MELTON

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS 2023

Diversity, Equality, Interaction, Participation

BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING WALLS

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INTERCULTURAL CITIES
CITÉS INTERCULTURELLES

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MELTON
INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural Cities is a Council of Europe flagship programme. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view.

In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which was rich in content and detail. However, narrative reports alone were relatively weak as tools to monitor and communicate progress. Thus, an "Intercultural Cities Index" has been designed as a benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the programme as well as for future participants.

While this report is being written (October 2023) 162 cities embraced the ICC programme and approach, and 124 (including Melton) have analysed their intercultural policies using the Intercultural Cities Index. The respective reports can be found here.

Among these cities, 31 cities (including Melton) have more than 200,000 & less than 500,000 inhabitants and 33 cities (including Melton) have more than 20% of foreign-born residents.

This document presents the results of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Melton, Australia, in 2023, and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

INTERCULTURAL CITY DEFINITION

The intercultural city has people with different nationalities, origins, languages or religions/beliefs. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

METHODOLOGY

The Intercultural Cities Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 86 questions (73 of which are mandatory) grouped in 12 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general Intercultural Cities Index).

These indicators comprise the following (including the two new indicators in bold):
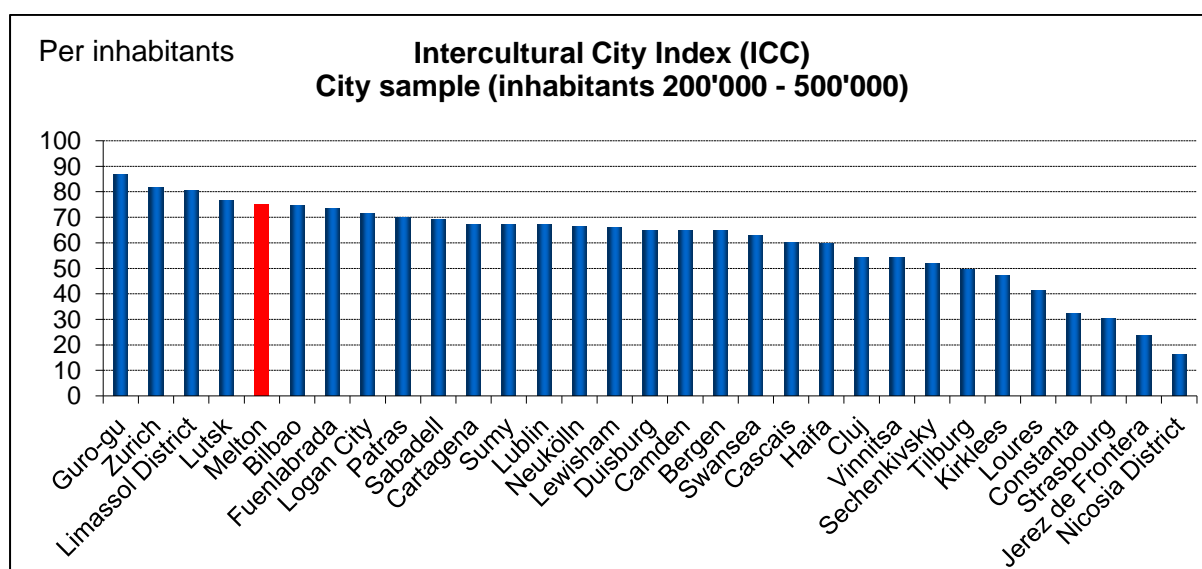
1.	Commitment	
2.	Intercultural lens	Education
3.	Mediation and conflict resolution	Neighbourhoods
4.	Language	Public services
5.	Media and communication	Business and the labour market
6.	International outlook	Cultural and social life
7.	Intercultural intelligence and competence	Public space
8.	Welcoming newcomers	
9.	Leadership and citizenship	
10.	Anti-discrimination	
11.	**Participation**	
12.	**Interaction**	

The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development, type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended **only as a tool for benchmarking/benchlearning**, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.

Taking into account the above-mentioned differences between the cities and a growing number of new cities willing to join the Intercultural Cities Index, it has been decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria. Two of these have been singled out insofar: the size (below 100,000 inhabitants; between 100,000 and 200,000; between 200,000 and 500,000; and above 500,000 inhabitants) and the percentage of foreign-born residents (lower than 10 per cent; between 10 and 15 per cent; between 15 and 20 per cent; and higher than 20 per cent). It is believed that this approach would allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

So far, 41 cities have used the Intercultural Cities Index containing the new indicators in their evaluations, including Melton. Thus, the city will be compared to the entire sample for all the indicators, and to the new sample for the new indicators relating to participation and interaction.

According to the overall Intercultural Cities Index results, Melton has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 75 (out of 100 possible points). The details of this result will be explained below.[1]
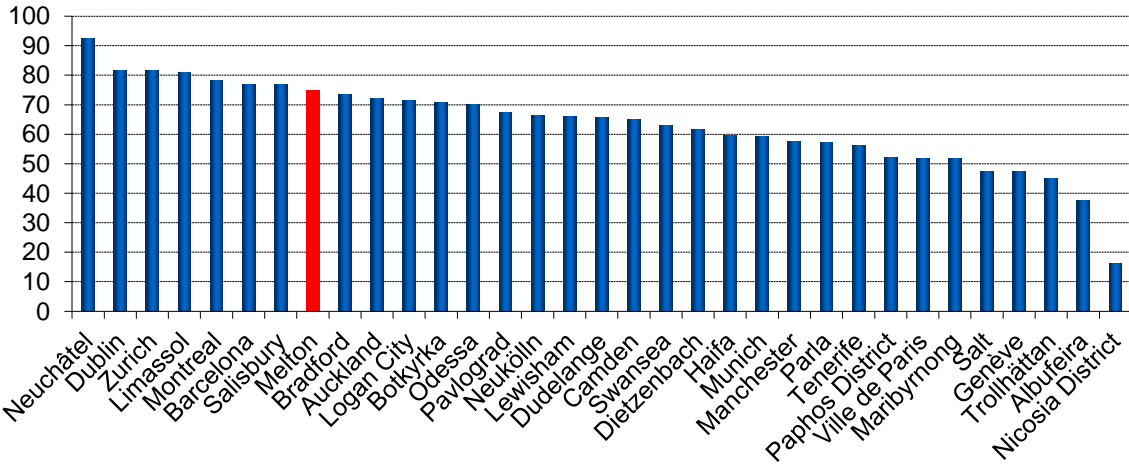

Per inhabitants

**Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)**

Guro-gu, Zurich, Limassol District, Lutsk, Melton, Bilbao, Fuenlabrada, Logan City, Patras, Sabadell, Cartagena, Sumy, Lublin, Neukölln, Lewisham, Duisburg, Camden, Bergen, Swansea, Cascais, Haifa, Cluj, Vinnitsa, Sechenkivsky, Tilburg, Kirklees, Loures, Constanta, Strasbourg, Jerez de Frontera, Nicosia District

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Per diversity

**Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)**

Core Index
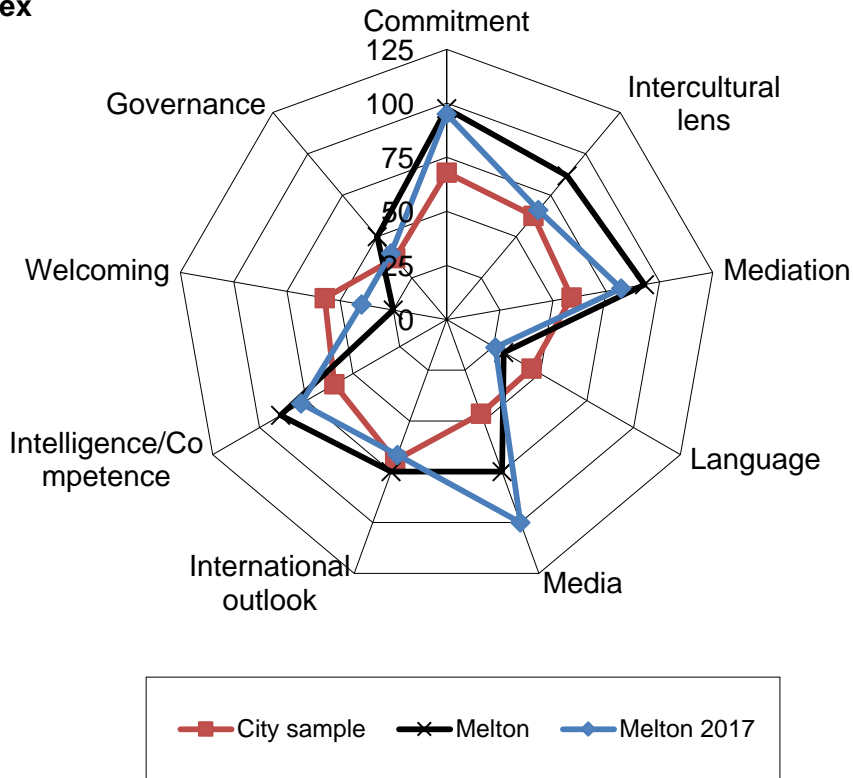
Intercultural Lens with Core Index

