

To: The review Panel
Department of Home Affairs
Australian Government

From: Cass Boyle
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Mornington Peninsula Shire's Submission to the Multicultural Framework Review

Background

Mornington Peninsula Shire (the Shire) acknowledges the Bunurong people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years; and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong people's living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region. Mornington Peninsula Shire recognises, values and celebrates diversity and inclusion amongst our community. We are committed to the cultural safety of older people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ+ community members.

Location:

The Bunurong people are the traditional custodians of the land on which the Mornington Peninsula is located. The Mornington Peninsula is located on the fringe of Melbourne's outer southern suburbs and covers 192km of coastline fronting Port Phillip and Western Port Bays and Bass Strait with a total area of 720 square kilometres. Mornington Peninsula Shire is an 'interface Council'. This means the local community does not yet have access to all of the services available in Melbourne's metropolitan areas thereby requiring travel outside of the municipality.

Population:

The Mornington Peninsula Shire currently has a population of 169,600 (2023). Annual population growth is around 1.42%. During 2020 to 2022 the population spiked due to an increase in people moving to the municipality following extended COVID-19 restrictions. There are more than 40 towns and villages along the Port Phillip side of the Peninsula from Mount Eliza to Portsea, and on the Western Port side from Baxter, Hastings, Crib Point and Balnarring. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) estimated the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the Mornington Peninsula was 1720 people, with approximately half aged less than 30 years.

The Mornington Peninsula encompasses a diverse range of multicultural communities, including people of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. In 2021, 17.7% of people on the Mornington Peninsula were born overseas and 5.4% of people used a language other than English at home. Although there is a higher proportion of English-speaking residents on the Shire relative to other municipalities and comparatively lower

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cultural and linguistic diversity, the collective community story of origin is one that encompasses multicultural roots sewn by multiple waves of migration. Additionally, there is a trend towards growth in numbers of cultural and linguistic diversity, of the 17% of residents born overseas, 8% were born in the United Kingdom and 1% in New Zealand. Amongst non-English speaking residents, Italy is the largest at 0.7% of the population. The three largest ancestries on the Shire are English (45%), Australian (37%) and Irish (12%).

Areas of alignment

The Shire is in support of the Commonwealth undertaking a review of multiculturalism and exploring ways to improve and meet the needs of our diverse communities and society. The broad vision and key principles put forward by the Multicultural Framework Review panel to 'work together to support a cohesive multicultural society...' is in alignment with the Shire's current and future direction.

In 2021 the Shire empowered the community to help shape our future and develop a [Community Vision for the Peninsula to 2040](#), culminating in seven guiding principles that inform the Shire's future direction. In particular alignment with the Multicultural Framework Review (the Review) is *Principle 3 Support an inclusive, connected and safe society*. Specifically, connecting and supporting the diverse social demographics, who live, work, and visit the Mornington Peninsula by facilitating universal access and social integration through safe social housing, services, and events within the community.

Following this the [Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025](#) was developed and outlines how the Shire will work toward fulfilling our community's vision for 2040. Strategic objectives guiding our work of significance for the Review include:

- 3.1 A healthy and self-determined community where everyone feels valued, supported and safe.
- 3.2 A resilient and confident community where everyone connects and is supported.
- 3.3 A community in which people from all generations, backgrounds and abilities can access local services
- 3.4 A community with vibrant arts, culture, sport and recreational opportunities that foster connections and participation across generations, backgrounds and abilities.

Commitment

The Shire is committed to supporting our multicultural and CALD communities and has a Community Inclusion Officer dedicated to this work. Our Community Inclusion Officer sits within the Community Partnerships Directorate and on behalf of the Shire participates in the following forums/committees and groups:

- Victorian Local Government (VLG) Multicultural Issues Network
- VIC/ TAS Multicultural Advisory Forum (facilitated by Services Australia)
- LGPro Diversity & Inclusion Special Interest Group
- University of Melbourne Anti-Racism Hallmark Research Initiative (ARHRI) network.

The Shire also supports and resources the Peninsula Ethnic Seniors Council (PESC) by co-chairing and coordinating quarterly meetings in partnership with Frankston City Council. PESC is a forum for information dissemination and sharing of issues relevant to multicultural communities and CALD seniors group. Membership currently includes groups and clubs that represent cultural connection and ethnic origin of Italian, Greek, Croatian, Dutch,

Polish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Muslim, Filipino, Sri Lankan and South American. PESC is supported by a collaboration between both Mornington Peninsula Shire and Frankston City Council. Where appropriate PESC advocates on issues to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Department of Health and Aged Care, Services Australia and through Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV).

Limitations of the Review

The Review has not been widely publicised or communicated to the Shire or local Mornington Peninsula community in an open, transparent or collaborative way. As a result the people of our constituency are unlikely to even know that the Review is taking place and their perspectives and insights will be missing from any outcomes of this work. Furthermore, it was only through the VLG Multicultural Issues Network, where [REDACTED] (Department of Home Affairs) presented an introduction and overview, that the Shire first became aware of the Multicultural Framework Review.

Due to the timing of communication, as well as lack of resources available that clearly explain and distil the broad vision behind the Review into accessible questions, this has meant we have been unable to consult with our community on the TOR and the Review specifically. Our Community Inclusion Officer has sent on the Shire's behalf a request to the Review Secretariat for a time extension, allow for the Review to be tabled at the next PESC meeting and for it to be shared with multicultural groups and networks. This would provide an opportunity to contribute lived experience and perspective from CALD community on the Mornington Peninsula. Gathering this information in person is important for PESC membership to enable contributions.

Additionally, seeking the diverse perspective and experience of First Nation communities on multiculturalism is of utmost importance. Noting that the timing of the Review, with the lead up to the upcoming referendum on the Voice to Parliament, means that the amount of politics happening for First Nation communities is overloaded and is a barrier to engagement. More time, thought and opportunity is required to enable meaningful reflection that gathers feedback and important insights from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the Review.

Overall the limitations underlying the Review bring to question the process, approach and timeliness. The Shire encourages the Review panel to consider what is missing and who is missing from the dialogue and feedback gathered thus far and to identify where clarity around process and outcome can be developed and shared.

Future vision

A review of multiculturalism and the structures of government that support communities is very welcome and necessary. The Shire would like to continue to engage in this process and be engaged. Through this work of considering multiculturalism there is a great opportunity to enrich the collective narrative around 'who we are' as a society. Multiculturalism is part of our identity as a nation, and this requires robust and inclusive dialogue to bring individuals and community along on the journey.