016, [National Youth Settlement Framework](#).  
Myriad Consultants 2014, [The Role Of Local Government In Settlement And Multiculturalism](#).  
Regional Australia Institute 2016, [The Missing Migrants](#).  
Scanlon Foundation 2016, [Australians Today](#).  
Victorian Government 2015, [Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria's Social Cohesion and the Resilience of its Communities](#).  
Welcoming America 2017, [The Welcoming Standard and Certified Welcoming](#).