Extended Index

Intercultural Lens with Extended Index

MELTON: AN OVERVIEW

Melton City Council or Local Government Area is on the western fringe of culturally diverse Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. It is made up of three wards: Watts, Coburn and Cambridge, which each include several suburbs and localities.[2] The City of Melton has a rapidly growing and diverse population that has experienced sustained growth for over 20 years. The population has risen from 115,000 in 2000 to a projected 216,389 in 2022. The composi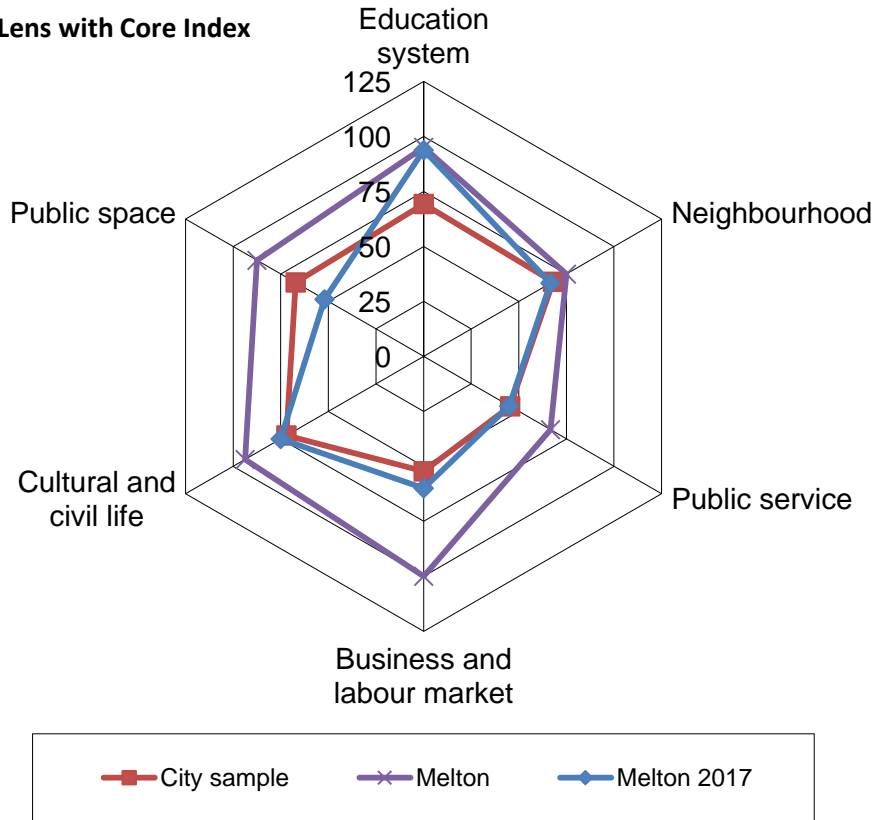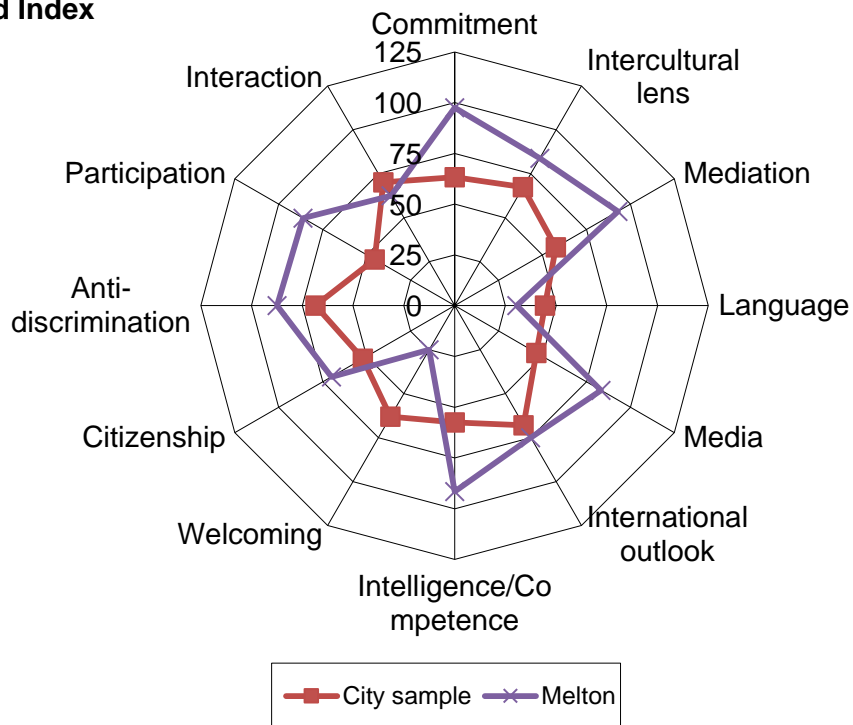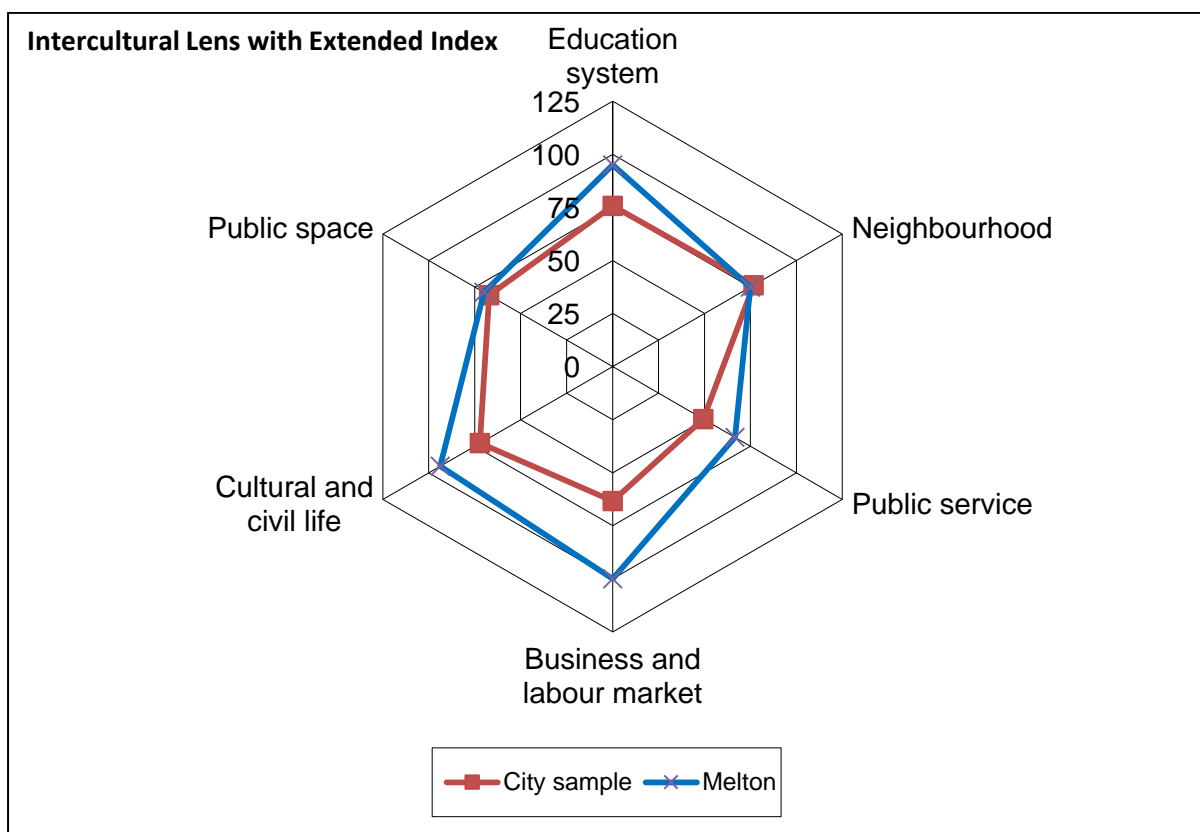tion of the population has undergone significant change, evidenced by the recent gazetting of 11 new suburbs by the State Government in 2017, and a 57.6% increase in the number of people born overseas between 2016 and 2021.

The City of Melton recognises its Indigenous heritage, as the land upon which it is located has a rich Aboriginal history dating back over 40,000 years. The traditional custodians of the land are the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung, Wadawurrung, and Bunurong peoples. These three related language groups, each consisting of multiple clans, occupied the area now encompassed by the municipality. The City of Melton acknowledges this heritage through recognition at all Council events and implementation of its Reconciliation Action Plan. A Virtual Exhibitions Portal on www.melton.vic.gov.au also acknowledges their traditional ownership. Notwithstanding, at the federal level there are ongoing tensions related to First Nations people not currently being formally recognised in the Constitution and much work is still required to embed recognition in meaningful ways across the country. 1.2% of residents of the City of Melton identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Census, 2021).

With regards to the population composition, the 2021 Australian Census uses the following categories to identify people: ancestries, country of birth, birthplace of parents, religious affiliation, language spoken at home.[3] Over 35% of the population of the City of Melton (63,852 individuals) were born outside of Australia, reflecting decades of

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[2] As at December 2022, there are : Aintree; Bonnie Brook; Brookfield; Burnside; Burnside Heights; Caroline Springs; Cobblebank; Deanside; Diggers Rest; Exford; Eynesbury (Shared with the City of Wyndham); Fieldstone; Fraser Rise; Grange fields; Harkness; Hillside (Shared with the City of Brimbank); Kurunjang; Melton; Melton South; Melton West; Mount Cottrell (Shared with the City of Wyndham); Parwan (Shared with the Shire of Moorabool); Plumpton; Ravenhall; Rockbank; Strathtulloh; Taylors Hill;Thornhill Park; Toolern Vale; Truganina (Shared with the City of Wyndham); and Weir Views. For more information : https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Council/About-Council/Councillors/Ward-map.
[3] For more information: https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA24650.

migration to the area (Australian Census, 2021). 19.1% (or 34,213) of the City of Melton residents are not Australian citizens (Australian Census, 2021). There are 9,481 non-national residents, or 5.23% of the population, born in EU-EFTA countries in the City of Melton (Australian Census, 2021). The largest overseas-born groups are from India (8%), Philippines (3.3%), New Zealand (2.2%), the UK (1.8%) and Vietnam (1.7%).

39% of households speak a language other than English at home. The most spoken non-English languages include Punjabi (5.9%), Filipino/Tagalog (2.9%), Vietnamese (2.5%), and Arabic and Hindi (2%). The largest religious groups are Western (Roman) Catholic (27.3%), followed by Islam (6.4%), Sikhism (5.3%) and Hinduism (5.2%). 24.2% of residents have no religion.

1,621 individuals or 0.89% of the population in the City of Melton hold a humanitarian visa (Australian Department of Home Affairs, 2022). There were 95 individuals seeking asylum on a Bridging E visa in the City of Melton (Australian Department of Homeland Affairs, 2021).

As can be shown by the above data, the city of Melton is a rapidly growing and diverse community. It is also interesting to note that the current estimate by the Victorian Agency for Health Information indicates that the LGBTIQA+ population in the City of Melton in 2022 represents 20,573 people or 15.5% of the city population.

The City of Melton's Gross Regional Product was $5.71 billion as of June 2021, representing a 9.5% increase from the previous year. In comparison to Greater Melbourne, fewer households in the City of Melton earn low income (16.6% vs 19%) and fewer earn high income (20.8% vs 25.3%). However, the median weekly household income in the City of Melton is higher ($1887 vs $1759 in Victoria). The median monthly mortgage repayment in the City of Melton is slightly lower ($1800 vs $1859 in Victoria), but a higher percentage of households are facing mortgage stress (17.3% vs 15.5% in Victoria).

COMMITMENT

For intercultural inclusion to occur, city authorities need to send out a clear and well-publicised message emphasising their commitment to intercultural principles, i.e. diversity, equality and interaction. Ideally, a majority of elected officials and senior policy officers will have a clear understanding of these core principles and their implications for policy-making. City authorities also need to initiate an institutional process to translate the principles of interculturality into concrete policies and actions. Most importantly, an intercultural city actively seeks to include residents of all nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups in the policy-making process. The authorities also highlight and nurture any intercultural practices that may already exist in the city.

Melton achieved a rate of 98%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 68% and slightly higher than its 2017 rate of 95%. This reflects a strong performance and a core foundation for the intercultural city.[4]

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Commitment City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

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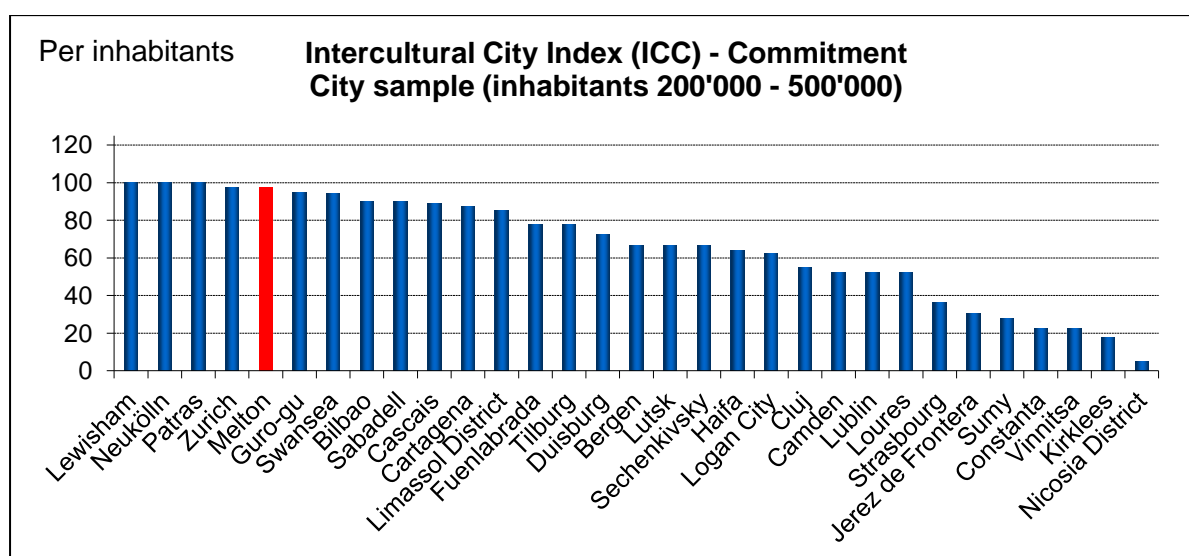
[4] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 98, while the city sample achievement rate is 63.
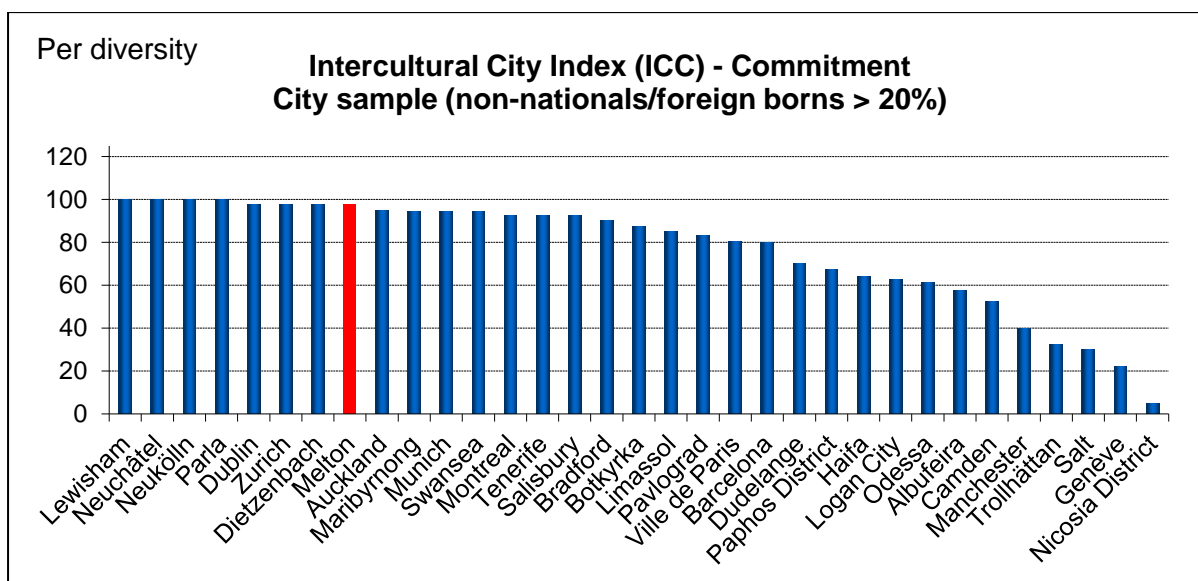
Per diversity

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Commitment
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)**

The City of Melton has a positive institutional framework in place to underpin and give expression to its commitment to intercultural principles. This is evident in a cornerstone policy ('Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025'), an intercultural strategy (Melton City Council Intercultural Plan 2017 to 2021 and Melton City Council Interfaith Strategy 2018-2021), and institutional structures for dialogue (Intercultural Advisory Committee, New & Emerging Communities Network, and Melton Interfaith Network).

