

Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Acknowledgement of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Macedon Ranges Shire is located around 75 kilometres North West of Melbourne and marks the transition from peri-urban Melbourne to north-west regional Victoria; known for its beautiful historic townships, picturesque streetscapes and thriving village communities. The shire's location within the peri-urban region of metropolitan Melbourne and the Calder corridor between Melbourne and Bendigo has, and will continue to have, a significant influence on its population and economy.

This statement considers the thriving connected townships of the Macedon Ranges community, acknowledging the skills and aspirations of our residents including our culturally diverse members.

Council values and respects our cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

Aligned to key references from the Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Principal 19, Cultural Rights, Council affirms that:

- *All persons with a particular cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy his or her culture, to declare and practise his or her religion and to use his or her language.*
- *Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community—*
 - a) *to enjoy their identity and culture; and*
 - b) *to maintain and use their language; and*
 - c) *to maintain their kinship ties; and*

- d) *to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.*¹

Inclusive communities

Inclusive community participation is key to sustaining a strong and vibrant community, and ensuring that people of all faiths, cultures, languages, genders and abilities are welcome and connected. Council commits to achieving this through leadership and the development of inclusive policies and plans that recognise, respect and value cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, gender and ability diversity. A community where diversity is not only accepted but welcomed and celebrated.

Commitment to Reconciliation

Council's commitment to reconciliation is reflected in our Reconciliation Action Plan and our vision for reconciliation:

Our vision for reconciliation is one of equality and unity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and all Macedon Ranges communities, which recognises past injustices, our shared history and shared future, and strengthens Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' right to self-determination.

Refugees and asylum seekers in our community

As a signatory to the Refugee Welcome Zone Declaration, Council will develop plans and programs in partnership with refugee communities and service providers to promote capacity building, and foster sustained engagement and connections between council and the newly arrived communities.

Culturally Diverse communities

Council will engage meaningfully with our community, ensuring that our engagement processes are inclusive, and that we engage directly with priority groups on issues that affect them.

Safe

Council will work towards a community where we can all freely and safely express ourselves regardless of religious belief, colour, ethnicity, language, gender or ability and share our cultures.

Welcoming

Council is committed to taking practical actions to support everyone who lives in the municipality to be able to participate fully in life and to feel welcome, included, accepted, visible and heard.

¹ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/charter-human-rights-and-responsibilities-act-2006/014>