



Established
WELCOMING CITY

City of Gladstone

Accreditation Report



Welcoming Cities has awarded Gladstone City Council the status of **Established Welcoming City**. An Established Welcoming City celebrates success in initiatives and policies that foster leadership in social and cultural inclusion, projects its reputation as a sector leader and is a prominent member of the Welcoming Cities network.

Introduction

Welcoming Cities supports local councils, and their communities, to work towards greater social, cultural, civic and economic success. Assessment and accreditation as a Welcoming City allows councils to benchmark progress and identify gaps in their welcoming and inclusion practice.

The **benefits of Accreditation** include:

- Increasing the impact of council initiatives for the whole community
- Providing a mechanism to plan for improvement and change
- A positive and welcoming reputation; and,
- Opportunities for shared learning.



City of Gladstone profile

The population of Gladstone was 63,515 in the 2021 CENSUS. It is estimated to increase by 0.8% each year until 2046.

Gladstone is home to people from diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages. The first people associated with the Gladstone area were the Aboriginal people known as the Bailai, the Gurang, the Gooreng Gooreng and the Taribelang people. In 2021, CENSUS 6.2% of Gladstone's population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The City of Gladstone is home to a highly diverse population, with 13.3% reporting being born overseas. Gladstone is home to people from more than 100 countries speaking more than 80 different languages at home. .

13.3%

residents born
overseas

100⁺

from 153
countries

6.2%

Aboriginal and/
or Torres Strait
Islander

Executive Summary

The City of Gladstone is a diverse and inclusive city that prides itself on being welcoming to all. Gladstone Regional Council has demonstrated a solid commitment to the community in all its diversity to ensure equitable access, social inclusion, economic development opportunities, and respect for human rights for all people who live and visit the city.

The City of Gladstone submitted the evidence for an Accreditation Assessment against the Welcoming Cities Standard at the Established Level.

The benefits of the Accreditation include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing the impact of council initiatives for the whole community
- Providing a mechanism to plan strategically for improvement and change
- A positive and welcoming reputation
- Opportunities for shared learning

Welcoming Cities recognises and commends the ongoing work of the Gladstone Regional Council and the genuine efforts undertaken to build an inclusive community where all residents have a sense of belonging regardless of ethnicity, cultural background, or religion.

Welcoming Cities has awarded Gladstone City Council the status of Established Welcoming City. An Established Welcoming City celebrates success in initiatives and policies that foster leadership in social and cultural inclusion. An Established Welcoming City projects its reputation as a sector leader and is a prominent member of the Welcoming Cities network.

The Established Welcoming City status was awarded based on an average score of 4.1 out of 5 in the first category of the Welcoming Cities Standards—Leadership.

Evidence was assessed against an Assessment Rubric of Compliance ([Appendix A](#)).

This report discusses the strengths and opportunities for the Leadership category of the Standard and provides the Council with recommendations.



City of Gladstone is highly encouraged to apply for the Advanced level of the Welcoming Cities accreditation due to their strong performance and deep commitment to welcoming practices. This recommendation comes with the expectation that City of Gladstone will implement the outlined opportunities and recommendations to further enhance their practice, programs and initiatives.

Assessment Aim

The Accreditation Assessment aims to determine whether the City of Gladstone is at the 'Established' stage of compliance with the Welcoming Cities Standards. Established Welcoming Cities project their reputation as sector leaders and are prominent members of the Welcoming Cities network.

Methodology

The assessment provides the City of Gladstone with a Welcoming Cities Accreditation that includes constructive feedback on the Welcoming Cities Standards Leadership category by identifying strengths, opportunities, and recommendations.

The assessment comprised a review of evidence submitted by the City of Gladstone to Welcoming Cities. This evidence was scored against each indicator of the first section of the Welcoming Cities Standard. The City of Gladstone's evidence included documents representing policy, internal and external programming, and practices.

After submission, Welcoming Cities conducted a focus group with council employees to gain clearer insight into council-wide community engagement processes and practices.

Welcoming Cities assessed all documentary evidence against the Assessment Rubric of Compliance ([Appendix A](#)), marking each indicator with a score out of 5. The Assessment Rubric was developed in 2020 by the Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre (MMIC) in consultation with Welcoming Cities, with scores related to the level of compliance.