The 'Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025' offers a bedrock for commitment to intercultural principles, with one of its six thematic priorities identified as being 'A safe City that is socially and culturally connected', which encompasses: A community that celebrates diversity and is inclusive of all; A safe community where people feel proud to live; Local neighbourhoods are socially and culturally connected; A City that promotes positive public health and wellbeing outcomes to our community; and A City that celebrates Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge and right to self-determination.

The Intercultural Plan 2017-2021, 'provides a roadmap for Council's work in the intercultural space', which involved a range of consultation mechanisms in its elaboration, and which is evaluated and updated through an annual operational plan. The plan seeks to 'contribute to an inclusive community that embraces and values cultural diversity, celebrates our collective heritage, and promotes social cohesion'. It picks up elements of the three key intercultural principles of equality, diversity and interaction, through four key themes:

- Embrace Cultural Diversity: which theme seeks to achieve a sense of belonging, a feeling of connection, and a sense of place for people from all cultural and religious backgrounds in advancing platforms for mutual learning between individuals and groups.
- Strengthen Community Participation: which theme seeks to build the relationships between individuals and groups and local service providers to facilitate and support participation in the economic, social and cultural life of community.
- Enhance Organisational Responsiveness: which theme seeks to improve access, trust and opportunities for collaboration and learning, ensuring responsiveness to needs of a diverse community by building on existing policies and programs and developing the cultural competency of the organisation.
- Support Leadership and Advocacy: which theme seeks to achieve better outcomes for people from all backgrounds through listening to needs, involvement in design and delivery of services, and advocacy on their behalf.

An Action Plan sets out a wide range of specific actions to pursue each of these four key themes. A consultation process has been launched to develop the next iteration of the plan to be called the 'Inclusive Cities Strategy' and solicited input from over 430 community members through online surveys, in-person pop-ups, and resident workshops. Targeted engagement was also held with key stakeholder groups, including the Intercultural Advisory Committee, Councillors, the general public, and specific community workshops. The adoption of this new plan would prompt the responsible Council departments to review their work plans and budget allocations to ensure alignment. Departments could also bid for additional resources through annual budget reviews.

Melton City Council has an [integrated approach to budget planning](#) and delivering services to meet the current and future needs of the community. This ensures that the municipality remains an adaptive, responsive, and viable local government authority. This approach also recognises the relationship with key strategic documents such as the next iteration of the Intercultural Plan. The adoption of that would prompt the responsible Council departments to review their work plans and budget allocations to ensure alignment. Departments could also bid for additional resources through annual budget reviews. Additionally, service delivery in this area could also be funded through partnerships with state and/or federal governments, foundations, and institutions. Council recurrently funds a diversity and inclusion team with modest budgets and staffing resources to deliver outcomes in this space.

With regards to evaluation, Melton City Council evaluates and updates its intercultural mechanism through an annual operational plan and regular progress reports as well as evaluation activities. An implementation plan will identify key tasks and activities, and progress will be monitored through engagement with target audience, Council departments and related advisory committees. The present ICC Index report will also feed into the evaluation of the city's actions related to interculturalism. Overall, the results of the evaluation processes will inform updates to future intercultural or inclusive mechanisms.

A gap is evident between the expiry of the current Intercultural Plan and its successor. The Intercultural Plan committed the city to 'join the intercultural cities network', however as the Plan pre-dates this engagement the Intercultural Plan doesn't explicitly name and recognise the ICC methodologies or the ICC guiding principles for intercultural integration. The Action Plan includes an impressive range of targeted measures and of actions to enable access to services by ensuring culturally responsive processes and tailoring communications.

However, there is limited focus, beyond utilisation of the Workplace Diversity Tool from the Diversity Council Australia, on the city's function as employer and having a diversity of staff at all levels. Likewise, there is limited focus on mainstreaming procedures in the development of general plans, policies, budgets and services to ensure their positive impact on the cultural and linguistic diversity of the population. This focus on mainstreaming process would be important in the context of an approach to funding implementation of the Action Plan that is a matter for the preparation of individual departmental budgets.

Melton City Council's Community Engagement Framework consists of a Community Engagement Policy, Community Engagement Guidelines, and a Community Engagement Toolkit. The policy principles of this framework include being inclusive, listening to the community, and creating partnerships. Melton City Council is committed to providing opportunities for diverse members of the community to participate in the policymaking process, regardless of their gender, cultural and linguistic background, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, or disability. By following this framework, Melton City Council seeks to ensure that it is inclusive and representative of all members of the community, allowing for a more diverse and nuanced approach to policymaking. This could assist as part of a mainstreaming process, but would usefully sit within a wider mainstreaming policy framework.

Melton City Council has specialised committees to provide guidance and oversight for the implementation of intercultural or inclusive mechanisms, the: Intercultural Advisory Committee; New & Emerging Communities Network; and Melton Interfaith Network. These committees have Terms of Reference that outline their governance and accountability requirements, as well as their role in providing input on Council policy. The representation on these committees or networks can include local community representatives, service providers, education institutions, other government agencies, councillors and staff, ensuring a diverse and representative group. This direct input from community groups on public issues, can help council better understand and address community needs as well as make adjustments to relevant policies, strategies and action plans as needed. These structures can directly assist in a mainstreaming process, but would usefully function within a mainstreaming policy framework.

These structures fall short of having a dedicated body or a cross-departmental co-ordination structure with responsibility for implementing the intercultural strategy within Melton City Council. Such an internal institutional structure gives leadership and holds responsibility for the intercultural strategy and serves as a sustained driver for its ongoing implementation.

Melton City Council communicates its intercultural commitment through its Media Policy, which is managed by its Communications Department. Melton City Council recognises the contributions of its residents and organisations to promoting interculturalism through various programmes and awards, such as the "[I Belong](#)" project, [Community Partnership Programme](#), and [Community Achievement Awards](#), which includes categories such as Inclusion Leader of the Year or Intercultural Engagement Leader of the Year. Additionally, the [Faces of Melton](#) Celebrating

Harmony Day is a project that honours residents through paintings and audio files showcasing their role in building an inclusive community.

The City of Melton is well-positioned when it comes to commitment to intercultural principles with the nature of the institutional infrastructure it has in place. Any suggestions merely serve to strengthen and evolve what is in place.

The forthcoming 'Inclusive Cities Strategy' could usefully make a more explicit reference to the ICC guiding principles of: equality and 'ensuring equality and non-discrimination in all their actions – towards their own workforce, in their relations with partners and suppliers, including civil society organisations and enterprises'; diversity and undertaking 'positive action to preserve diversity as an intrinsic feature of human communities, and a source of resilience, vitality and innovation'; and interaction and 'creating conditions for positive and constructive everyday encounters across cultural as well as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socio- economic status etc. differences' (The Intercultural City Step by Step, Council of Europe, 2021). Fulfilling those principle also contributes to enabling active citizenship and participation as a way to promote community cohesion[5].

The City of Melton might usefully consider establishing a mainstreaming policy framework, deploying a mainstreaming procedure in the development of its general plans, policies, budgets, programmes and services to ensure that each of these contributes appropriately to equality, diversity, interaction and participation for the culturally and linguistically diverse communities that make up the population. This procedure would be: evidence-based and participative; integral to the decision-making process involved; and designed to ensure new outcomes for those experiencing issues of inequality or exclusion.

A number of different mainstreaming models have been developed. Kirklees Council, UK, has developed an Integrated Impact Assessment process that is implemented when new services, policies or strategies are being developed or existing ones being changed or when reviews or audits are being conducted in the organisation. This involves an assessment of likely impact on people and on the environment, to be considered in the development of services, policies, and strategies, and enables an early identification and prevention of any systemic discrimination that might be involved in these.

The City of Melton might usefully consider evolving its internal institutional structure for interculturalism and driving the articulation of its intercultural principles. This structure would be at senior management level and would hold responsibility for this brief and for any planning and initiative with regard to this brief. It would offer leadership, standard setting, and drive for this agenda within the administrative structures of Melton City Council.

A variety of approaches might be considered in this regard, to secure an alignment with existing city structures. In the city of Montreal, Canada, the Diversity and Social Inclusion Department now includes an Office for the Integration of Newcomers in Montreal, which enables it to: work in partnership and hand in hand with the city's various other departments and directorates to ensure crosscutting, effective and concerted action; bring players in the business sector, community sector and social services together to prepare the host society for the arrival of and harmonious coexistence with newcomer; and perform a leadership role at community level.

THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS

Although the formal functions cities and other local authorities assume vary considerably from one country to another, all cities have the primary responsibility for maintaining social cohesion and preserving the quality of life in the city. The policies designed to achieve these goals will therefore be re-conceived and re-configured in order to assure they provide adequate service to all residents regardless of their nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientation and age group. This is most notably the case for policies concerning education, neighbourhoods, public services, business and the labour market, cultural and social life, and public space.

The overall rate of achievement of the urban policies of Melton, assessed as a whole through an "intercultural lens" is considerably higher than that of the model city: 87% of these objectives were achieved while the rate of achievement of the model city reaches 63%. [6] With a previous score of 66% in 2017, it appears clearly that Melton has since then effectively dedicated efforts towards the key policy areas covered by the intercultural lens.

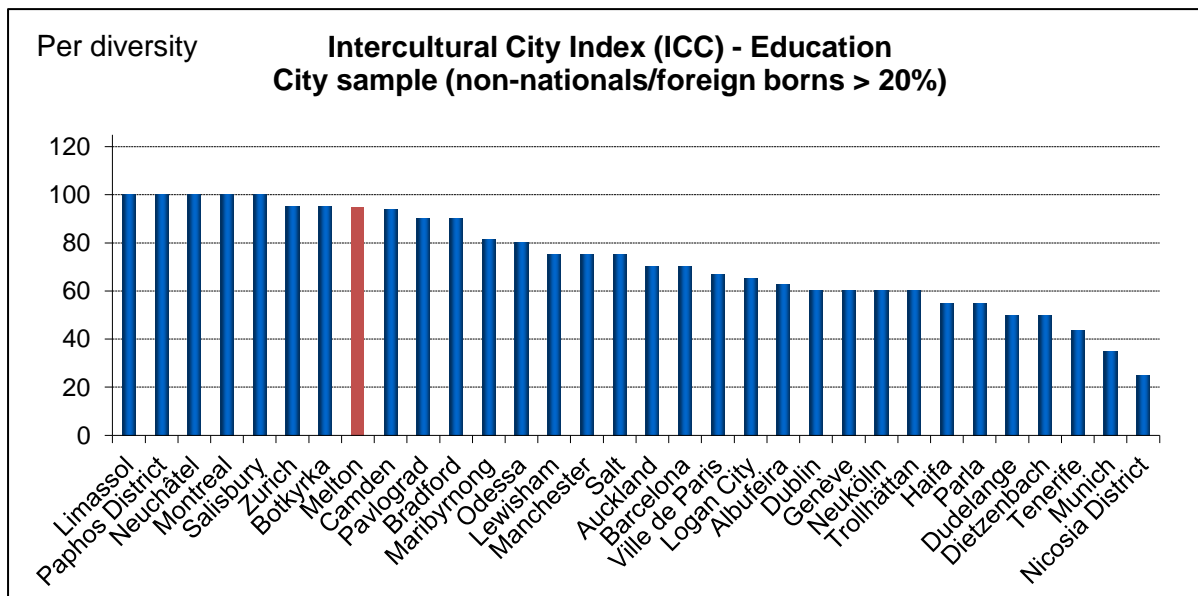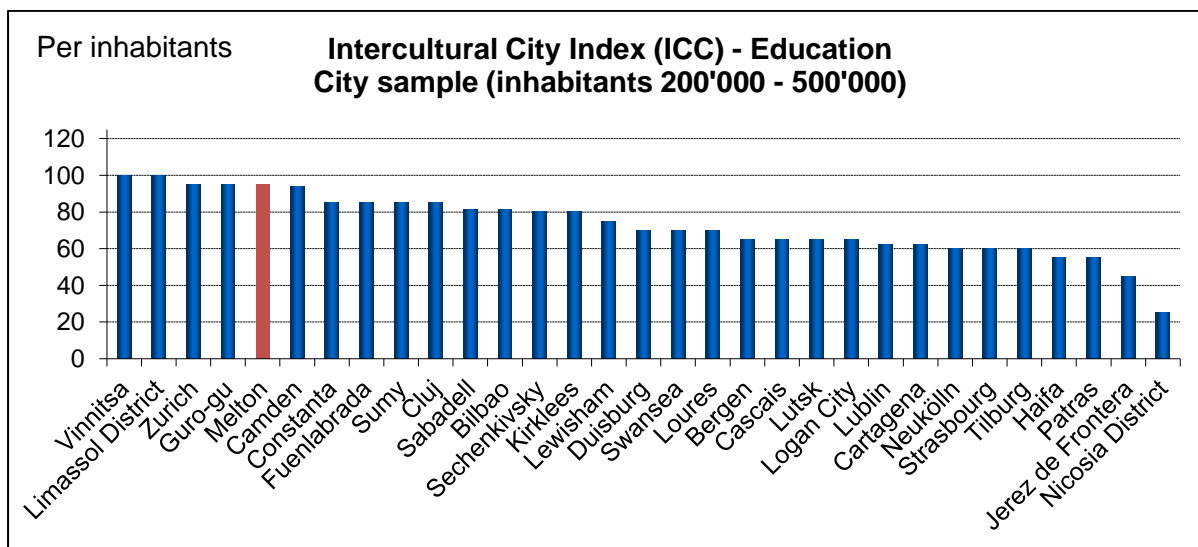[5] See: Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration.

