Welcoming Cities

Welcoming Cities Guide to Successful Accreditation

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.

Benefits of Accreditation

Accreditation through Welcoming Cities has a range of benefits, including:

- 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.

Timelines and Personnel

A dedicated leader from within council should be assigned for the development of the accreditation submission, preferably someone who can leverage inter-departmental action in the collation of evidence against each criterion. Up to six months should be allowed for councils to develop their accreditation submission. Up to three months should be allowed for the submission to be assessed.

Support and Guidance

Welcoming Cities accreditation provides constructive feedback on relative categories in the Welcoming Cities Standard (the Standard) by identifying strengths, opportunities and recommendations against each.

Once a council has received approval to go through the accreditation at the desired level, a meeting will be held with relevant Welcoming Cities staff and members of council who will be leading the accreditation. Welcoming Cities acknowledges the work required to submit evidence for assessment.

During this time staff are available to advise users on the process and provide constructive feedback on appropriate forms of evidence.

For more detailed information about how to use the Portal, refer to How to use the Welcoming Cities Accreditation Portal.

The table below indicates the categories (1–6) to be addressed in each level of accreditation.
Evidence needs to be supplied for each indicator of the relevant categories.

Committed	Established	Advanced	Excelling	Mentoring
Council signed on to be a member of the Welcoming Cities Network	1. Leadership	1. Leadership	1. Leadership	Excelling, plus approval by Advisory Committee
		2. Social & Cultural Inclusion	2. Social & Cultural Inclusion	
		3. Economic Development	3. Economic Development	
			4. Learning & Skills Development	
			5. Civic Development	
			6. Places & Spaces	

Supporting Evidence

Councils will need to use the Welcoming Cities Online Portal to upload detailed supporting evidence to achieve accreditation at the desired level. The Assessment Rubric (see appendix) provides detail of each level of compliance. In order for full compliance (5/5) to be achieved against the criteria, the following has to be evident in policy, internal and external practice:
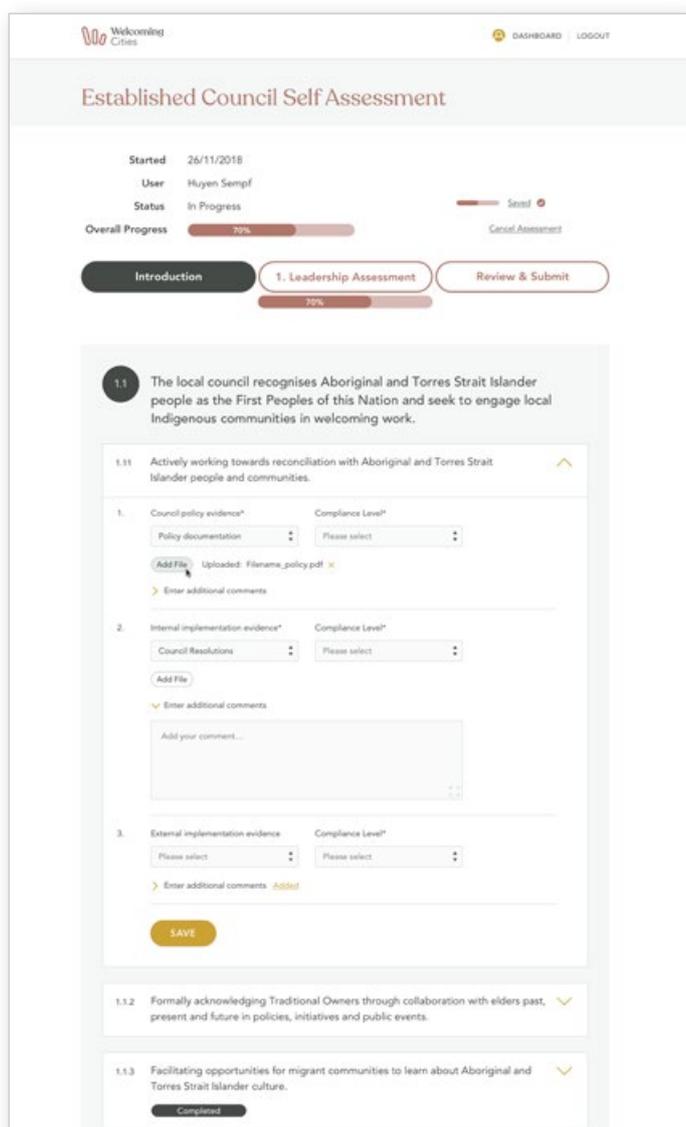
Policy

- The policy/plan/strategic framework is **embedded** in various functions in the local government.
- Policies are active across a **range of functions/ departments** in the local government.
- As well as responsibilities being defined, there is **advocacy from senior leaders** within the local government (e.g., endorsement by the Mayor or Senior Councillors).
- **Evaluation** practices exist to continuously improve policy.