Desktop review

The evidence presented for review shows the council's policies being applied council-wide and community-wide. It showcases several successful council initiatives that promote Gladstone as a highly diverse community and harness the power of its diversity. The evidence includes numerous stories of success and demonstrates the council's commitment to being a sector leader. Welcoming Cities acknowledges the outstanding progress made by Gladstone Regional Council in recent years and celebrates the results achieved.

Evidence Assessment and Considerations

All submitted evidence has been assessed against the Accreditation Rubric to ensure a thorough and consistent evaluation of the Council's efforts across key areas. The rubric provides a structured framework for evaluating the extent to which the Council's policies, programs, and initiatives align with the Welcoming Cities Standard.

However, it is essential to note that the quality and completeness of the evidence provided can influence the assessment outcomes. Instances such as incomplete policy documentation, cropped or unclear screenshots, and insufficient context in supporting materials may impact the ability to determine the level of compliance against the indicators accurately.

Accreditation result

Criterion	Average
1.1	3.6
1.2	4.3
1.3	4.3
1.4	4.0
Total	4.1

Leadership

Overview

Gladstone Regional Council has demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community through its strategic vision, policies, and initiatives. The Council actively promotes a culture of inclusivity by supporting community-led initiatives, encouraging diverse representation, and engaging with various stakeholders to ensure the needs of all residents are considered. Its approach emphasises collaboration with community organisations and local businesses to create opportunities that enhance social cohesion and economic participation. The Council also recognises the importance of cultural diversity and reconciliation, embedding these values within its broader strategic frameworks.

While the Council's efforts provide a solid foundation, opportunities remain to enhance further its leadership role in fostering inclusion and diversity. Strengthening targeted engagement with underrepresented groups, ensuring that policies address the specific needs of diverse communities, and establishing dedicated advisory structures could further support inclusivity. As the region grows and diversifies, planning for future needs such as multilingual communication and culturally responsive services will be essential to sustaining a genuinely welcoming community.

Strengths

Commitment to Declaring a Welcoming Community

Gladstone Regional Council has provided substantial evidence demonstrating its commitment to being a welcoming community through various initiatives, including promotional videos, community events, and strategic partnerships. The Glad to be in Gladstone campaign effectively showcases positive migrant contributions and settlement stories, reinforcing the region's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Strategic Community Development Approach

The Council's Community Development Strategy demonstrates a clear commitment to representing the community's issues and interests across different levels of government, services, and organisations. The strategy firmly embeds principles of diversity and inclusion, emphasising that the right of all community members to be heard and to participate is a non-negotiable priority. This strategic approach ensures a holistic and responsive engagement with the broader community to enhance social cohesion and well-being.

Support for Community-Led Initiatives

The Community Celebration Fund underscores the Council's dedication to supporting community-led events contributing to the region's destination profile and public interest. This initiative empowers local community organisations, enhances cultural visibility, and fosters social inclusion by celebrating diverse traditions and heritage.

Inclusive Workforce Attraction and Development

Gladstone Regional Council has proactively supported local businesses adopting inclusive recruitment practices. The Skills Attraction Employers Toolkit provides practical guidance on creating inclusive job advertisements, leveraging social media effectively, and attracting a diverse workforce. The Council's social media platforms further reinforce this effort by featuring real success stories of migrants thriving in the region, offering inspiration, and promoting the benefits of migration to the community.

Commitment to Reconciliation

Evidence suggests that the Council is deeply committed to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Their Reconciliation Action Plan showcases a rigorous approach, including clear evaluation frameworks, accountability measures, and designated responsibilities for deliverables. Internal engagement in the RAP's development indicates that Council staff are actively invested in reconciliation efforts, demonstrating an organisational culture that values and respects First Nations peoples.

Recognition of Multicultural Assets

Multilingual skills and a multicultural society are recognised as valuable assets within Gladstone's community. This approach ensures that cultural diversity is viewed as a strength and an integral component of the community's development strategy.

Effective Disaster Preparedness and Community Engagement

The Council has demonstrated leadership in ensuring inclusive and culturally appropriate disaster preparedness efforts. Events such as the Disaster Resilience World Fusion Dinner successfully brought together representatives from First Nations, migrant, and receiving communities. These events provided community members with critical information in an accessible format, fostering resilience and strengthening community connections in times of crisis.