[6] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 84, while the city sample achievement rate is 67%.

Formal education and extracurricular activities have a powerful influence on how children will perceive diversity as they grow up. Schools therefore have a strong potential to reinforce or, on the contrary, challenge prejudices and negative stereotyping. Although school programmes are defined primarily at the national or regional level, local schools can look at alternative and innovative ways of providing opportunities for children of different cultures to build trust and mutual respect, and create thereby favourable learning conditions for all pupils, irrespective of their nationalities, origins, languages, sexual orientation or gender identity, religions/beliefs. From the intercultural perspective, cultural and other diversities, including multilingualism are treated as positive opportunities and are nurtured accordingly. Intercultural schools also consider parents of pupils with migrant/minority backgrounds on an equal basis as other parents. They take steps to ensure that all parents overcome any reluctance they may have in engaging with the school and give them in this way the possibility of playing the educational role usually expected from parents.

Melton achieved a rate of 95%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 69% and slightly higher than its 2017 rate of 94%. This reflects a strong and thorough performance in a key sector.[7]

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Education City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Education City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)

There appears to be limited segregation along cultural/ethnic diversity lines which is positive. Over 70% of Melton's population is participating in various level of education, where it is expected the student population in local schools and institutions will reflect the cultural diversity of local population. Most public schools in Victoria work on a system called 'school zoning'. A 'school zone' is a defined geographic boundary surrounding a school from which the

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[7] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 95, while the city sample achievement rate is 75%.

school will accepts its students. Some schools may have a shared zone which may allow students living in this zone to nominate a preferred local school. A higher concentration of diversity is suggested as being found in the Melton's Watts and Cambridge Wards. There are 44 schools located within the municipality ranging from Secondary, Primary and Early Childhood Education.

In Australia overall, a 2018 study found 41% of teachers work in schools in which more than 10% of students are immigrants or from a migrant background, and 62% in schools in which at least 1% of the student population are refugees.

There is a lack of quantitative data, however, in relation to cultural/ethnic diversity in the education system, which hampers reporting on and tracking of any issues. The limitations in equality data collection mean that it is not possible, from available public data, to extrapolate the likelihood of teachers in local schools reflecting the composition of Melton's population based on the available data.

Schools in Victoria can involve parents from diverse communities in a number of ways such as school councils. School councils are mandatory in government schools to support the principal in providing the best education outcomes. School councils are comprised of 6 parents, 4 school education representatives, and up to 2 co-opted members, and have responsibilities such as grounds and building maintenance, finances, education, fundraising, and community building. It is not clear what the ethnic/cultural composition of such school councils might be or what the barriers or challenges particular ethnic/cultural groups might face in seeking effective participation.

Melton City Council encourages local schools to participate in programmes, activities, and events that promote diversity and social cohesion. Local schools are able to support intercultural projects by offering exchange programmes, language programmes (including Aboriginal languages), intercultural events and programmes, and by participating in public events that promote diversity and social cohesion. It is clear that some such activities are pursued, with examples including: : Student Exchange Program, Languages Programmes in Victorian Government Schools, Aboriginal Languages in Victorian Government Schools, Cultural Diversity Week, Harmony Day, as well as participation in related public events and activities offered by Melton City Council.

In this body of work, little focus emerges on curriculum development to reflect cultural diversity, schools taking steps to ensure intercultural competence of staff, and schools having policies and procedures to deal with intercultural issues. The Intercultural Plan includes a focus on interculturalism and education provision, but this appears narrow in scope.

Suggestions

The intercultural work being done within schools might usefully be expanded. The policies, procedures and practices of schools and school curricula are key components for equality, diversity and interaction in educational settings and could be a useful focus in any expansion of the work being done.

The Co-existence and Mediation initiative in Barcelona, Spain, offers some pointers in this regard. A working committee with leading figures and experts from the educational sector was convened to introduce interculturality as a mainstream element of the curriculum. Teachers are being trained in intercultural education and knowledge of the socialising processes that minority children experienced in their countries of origin. Schools are involving families in the educational process of their children, opening spaces for meetings between families, entities and the school. They are also strengthening policies that open up the school to the neighbourhood and make it a place for meeting and coexistence. Steps are being taken to change the ethnic/cultural make-up of teaching staff, including facilitating the official recognition of academic qualifications from other countries

Education for coexistence in the city of Parla, Spain, offers a more focused pointer with its volunteering projects to foster equality and solidarity in Secondary Schools. This project sought to bring intercultural values into the heart of the classroom and was run by the City Council's Department for International & Intercultural Coexistence. It was implemented in 10 Secondary Schools (8 public and 2 private). The objectives were: promotion of intercultural relations in the educational space; education in attitudes and values of equality, solidarity and inclusion; and prevention attitudes of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. It involved three sessions with each school group, employing participatory methodology: one session on mutual knowledge; one on emotional work, empathy and prejudices; and one on rap against racism, to encourage self-esteem and prevent discrimination. It involved a team of four interdisciplinary monitors (students from different faculties) working in each school.

Within the school setting the teacher is a key actor and Melton could usefully bring its focus and work on intercultural competence building to bear in relation to the teaching profession.

The experience in [Patras](), Greece, might offer pointers in this regard. The University of Patras in partnership with the municipality sought to address a perceived reluctance among teachers to acquire new languages and intercultural skills, with a training programme. Trainee teachers were engaged in an action research collaborative project as part of their multicultural course at the University of Patras, and tasked to design, implement and reflect/evaluate an anti-rumour campaign to combat prejudices, stereotypes and racist attitudes in workplaces of their choice. At the end of the project, the trainee teachers completed the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), and the pre and post ISS scores demonstrated their enhanced positive attitudes towards diversity after their semester-long engagement with this anti-rumour strategy.

ICC programme resources on education are also available [here]().

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Within a city, districts, neighbourhoods, or other territorial sub-units, can be more or less culturally/ethnically diverse. People are indeed free to move and settle in the neighbourhood of their choice. To be intercultural, a city does not require a 'perfect' statistical mix of people in all neighbourhoods. It will however make sure that ethnic concentration in a neighbourhood does not convert into socio-cultural segregation, and does not act as a barrier to the inward and outward flow of people, ideas and opportunities. In particular, the intercultural city ensures the same quality of public service delivery in all the neighbourhoods and plans public space, infrastructures, social, cultural and sport activities to encourage intercultural and socio-economic mixing and interaction.

Melton achieved a rate of 75%, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 69% and slightly higher than its 2017 rate of 67%. In this field Melton posts a positive performance in line with the average for cities of its size and composition.[8]
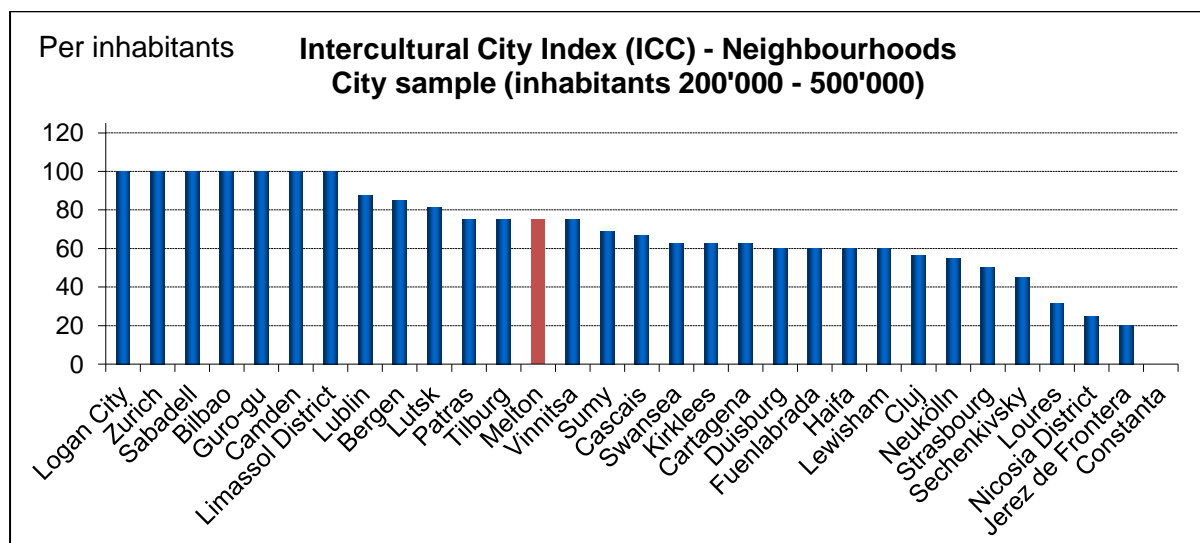
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Neighbourhoods
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

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[8] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 75%, while the city sample achievement rate is 76%.

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Neighbourhoods
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)**
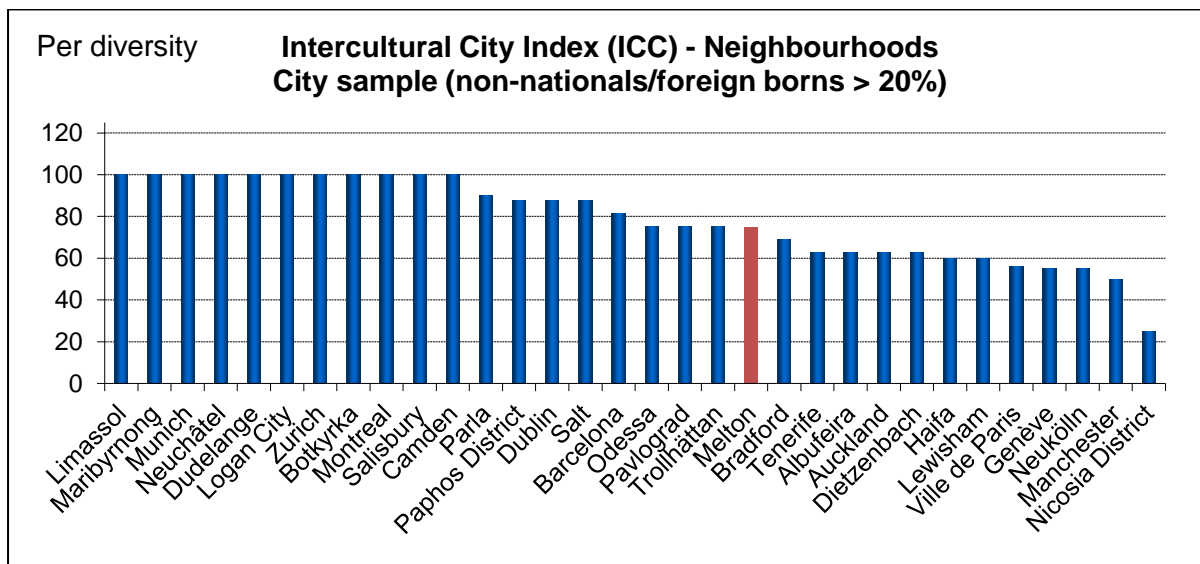
All areas in the City of Melton are culturally and ethnically diverse. There are some areas that have many people born overseas and speaking languages other than English. In 2021, by way of example, Aintree had 64.8% residents speaking a language other than English and 52.2% residents born overseas, Burnside-Burnside Heights had 56.8% and 48.3% respectively, Cobblebank-Strathtulloh had 54.5% and 47.7% respectively, and Fraser Rise had 50.9% and 42.1% respectively, and Rockbank had 50.2% and 44.1% respectively. The City of Melton does not have a policy to increase the diversity of residents and avoid ethnic concentration in the neighbourhoods.

In terms of interaction between neighbourhoods, Melton City Council encourages interaction among diverse community members by: setting up intercultural mechanisms at a city-wide level, such as the Intercultural Advisory Committee, African Communities Working Group, Melton Interfaith Network and Community Partnership Programme; and hosting annual events and activities, such as Harmony Day and Refugee Week, to bring together diverse communities. This city level approach does not appear to reach directly into the level of the neighbourhood and of interactions between neighbourhoods.