Internal

- **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 is widespread through **a range of initiatives** 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.**

Comments

Users will include relevant additional and explanatory comments to further support compliance within each indicator. The following table shows an example of a high scoring submission from the City of Greater Bendigo assessment. Using indicator 2.21 of the Standard (Celebrating community festivals, cultural events, religious observances that represent diversity and encourage dialogue), the user added context and a well-formed narrative that further supported the evidence provided.

Category	Evidence	Comments (300-500 words max)
Policy	**Provided:** Cultural Inclusion and Diversity Plan – Objective 1, Action 1 and Actions 1 a,c and c See also, Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019 Reconciliation Annual Progress Report 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols Guide 2018 The Cultural Inclusion and Diversity Plan 2016-2019	The CoGB Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019, Reconciliation Annual Progress Report 2019 (see policy evidence provided at 1.11 and 1.12), and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols Guide 2018 (see internal evidence provided at 1.11) underpins Welcome, cultural practices and experiences from Traditional Owners to be include in CoGB festivals and events. The Reconciliation Plan provides a list of objectives and actions designed to provide greater recognition of the culture, history and experience of the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people resident in the City of Greater Bendigo. Objective 4 is to 'Publicly promote Aboriginal Culture and increase public recognition of the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Australian / Bendigo society'. Further, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols Guide 2018 provides practical advice to CoGB staff on the appropriate use of terminology when engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, to understand the use of Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country, Aboriginal Smoking ceremonies and other protocols concerning delivering programs and service, and applicable to all community festivities and events. The Cultural Inclusion and Diversity Plan 2016-2019 (CIDP) provides the CoGB with the framework to promote multiculturalism in the community, including through events and celebrations supported set of Goals, Objectives and Actions to celebrate diversity and inclusion and encourage cross-cultural dialogue. Specifically, see Goal 1, Objective 1 and Actions 1a,b and c of the CIDP. These relate to providing opportunities for the community to increase their understanding of residents from culturally diverse backgrounds by the provision of information and intercultural experiences through forums and events that promote significant multicultural days and celebrations in Greater Bendigo. The CDIP has the capacity for evaluation and to measure the effectiveness of the Goals and Objectives contained within the Plan.
Internal	**Provided:** Committee Terms of Reference: Interfaith dinner See also, Intercultural Ambassadors Program Project Brief Emerge Cultural Hub – Bendigo Creative Arts Workshop doc Library Strategy Discussion Paper	Supported by the CIDP and including cultural practices from the Traditional Owners, the CoGB has a range of internal initiatives and events that have a strong or emerging history of implementation. Monthly meetings and an annual Interfaith Dinner for Council Members and the Intercultural Ambassadors Program (see internal evidence provided at 1.13 and 5.11) and are examples of events and initiatives that advocate for cultural diversity and celebration. The Multicultural Arts partnership allows the CoGB to a host of activities and events for First Nations, multicultural and migrant groups through the Emerge Cultural Hub (see internal evidence provided at 3.42) as a dedicated space with facilities for celebration and a commitment to facilitate diverse cultural expression and dialogue. Objective 2.4 of the Library Strategy Discussion Paper [internal doc] (see policy evidence provided at 4.12) outlines that the library service priority of inclusion and equality as a public space that is available for all including for multicultural programs/events / celebrations.
External	**Provided:** Indigenous Film Festival Program See also, Aspire multicultural markets news story Zinda Festival website	External, public initiatives of cultural celebration and festivity supported by CoGB include the Aspire multicultural markets (see policy evidence provided at 1.22 and 1.31), annual Indigenous Film Festival (see also external evidence provided at 1.11 and 1.13) which has been held for the past three years and the Zinda Multicultural music, food and art Festival (see external evidence provided at 2.22 and 3.42) as another example of a permanent cultural celebration in the CoGB events calendar. Evaluations have been planned for both of these events to gauge their facilitation of intercultural connection, dialogue and participation of community groups, including target groups for these events.