Strategic Partnerships for Inclusive Community Support

Gladstone Regional Council has demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering strategic partnerships that enhance inclusivity and accessibility for migrant and refugee communities. Collaborations with key organisations have resulted in culturally appropriate and in-language support services through the Virtual Community and Neighbourhood Centre.

Opportunities

Facilitating Direct Engagement Between Migrant and First Nations Communities

While the Council has undertaken significant efforts in fostering social cohesion, there is an opportunity to create dedicated initiatives that intentionally bring together representatives from migrant and First Nations communities. Currently, while both groups may participate in broader community events, there are no targeted programs or initiatives designed to facilitate meaningful dialogue and connection between them. Establishing specific platforms for cultural exchange and mutual understanding could enhance social cohesion, foster stronger relationships, and celebrate the rich diversity within the region.

Tailored Policies and Plans for Enhanced Representation

The Council's policies and strategic plans currently adopt an inclusive "for all" approach; however, a more significant impact can be achieved by identifying and addressing the specific needs of diverse population groups, including migrant and refugee communities. Broad, all-encompassing strategies risk overlooking the nuanced challenges faced by minority groups. Developing tailored action plans that explicitly identify migrant and refugee communities as key stakeholders can lead to more effective and meaningful representation.

Establishing a Dedicated Migrant and Refugee Advisory Group

As Gladstone's population grows and diversifies, establishing a dedicated advisory committee or working group focused specifically on migrant and refugee communities would provide a structured platform for engagement and advocacy. While including migrant representatives in existing committees is a positive step, a specific advisory group would enhance the Council's capacity to address unique challenges, foster deeper engagement, and support culturally responsive policymaking.

Preparing for Multilingual Communication Needs

As the city develops and its multicultural population expands, the demand for multilingual resources and communication materials will inevitably increase. Proactively developing a framework for multilingual service delivery - such as translated materials, multilingual signage, and interpretation services - will ensure that the Council is well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of its diverse community. Early investment in these resources can enhance accessibility and engagement across all sectors of the community.

Expanding Staff Training on Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Equity

The Council has an opportunity to strengthen its internal capacity by expanding staff training on anti-racism, diversity, and equity. While some foundational training may exist, further development in these areas will help staff better understand systemic inequalities, respond to discrimination, and actively promote inclusive practices. Ongoing and comprehensive training will also support a more culturally safe and responsive workplace and service environment for employees and the wider community.

Appendix A

Evidence category	1. No compliance	2. Low compliance	3. Partial compliance	4. High compliance	5. Full compliance
Council policy/plan/framework evidence	No evidence of the existence of a relevant policy/plan/strategic framework.	A relevant policy/plan/strategic framework is in the planning or development phase.	There is a relevant and current policy/plan/strategic framework, however, no plans for review exist; there is no clear party responsible and/or desired outcomes detailed.	The relevant policy/plan/strategic framework is current and regularly reviewed, spanning (at least) the three-year Accreditation period. Key responsibilities and/or intended stakeholders are defined, along with desired outcomes/measures.	The policy/plan/strategic framework are embedded in various functions in the council. Policies are active across a range of functions/departments in the council. As well as responsibilities being defined, there is advocacy from senior leaders within the council (e.g., endorsement by the mayor or senior councillors). Evaluation practices exist to continuously improve policy.
Internal implementation evidence	No evidence of internal implementation of relevant policy.	Internal implementation is in the planning or development phase.	Some internal activities exist, however, these may be irregular, isolated or have only partially defined target groups.	There are a range of established internal activities, with clearly defined target audiences and outcomes. Internal activities are tailored to meet the needs of intended stakeholders. Reference groups or project leads have responsibility for delivery, and evaluation measures may be present.	Practices are normalised as part of daily operations and have been proven successful. There may be a history of implementation, with demonstrated actions and outcomes.
External implementation evidence	No evidence of external implementation of relevant policy.	External implementation is in the planning or development phase.	There has been some external implementation. Improvements could be made to better meet the needs of target audiences.	There is evidence of a range of external activities, with clearly defined target audiences and outcomes. Content is fully accessible to intended stakeholders using appropriate formats.	Implementation is widespread through a range of activities targeting different stakeholders, and have proven successful in meeting the needs of external stakeholders. An evaluation process exists to improve desired outcomes. There is evidence that any content is accessed and used by target audience.