At a level closer to the neighbourhood Melton City Council's Community Activity and Learning Centres and hubs provide opportunities for community members to engage with others through a range of cultural and faith activities. The Melton City Council Learning Directory YouTube channel offers online content and programmes to support face-to-face community programming. The Melton Library and Learning Hub provide resources, events, and classes promoting cultural understanding and appreciation, with collections of materials in multiple languages. Melton City Council also refers community members to partner agencies that provide similar supportive services. This approach could benefit from a proactive element to secure positive interactions between members of different groups. It would also appear to be more focused on interactions within neighbourhoods than between them.

The Intercultural Plan includes some activities of relevance, including actions to: create and facilitate interactive opportunities for communities from diverse backgrounds to learn about each other's culture and way of life; utilise the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government's Building Social Cohesion in our Communities resource to guide current practice and future planning; create opportunities to facilitate participation of diverse community groups and individuals in Neighbourhood House and Community Centre programmes; and develop initiatives to link people from diverse backgrounds with local sport clubs and sporting activities happening in the municipality.

Suggestions

The local hubs and public spaces such as libraries provide a resource used by the City of Melton in promoting interaction. This is a resource that could usefully be built on in a more intense investment in interaction.

The EMPO Multicultural Resource Centre in Bergen could serve as an example in this regard. It pursues initiatives to create dialogue, mutual understanding and change, with the overarching goal of empowerment. These initiatives include women's groups, men's gatherings, courses, theme days, seminars, individual counselling, parental guidance, language and work practice and social networking across cultures. The centre offers several meeting arenas, work in groups with role-play, discussions and parental guidance as well as social, cultural and professional activities. The centre encourages participants to learn Norwegian and engage in other activities to meet with local

people and families. It also provides participants with information, networks, and a chance of taking initiative and becoming active in the local communities.

A more planned and systematic approach to interaction might serve the City of Melton in mobilising the benefits of this key principle of the intercultural city. This could build on the range of actions in place or committed to by Melton City Council in a manner that better advances positive outcomes.

The [Barcelona](#) Neighbourhood Plan is a municipal initiative that implements social, economic, and urban actions to improve the neighbourhoods in collaboration with local residents. The Directorate of Community Action Services, Neighbourhood Plan, and the city's districts work together to create links and good neighbourhood relations. They consider the intercultural perspective which includes combatting segregation and fostering positive interaction. In addition, a person from the Intercultural Team works on the Neighbourhood Plan, bringing cross fertilisation of experience. District personnel can design their own Intercultural Action Plans, allowing for a "territorialisation" of the intercultural perspective through the involvement and connections between different districts and neighbourhoods. There are also actions where neighbourhoods meet and interact with each other.

PUBLIC SERVICES

As their very name implies, public services work for the benefit of the public as a whole. If the population is diverse, public services will be more efficient in delivering adequate benefits and information if city officers, at all levels of seniority, are as diverse as the population in general. This requires much more than simply ensuring equal opportunities to access public service employment. When taking action to encourage a diverse municipal workforce, an intercultural city acknowledges that a 'one size fits all' approach to public services and actions does not guarantee equal access to public benefits. The city also recognises that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds should never be treated as passive consumers of public benefits but can contribute actively by suggesting new ideas and innovative solutions to public problems.

Melton achieved a rate of 67%, which is slightly lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 68% but considerably higher than its 2017 rate of 45%. This is a very positive result in an area of core importance for the intercultural city, that is clearly challenging across most cities.[9]

Per inhabitants — **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public services City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)**

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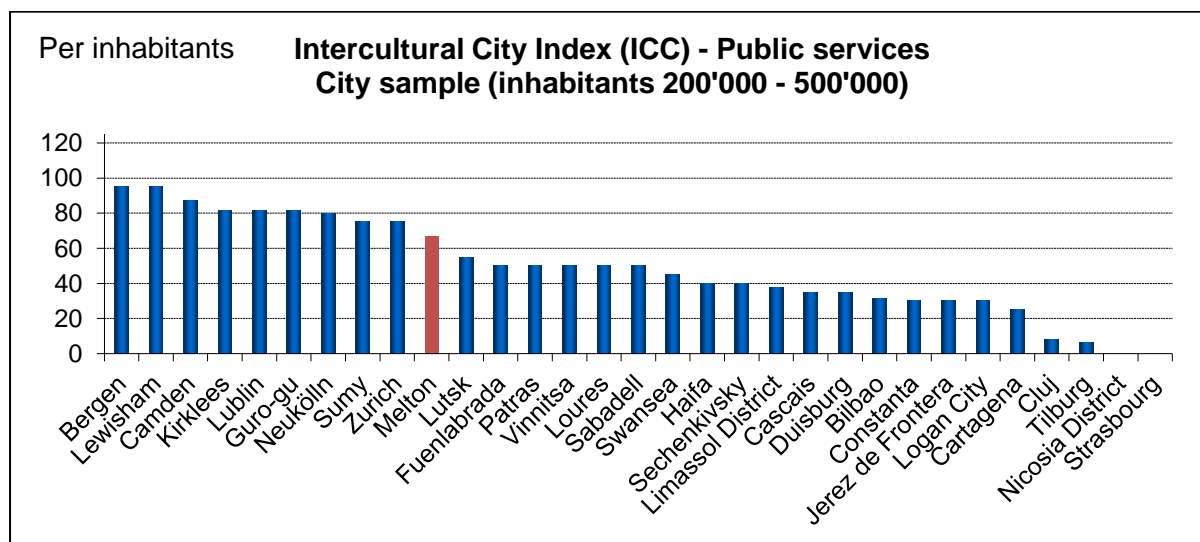
[9] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 67%, while the city sample achievement rate is 50%.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public services
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)
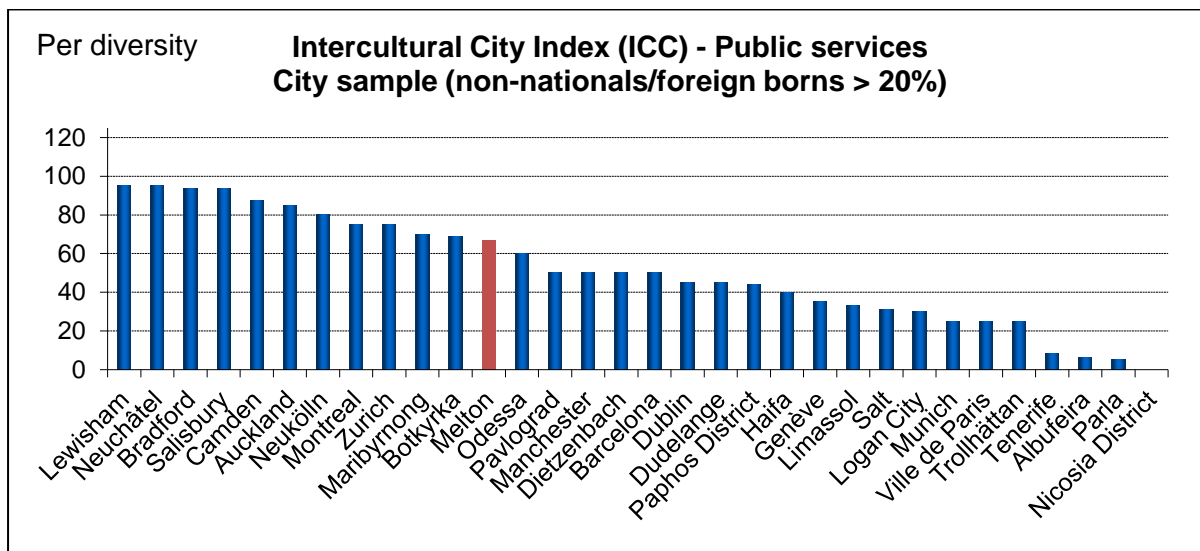
Melton City Council has a Recruitment Policy (Melton Recruit) that is dedicated to promoting fairness and inclusivity in its hiring process. It aims to create a diverse workforce by considering applicants from various backgrounds, including First Nations Australians and those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The policy and procedures ensure that recruitment and selection decisions are made based on candidates' abilities, knowledge, skills, values, and potential contributions, ensuring a fair, equitable, and inclusive process. Lack of data emerges in relation to tracking the migrant/minority background of public employees and the extent to which this reflects the composition of the city's population. The emphasis on fairness is positive in ensuring processes that are free from discrimination, but a focus on achieving outcomes might require an emphasis on flexibility in adapting for the practical implications of cultural and linguistic diversity and on positive action.

Melton City Council leverages its economic and community initiatives to showcase and honour the social and economic contributions of its diverse population, through various means such as grants, networks, and awards. Melton City Council collaborates with various service providers to empower local organisations, including employers, to effectively connect with diverse communities. Melton City Council plays an active role in advising and shaping state-wide consultation policies to safeguard employees from diverse backgrounds.

Melton City Council is actively collaborating with sports and recreation service providers to enhance accessibility for a diverse range of community members. Melton City Council has most recently supported the development of a glazed off pool area that is culturally sensitive to the needs of diverse patrons. Melton City Council works with service providers to increase their capacity to engage effectively with diverse communities on various issues. This includes establishing designated times for women-only use of facilities. Currently, all residents have access to Council's sports and recreation facilities. However, there is no specific policy in place to address the needs of women or other minority groups. Melton City Council is in the process of developing a 'Fair Play' policy, which will provide a specialised approach to serving these communities. It would be valuable for such a policy to also encompass a focus on flexibility in adapting for the practical implications of cultural and linguistic diversity and on positive action to achieve new outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The Intercultural Plan again goes further in its commitments to: ensure culturally responsive processes to broker short-term and long-term access to Council owned facilities; develop and implement Language Services Policy and Procedure; ensure relevant Council staff are trained and aware of culturally appropriate practices; install signage, messages and images reflecting Melton's diverse community at Council's facilities; provide specialist intercultural input and advice into initiatives being developed and implemented by the Council. However, it is not clear as to extent to which implementation of these has been possible to date.

Suggestions

The City of Melton might usefully consider evolving its focus on securing a workforce that reflected the diversity of the population served, at all levels of the organisation, and on the wellbeing of this diverse workforce. Forms of positive action could be considered that would go beyond the emphasis on fair procedures, which is bedrock but might not be sufficient.

[Camden Council](#), UK, developed a process of 'Conscious Inclusion' to ensure all staff 'can be their best self at work', which involves a focus on leadership, staff, and systems in the Council, such that: staff composition reflects the diversity of Camden; understanding, challenging, and evolving from the biases that everyone holds; valuing and celebrating difference; using differences to assist in better decisions; sharing responsibility for calling out anything that is not right; everyone coming to work with the determination to resolve and learn from the things that are not right; and not tolerating any form of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying.

In this focus by the City of Melton on employees, it would be important to further develop data collection to track progress on this diversity in terms of culturally and linguistically diverse groups. This tracking would need to encompass the presence and experience of diversity as well as capacity to meet the specific needs of this diversity of employees. In the absence of formal equality data systems, less formal survey methods could be used.

The [Canton of Neuchâtel](#), Switzerland, report "Snapshot of diversity in the administration of the Canton of Neuchâtel" prepared by the University of Neuchâtel, provides an overview of the profile of administrative staff within the State and is part of a Roadmap to promote an egalitarian government open to diversity. In order to facilitate the identification of diversity among employees, a questionnaire was developed by the University of Neuchâtel, in partnership with the State of Neuchâtel and sent to all employees of the Neuchâtel cantonal administration, the secondary school system and the Neuchâtel Music Conservatory (5 314 people in total). The questions covered three areas: the profile of the employees, their well-being at work (in particular work-life balance), and their feelings and experiences regarding discrimination. 46% of those questioned returned complete answers.

The focus on the service delivery includes a valuable range of initiatives by Melton City Council. However, these are focused on what gets delivered and actions could usefully look behind what gets delivered, to shaping the manner in which it gets delivered in terms of organisational systems and their design, and to the organisational culture that shapes priorities, procedures and practice within an organisation.

[Bradford](#) Council, UK, identified a key role for organisational values in this regard. Values are central to the culture of organisations, and, where explicitly engaged, can underpin and motivate staff and shape organisational behaviours. An initiative was developed to identify the shared values that could shape what individuals, groups and organisations do and how they might work together to address key issues. A values statement was co-created through a participative process over a twelve-month period. The values statement is based on values of: We Respect; We Care; We Share; and We Protect. The framework for behavioural change that shapes this initiative involves: co-creation; education; raising awareness; promoting positive experiences; reminding and encouraging; and ongoing evaluation. Future plans include to: communicate and celebrate the values to a point where they become a social norm; host an online pledge counter to gather support for the values statement; and provide organisations signing up to the values statement with tools to promote a positive culture in-line with these values.

ICC programme resources on public and community services are available [here](#).

BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Access to the public sector labour markets is often restricted by national or regional legislation. When this is the case, the private sector may provide an easier route for people with migrant or diverse backgrounds to engage in economic activity. As a result, private companies and activities tend to offer much more diverse working environments than the public sector. Research has also proved that it is cultural diversity in private companies, and not homogeneity, which fosters creativity and innovation. By constantly highlighting the diversity advantage in business, and partnering with their chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs, cities can influence how diversity is perceived in the private sector in such diverse sectors as shops, clubs, restaurants, industry, technical services and science.

Melton achieved a rate of 100%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 46% and also considerably higher than its 2017 rate of 60%. This reflects considerable achievement by Melton in this field.[10]

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[10] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 100%, while the city sample achievement rate is 63%.

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Business and labour market
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Business and labour market
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)
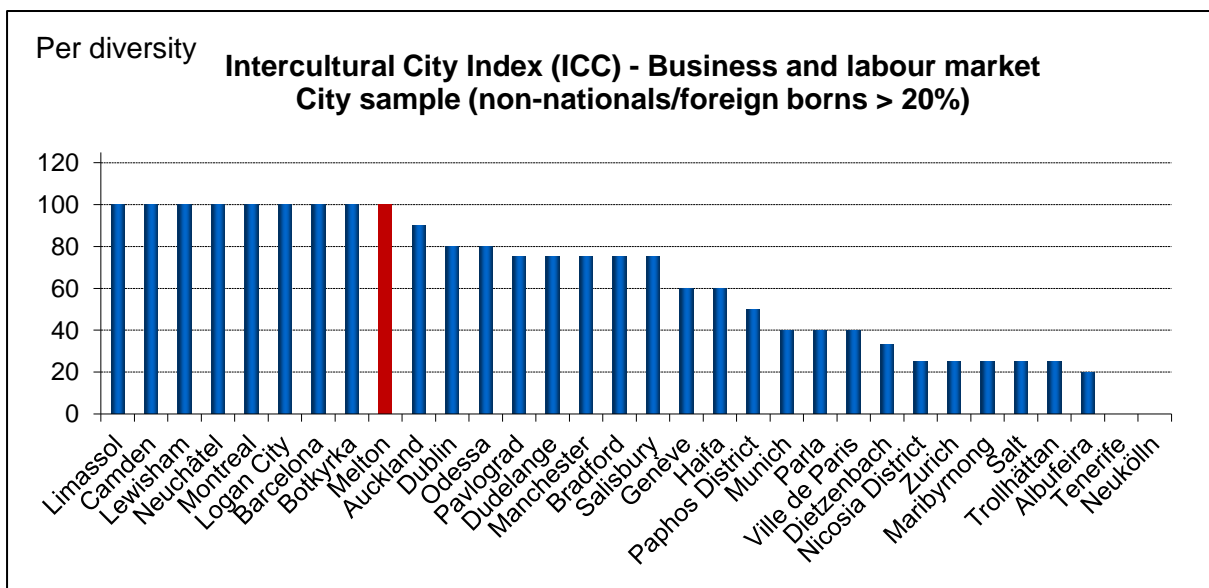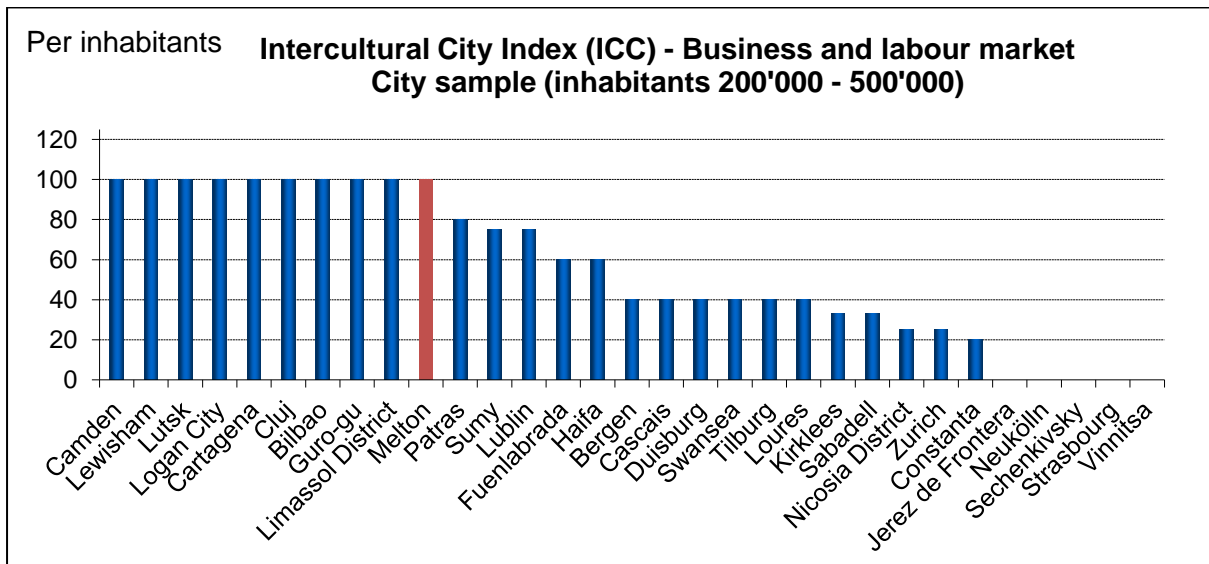
Melton City Council promotes diversity and non-discrimination practices across a broader range of enterprise through the Venture Melton Business Network. This network brings together business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals to enhance business performance through shared connections and professional development opportunities. It actively promotes and educates on the importance of inclusion and diversity in this commercial sector. The network is open to all business owners, regardless of background or industry.

Melton City Council promotes diversity and inclusiveness through the Melton Business Excellence Awards. This awards ceremony recognises businesses that support diversity and inclusion in the workplace through various initiatives and programmes. The awards highlight the benefits of an inclusive workplace and reward businesses that have acted to reduce barriers, enhance participation, and make information, services, and facilities accessible to everyone in the community. The awards include a category specifically for "Diversity & Inclusion" to celebrate and recognise the business leaders who prioritise these values. Diversity and inclusion can encompass a wide range, including gender, age, LGBTIQA+, culturally and linguistically diverse, and Indigenous engagement.

Melton City Council is committed to supporting and encouraging businesses from ethnic minorities to expand their reach beyond their ethnic markets and enter mainstream, high-value-added sectors. This is achieved through initiatives such as the Hot House Project, a five-week training programme for home and small business owners, many of whom come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The programme provides intensive training and ongoing support from the Council to help business owners develop and grow their businesses. Melton City Council has developed the Melton Town Centre video series that showcases the diversity of the city's small

businesses, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This campaign aims to celebrate and promote local businesses to both residents and visitors to the city, highlighting their unique offerings.

Melton City Council is committed to promoting businesses representing culturally and linguistically diverse communities as ambassadors for the city's diverse community through its visitor economy attraction strategy. The website and app, 'Melton City Much More', provides residents and visitors with a platform to explore the city and its offerings, further promoting and highlighting the diverse businesses operating within the municipality.

Melton City Council provides various resources and support to help local entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed, particularly those from minority communities. The Hot House Pop Up Shops programme offers a follow-up opportunity for graduates of the Hot House Project who have a physical product offering. This programme provides a prominent location on High Street Melton, expert retail development support, and promotion to help these businesses grow and succeed. Additionally, the Western Business Accelerator and Centre of Excellence (Western BACE) is a state-of-the-art facility established to support and nurture small businesses by providing the resources, infrastructure, and skills they need to grow. Since its establishment in 2015, over 3,000 aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners have been supported at the Western BACE.

Melton City Council promotes social inclusion through its sustainable procurement policy by giving preference to businesses that align with its values of diversity and inclusion. Melton City Council's Procurement Policy states the importance of "Sustainable Procurement" and recognises that its procurement decisions can impact on social disadvantage and diversity, including diversity of ethnicity, gender, and disability. In line with this, Melton City Council strives to support businesses within the municipality and generate local employment and will give preference to businesses that employ local and socially disadvantaged residents, or those that have evidence of gender equality in leadership or addressing gender imbalance. By prioritising these businesses, Melton City Council is promoting social inclusion and supporting the development of a diverse and inclusive local community. While this is positive, the approach could include for more specific requirements on such businesses in relation to the policies and systems to give effect to values of diversity and inclusion, with more specific reference to cultural and linguistic diversity.

Suggestions

The Venture Melton Business Network offers a strong point of potential growth for the promotion of diversity and inclusion values across the business sector and inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse groups. In this it will be important to evolve this focus on diversity and inclusion, if this dimension to the Venture Melton Business Network is to remain attractive and secure ongoing engagement. More focused networking initiatives might assist.

The DIVERSITY=INNOVATION project in Kirklees, UK, might be a source of such new thinking for any such evolution. This project brings the local council together with local employers including SMEs and larger businesses such as Cummins Turbo Technologies and Syngenta agrochemicals to monitor the diversity of recruitment and promotion locally, and work with employers to champion diverse workplaces. These employers also seek to be ambassadors for diversity in their own right: for example, Cummins recently partnered with Conscious Youth to deliver an international event on Black leadership in recognition of Black History Month.

The provision of guidance and practical tools by the City of Melton through the network might further assist the performance by businesses in giving expression to values of diversity and inclusion and in focusing on culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The Inclusive Employers Toolkit developed in Bradford, UK, might be a source of new thinking in this regard. The accountancy and consulting firm Grant Thornton developed the toolkit in partnership with the local council. This aims to help local employers to become more inclusive by providing them with a method for self-evaluation, including clear instructions for how to collect data on current levels of diversity and established practice within the business, set targets and then implement a plan to achieve these. It also provides guidance for evaluating progress and updating targets based on this new information. The toolkit is based on five inclusion factors, relating to: talent attraction; talent development; strategic development, which assesses the quality of the inclusion strategy itself; organisational culture; and external impact, relating to the effect on customers, suppliers and the wider community.

There is a positive body of work being done by Melton City Council to support culturally and linguistically diverse entrepreneurs and the growth of their businesses. Again, this is an area that will always benefit from new thinking and creating links to access this new thinking can be valuable.

The work being done by the local council in Camden, UK, holds potential in this regard. Camden takes action to encourages businesses from ethnic minorities to move beyond the ethnic economy and enter the mainstream

economy and higher value-added sectors. Camden encourages 'business districts/incubators' to involve an adequate percentage of entrepreneurs with migrant/minority backgrounds and offers activities which encourage them and mainstream entrepreneurs to engage and develop new products/services together. The LIFT programme, delivered in partnership with three other Councils, is helping to tackle underrepresentation in the creative, tech and science sectors, including an entrepreneurship incubator, supporting early-stage tech and digitally enabled businesses led by underrepresented communities. There are also a number of accelerators and incubators locally, offering entrepreneurs opportunities to grow their business and increase their chances of attracting top firms to invest: Camden Collective; Digital Catapult; British Library IP Centre and London Bioscience Innovation Centre.

ICC programme resources on business and employment are available here.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

Whereas people living in a city may have different migrant/minority or other backgrounds, they very often share the same interests and satisfaction when engaging in leisure activities, especially in the fields of arts, culture and sports. Such activities are sometimes structured along ethnic lines. That is quite understandable when they aim to preserve folklore traditions or the language and history of countries of origin. What is problematic is when cross-cultural leisure activities are organised along ethnic lines, for example when a football team only accepts players from one ethnic group. The intercultural city can encourage cultural openness through its own activities and by introducing intercultural criteria when allocating resources to artistic, cultural and sports organisations.