Determining Success

Successful accreditation is determined by the quality of evidence supplied for each indicator in the Standard. The score required to gain accreditation changes depending on the level of accreditation council is trying to achieve:

- For the Established level, council must score over 3.5/5 (70%) in Category 1 of the Standard.
- For the Advanced level, council must score over 3.5/5 (70%) in Category 1-3 of the Standard.
- For the Excelling level, council must score over 4/5 (80%) in all categories of the Standard.

A council's final score is calculated in the following manner:

- Each indicator will have a score of 1-5, based on compliance against the Assessment Rubric.
- The average score across indicators will create the score for the category.
- The average score across all categories will be the final score for the assessment.

Focus Groups

In addition to the scoring outlined above, focus groups to further determine the level of compliance for some indicators will be conducted at the Advanced and Excelling levels. These sessions may involve members of the community, local business owners and other council staff. The focus groups supplement and further build on the documentary evidence provided for the accreditation.

Further Information Required

Once the assessment is submitted for review, an assessor may ask for further information or further evidence to support the submission. Users will be given adequate time to submit the required documentation.

Re-Submission

Once the level of accreditation is determined, a member of the Welcoming Cities staff will provide council with the final score and detailed report. If a user is unsatisfied with the outcome, they may have recourse to re-submit within an agreed timeline.

Assessment Report

At the Excelling level, an extensive public report that provides a discussion of the strengths, opportunities and recommendations for each category is provided to the council. A less extensive report is provided at the Advanced level, with no formal report provided at the Established level. It will also note the average of council's accreditation outcomes against each of the relevant categories. This report is intended to be a public document that will contribute to other council's learnings and future work.

Becoming an Accredited Welcoming City

An accredited Welcoming City is a council in Australia who has received accreditation. Councils receive a trophy and a certificate. Welcoming Cities will support councils to adequately celebrate this achievement. All Welcoming Cities will be able to apply for the Local Government / Welcoming Cities award.

Mentoring Level

All Councils that achieve the Excelling level can apply to be recognised as a Mentoring Welcoming City. To be considered, a Council must submit a letter to the Welcoming Cities Advisory Committee, outlining their actions to:

- provide leadership to the local government sector;
- build the capacity of the sector; and
- demonstrate innovation in welcoming initiatives.

Contact

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welcomingcities.org.au/get-involved

Welcoming Cities is an initiative of Welcoming Australia, supported by the Scanlon Foundation.

Appendix

Assessment Rubric

Next to each example, users are asked to choose a compliance level for each of the 3 stages of implementation.

Users will use the Welcoming Cities Accreditation Assessment Rubric below to assess their compliance level.

Evidence category	Compliance level/s				
	1.None	2. Low	3. Partial	4. High	5. Full
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.

Examples of Evidence

In the Welcoming Cities Online Portal, users are asked to upload three examples of evidence to support work in each given indicator of the Standard.

These are:

1. **Policy**

   - Policy / Action Plan documents (must be current – reviewed or drafted in the last two years – and active)
   - Council resolutions

2. **Internal Implementation.** This category includes internal materials that demonstrate the implementation of related policies.

   - Meeting notes
   - Training materials / procedures
   - Organisational characteristics (staffing by gender / age / ethnicity
   - Council / meeting minutes
   - Internal events
   - Community database for referrals / information
   - Documented internal process / frameworks
   - Reports
   - Charter / guidelines
   - Reference Groups (is this external)
   - Tender process
   - Committee terms of reference
   - Master Plan

3. **External implementation.** This category includes external materials, activities, resources and channels that are being used to ensure the delivery on all related policies.

   - Websites / social media
   - Testimonials (in application)
   - Program documentation
   - Flyers / promotional material / signage / newsletters
   - Photos of practical application (signage / events / parks)
   - Mayor / Councillor speeches
   - Services delivered
   - Grant provision / sponsorship
   - MoU / partnerships (could be for provision of service eg ECC or for advocacy eg police)
   - Informative materials
   - Effective referrals
   - Events and celebrations
   - Buildings and facilities
   - Information sessions
   - Awards