Melton achieved a rate of 94%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 52% and higher than its 2017 rate of 75%. This reflects further strong performance on the part of Melton.[11]

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Cultural and social life
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

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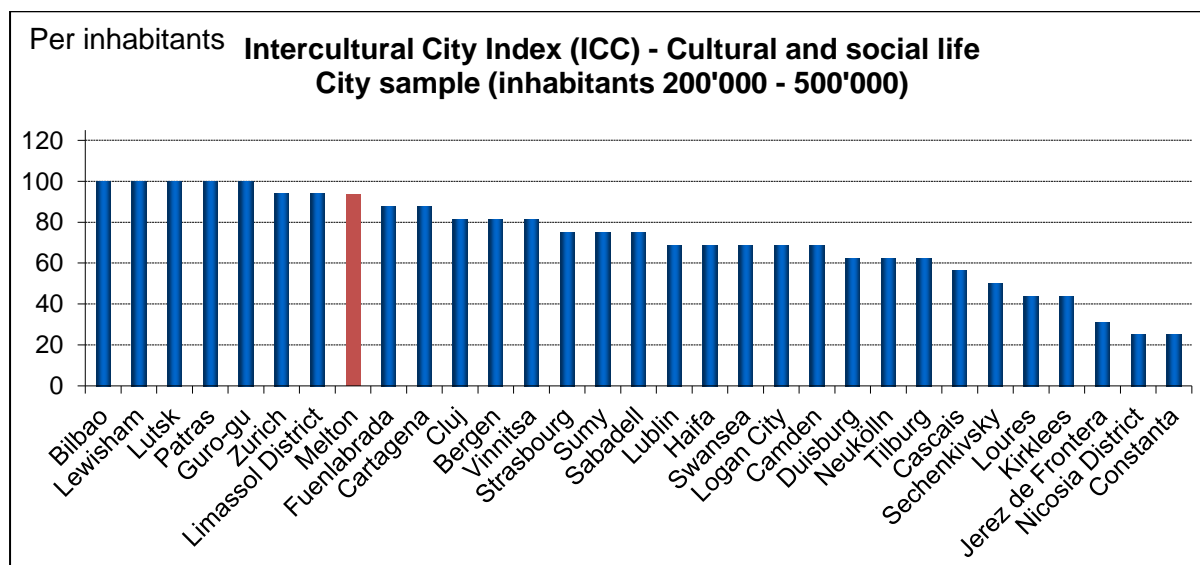
[11] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 94%, while the city sample achievement rate is 73%.
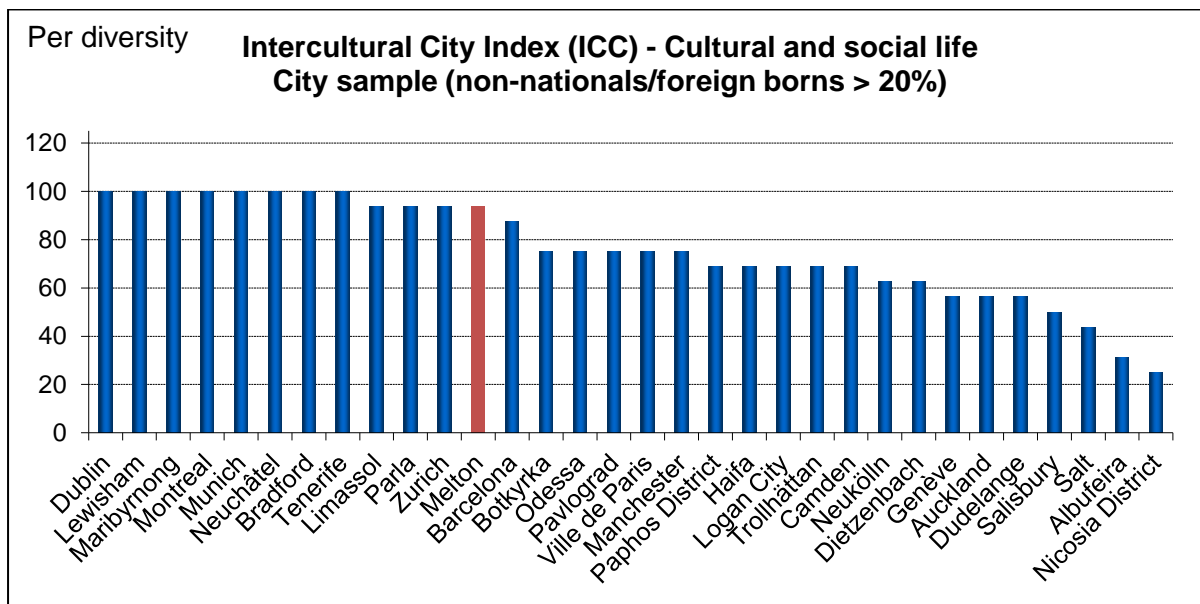
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Cultural and social life City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)

Per diversity

Melton City Council has interculturalism as a criterion when allocating funds to associations and initiatives, as the priorities listed in the Council and Wellbeing Plan form part of decision-making related to budgetary expenditure as a means of ensuring alignment between expenditure and stated priorities. This Plan includes a strong focus on addressing interculturalism, under the thematic priority of 'A safe City that is socially and culturally connected'.

The Community Grants Programme of the Council, by way of example, provides funding to community individuals, groups and organisations to support them to lead and deliver projects and initiatives that provide community benefit. The municipality's diverse communities are represented among the most recent beneficiaries of the Community Grants Programme. The Council also promotes interculturalism through its Community Partnership Programme which encourages community groups, organisations and service providers to collaborate on projects or activities that foster partnership, understanding and relationship among the diverse communities.

Melton Arts and Culture programme includes cultural projects and exhibitions that bring people from different backgrounds together. Such events encourage interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds, promoting intercultural understanding and cooperation in the City of Melton. Examples include: 'Real Local', that engaged students from different cultural backgrounds to explore their cultural identity; 'Longing for Home: Water Ritual' that showcased the experiences of migrant women and involved the local community; and 'Equal' an online exhibition showcased local female artists in order to redress gender imbalance in art opportunities, increase the visibility of women and acknowledge their contributions by providing a platform to voice ideas, portray their perspectives, and explore the creative arts. The performing art components of the City's major events also showcase the diversity of community, drawing crowds from across all cultural groups in Melton City.

Melton City Council supports cultural organisations in addressing diversity and intercultural relations through its Community Grants Programme and provision of funds, and through the Community Partnership Programme with its encouragement to cultural organisations to engage with diverse communities and incorporate their perspectives in productions through partnerships and consultations. This could usefully be accompanied by support for planning, systems and practice standards within cultural organisations that might be required to achieve intercultural outcomes.

Melton City Council enables public debate, discussion, and campaigns on cultural diversity and living together by providing various platforms and opportunities for residents to participate and voice their concerns. This includes public forums, online portals for public questions and feedback, and council committees and advisory groups. The Intercultural Advisory Group and Melton Interfaith Network are examples of committees that provide a platform for public dialogues on issues impacting diverse groups. Melton City Council works with partner organisations, such as Victoria Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, to increase community capacity to respond to social issues that might impact them such as racism and discrimination. The approaches outlined appear largely of a formal nature with an emphasis on feedback and consultation, which is useful. However, a broader emphasis on debating more collective intercultural themes and intercultural futures might benefit from more informal and arts-based approaches.

While there is support provided by Melton City Council for cultural sector organisations to take action on the intercultural dimensions of their work, there is less focus on supporting a capacity to do so within the sector. This might usefully be developed on the basis of the progress made and relationships already developed with the sector.

The Danish Centre for Arts and Interculture (DCAI/CKI), established as Project Brændstof by the County of Copenhagen, acts as a 'centre of the mind' or think-tank for the intercultural transformation of the cultural sector. The goal of DCAI is to enable full and equal participation of individuals and communities from all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Danish cultural life and to assist in the elimination of any barriers to such participation. Its aim is to create a platform which reflects the diversity of Danish society in the cultural sector, by building intercultural competence. It seeks to change the structures of representation so that the life experience of the migrant suburbs is fully reflected in the culture. The means to achieve this are through working with partners to make the presence felt of a new generation of Danish artists of immigrant background, who have grown up on the periphery of the five major cities of Denmark.

Public debate on issues of cultural diversity and living together are a valuable feature of the Melton City Council approach. These processes are of a formal nature, which is positive and important, but might usefully be strengthened by the addition of further endeavours of a more creative and informal nature which would allow for a broader focus for debate and discussion.

In the Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, Neuchàtoi is an ongoing campaign and dialogue platform to create an open discussion of how the city of Neuchâtel is evolving over many years of immigration, in terms of its identity and intercultural relations. The Neuchàtoi Association, formed as a community trust, initiates and encourages various actions of public interest in the field of social cohesion and intercultural relations. Neuchàtoi's themes and activities over the years have encompassed: a questioning of the Neuchâtel identity; a focus on youth; and an exploration of diversity in public space. Secularism and religious plurality provided a focus for one year, enabling citizens to have increased opportunities to get to know about and to value diversity and respect plurality while identifying common values and principles in the community. Neuchàtoi explored questions in relation to' living together with our beliefs' and 'deconstructing stereotypes' through events taking place throughout the canton, with discussions taking place around the symbolic table of the mandala.
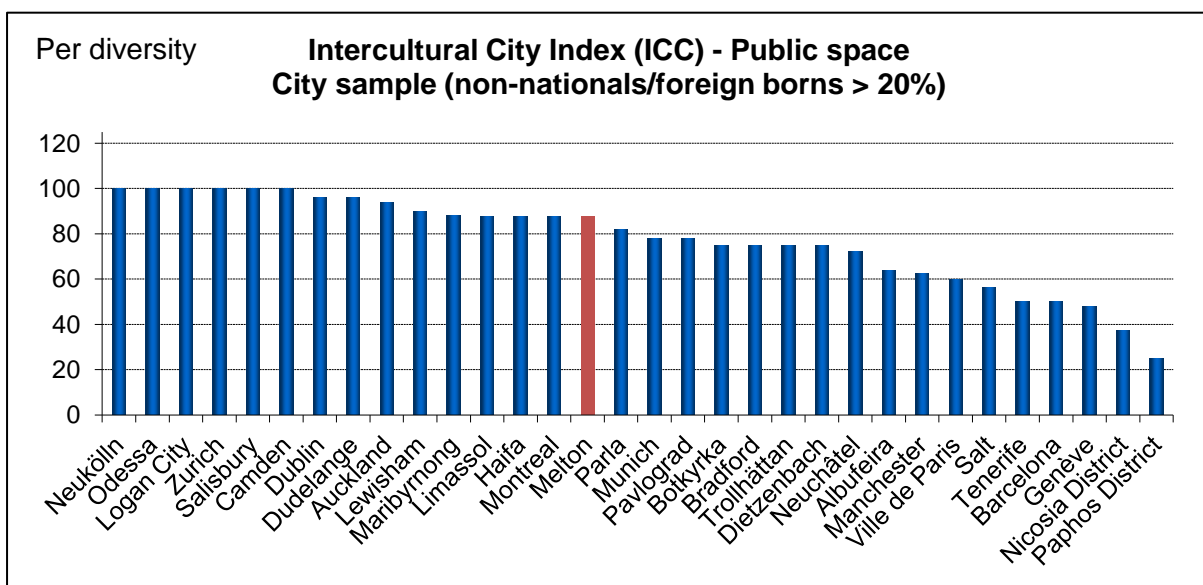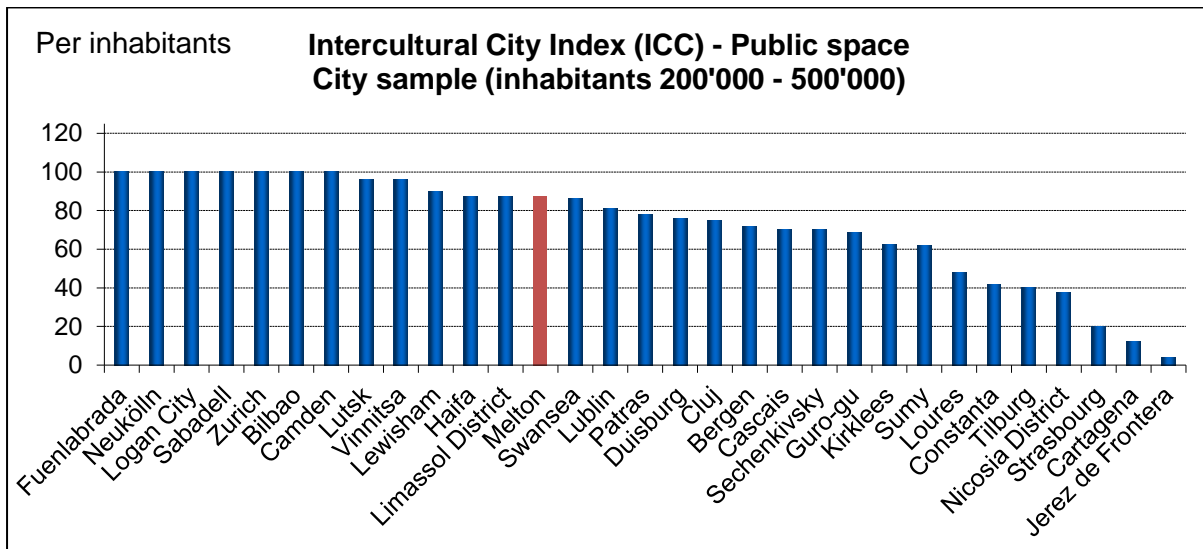
The House of Peace and Human Rights in Donostia-San Sebastian, with its focus on intercultural dialogue and creating an informed space for this, could offer further ideas to advance broader debates. Its work encompasses: training, education and research; promotion of awareness and sensitivity; memory of and recognition for all persons whose human rights have been undermined; information and counselling; study and documentation; recognition and reinforcement of social movements working on human rights; and dissemination of materials.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public spaces (streets, squares, parks, etc.) and facilities (public buildings, day centres, schools, health centres, etc.) are places which most citizens are obliged to use. They offer the possibility of meeting people of different nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups. For encounters between diverse people to actually occur, such spaces and facilities should be designed and animated in a way that all residents feel comfortable when using them. Conversely badly-managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the "other". When this is the case, the intercultural city actively engages with all the people concerned, firstly to understand the local context from their perspective, and secondly to identify solutions largely support by them.

Melton achieved a rate of 88%, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 72% and considerably higher than its 2017 rate of 52%. Melton matches the average in this field which is positive and can be built upon.[12]

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[12] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 70%, while the city sample achievement rate is 68%.

Per inhabitants

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public space
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)**

Per diversity

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public space
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)**

Melton City Council's Community Facilities Access Policy outlines its commitment to making its facilities accessible and equitable to all members of the community, with a focus on creating a vibrant, safe, and liveable city that is accessible to all. The policy sets out a detailed and positive vision for its public spaces and facilities, including parks, gardens, recreation areas, libraries, and community centres, and provides guidelines for ensuring that they are designed, renovated, and managed in a way that considers the needs and diversity of the local population. It aims to promote intercultural mixing and interaction, ensure that public spaces and facilities are inclusive and accessible to all, and support well-being and social cohesion of the community.

Melton City Council encourages intercultural mixing and interaction in its public spaces, most specifically in public libraries, parks and squares, by offering a diverse range of facilities and programmes for residents, businesses, community service organisations, community sporting groups, and visitors. However, a proactive dimension to secure participation from and interaction between diverse communities could usefully accompany this. This work is to be further strengthened by Council's ongoing 'Welcoming Spaces Project' which is auditing public facilities and spaces to make them more welcoming to a diverse mix of users. This is valuable, but a focus beyond welcoming that would include the issue of accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse groups in terms of the design and manner of functioning of these facilities and spaces would be important.

The Melton Library and Learning Hub is designed to be a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for all. The libraries positively offer local programmes for diverse audiences, including language practices and assistance with citizenship tests. Parks, gardens, recreation areas, and playgrounds are open to all residents to use and enjoy, with regulations in place to ensure safety and community use. These spaces might benefit from a focus that goes

beyond regulation to include for design and functioning of these spaces to encourage and secure engagement and interaction. The town centre of Melton is undergoing a revitalisation, with a redesign of civic spaces, a programme of events, and a campaign to engage with local businesses. This process would need to offer opportunity to include a focus on diversity of communities and meeting specific needs, adapting for cultural and linguistic diversity and securing interaction in civic spaces through an engagement with these communities.

Melton City Council can, depending on the nature of any proposed civic project and subject to any relevant legislation, use a variety tools and techniques to ensure the engagement of community members who may be impacted by the project. One of these tools in the City of Melton Conversation online portal. This site usefully offers a translation option to cater to communities in which English is not a first language. Melton City Council has also facilitated the necessary connections between residents and major state and federal government projects to ensure public awareness and input. It is recognised that there is more work and emphasis to be placed on this ongoing to ensure engagement opportunities better target the identified communities that will be impacted by the proposals.

There are no spaces or areas that are dominated by one ethnic group (majority or minority) and where other people feel unwelcome or unsafe, and, as such no policy to address such issues.

Recommendations

Melton City Council's Community Facilities Access Policy provides a key foundation in this field. It would be useful, in building on this policy, to strengthen, enable and support the design and management processes for public spaces that have a clear and well-developed intercultural dimension, to ensure a capacity to implement this approach is supported and resourced, and to involve culturally and linguistically diverse communities in these processes.

In Barcelona, Spain, has developed action to ensure place-making professionals (such as architects, planners, transport managers, constructors etc) work in a participative and intercultural way, with a view to ensuring public space can be the place where a diverse and harmonious community can be built. This is rooted in the city's intercultural plan. It has involved these professionals by developing their competency in diversity management and enabling their incorporation into relevant structures, such as: committee for public spaces; committees for coexistence, and inter-group committee for immigration. This action enables promotion of bilateral relations through bridges for dialogue, between the area for urban development and other areas at the Council. There is a concern to secure consensus and involvement of citizens in the practice of urban development. This involves action to integrate social policies into the construction of social amenities or public spaces, including incorporating elements into public spaces that contribute to generating spontaneous interaction between users: play areas in children's parks, specific offers for young people, and bicycle or walking paths. There is a renewed definition of the public space, spaces for relations, as an integral part of the idea of a city and as a space for meeting and generation of citizenship.

The Borough of Lewisham, UK, developed a toolkit for intercultural place-making which has informed a new approach to public space. Extensive consultation and imaginative participatory techniques are deployed in the design process. A concern to encourage visitors to slow down and use the public space for enjoyment is addressed. a programme of targeted improvement has transformed numerous locations within the district.

Creativity in the use of public spaces offers further potential in this field. Such creativity is evident in the library sector in Melton, but could usefully be expanded more widely to parks, squares and community centres.

The city of Erlangen, Germany, built a banquet table over 180 meters in length and hosted a giant picnic along the main street of the city. About 1,000 native Erlangers and asylum seekers directly communicated and exchanged with each other, and took away with them information about rumours and how to counter them. A 'Living Library' offered open conversations with asylum seekers, to encourage exchange in a deep and sincere manner, and not just symbolically share a large table. Common rumours and facts were debunked by presenting them on placemats. A positive ambience was created with live music, bouquets of flowers, tablecloths, and symbolic release of balloons.

ICC programme resources on housing, public spaces and urban planning are available here.

In diverse societies there is always the potential for misunderstanding and conflict over values, behaviour or resources. In cities, where people with different cultural backgrounds and socio-economic statuses live together in close proximity, such tensions are natural and indeed part of everyday life. Instead of denying, ignoring, or repressing conflict, the intercultural city seeks to anticipate, identify, address and resolve issues to the satisfaction of all protagonists without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The intercultural city views conflict as a normal feature of free, dynamic and communicative communities and sees the very process of conflict mediation and resolution as an opportunity for innovation and sustainable social cohesion.

Melton achieved a rate of 93%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 67% and higher than its 2017 rate of 82%. Melton records strong and positive achievement compared to the average on this dimension.[13]

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Mediation and conflict resolution City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Mediation and conflict resolution City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)
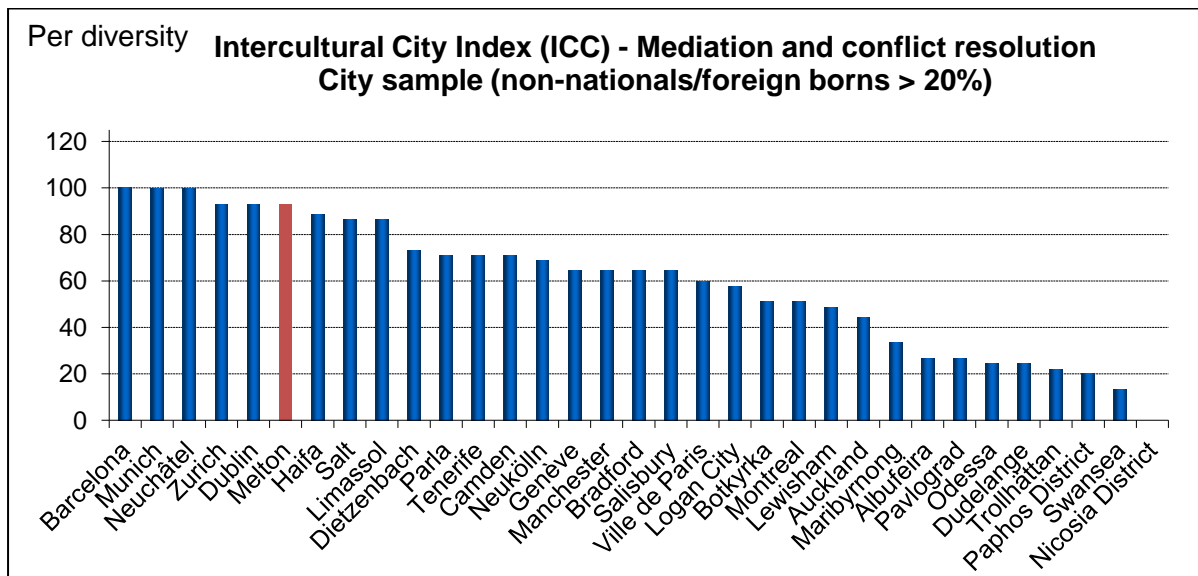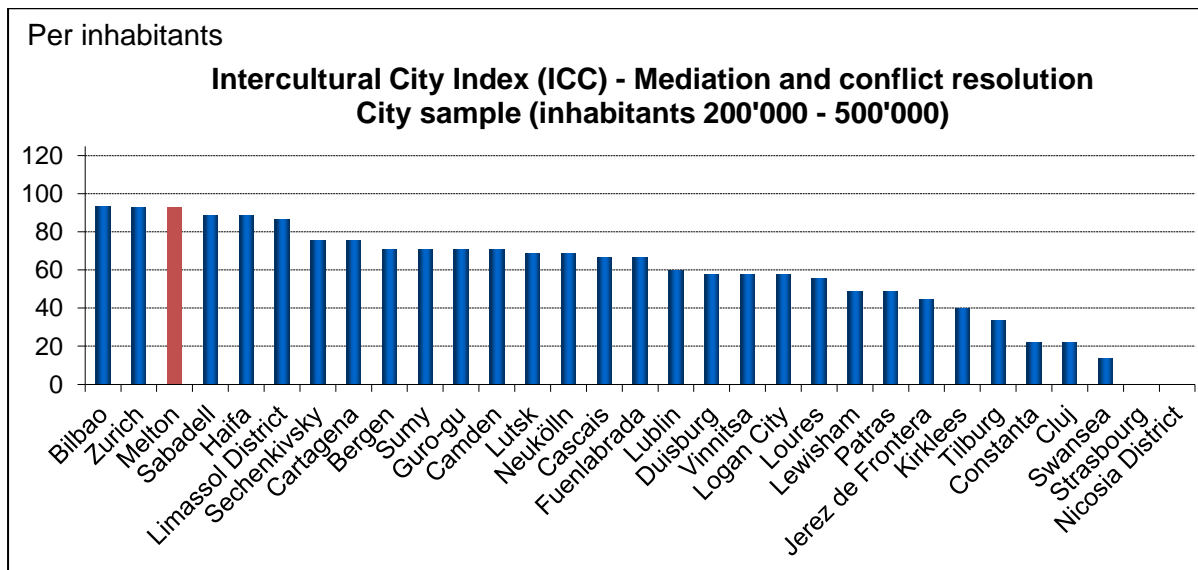
Relationships Australia Victoria is a community based, not-for-profit organisation with no religious affiliations, providing family and relationship support services including dispute resolution and training to diverse communities. This service has a strong focus on cultural diversity and specific family needs that arise in different cultural groups, however it is focused on interpersonal relationships rather than inter communal relationships. The Koori Courts and the Victorian Family Violence Restorative Justice Framework also offer culturally appropriate environments for individuals to resolve disputes.

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[13] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 93%, while the city sample achievement rate is 58%.

The Migrant Resource Centre North West Region is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation serving the North-Western regions of Melbourne, including Melton. It offers a focus on addressing the diversity within migrant communities and provides personal advocacy supports, but its focus on inter communal mediation appears limited.

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria provides free dispute resolution services across Victoria, as well as training and accrediting mediators to national standards. The focus is on mediating disputes between specific parties rather than a specific intercultural focus.

The Victorian Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Victorian Parliament whose principal functions are to resolve complaints about, enquire into and investigate administrative actions taken in or by Victorian state government and public organisations. Specialised units of various government Ministries, such as the Victoria Police LGBTIQA liaison officers, cultural liaison officers in hospitals and WorkSafe Victoria, also provide dispute resolution services at the level of the individual.

While there are several national and state civil society organisations that provide services to the diverse communities including mediation support, the focus on intercultural communication and conflict resolution is limited.

Overall, the focus developed in this field is more on family relationships, individual advocacy, disputes between parties, and dealing with individual complaints, all of which are valuable and some of which take a positive intercultural approach, but the focus is less on the inter-communal dimension.

In terms of inter-religious relations, the Melton Interfaith Network has the goal of fostering harmony, unity, and inclusivity within the City of Melton. The network aims to raise awareness of the various faith, beliefs, and traditions present in the community and promote mutual understanding and respect among its diverse cultural and religious groups. The City of Melton actively supports the initiatives and activities of the network, contributing to the promotion of multi-cultural and multi-religious inclusivity in the community. However, while serving to prevent conflict, there is limited capacity apparent to mediate conflicts that might arise.

Suggestions

The City of Melton could usefully consider developing or supporting a dedicated initiative to focus on the prevention and mediation of inter-communal conflict across culturally and linguistically diverse groups. This could usefully include a focus on preventing and addressing all forms of racism, hate speech, and hate crime.

The Intercultural Mediation Service of the city of Valladolid, Spain, is composed of an interdisciplinary team of professionals qualified to intervene in intercultural conflicts (conflicts for which cultural or ethnic differences are considered as explaining factors). The overall objective is the promotion of mediation as a mechanism of alternative conflict resolution that will help to foster peaceful and inclusive cohabitation in the municipality. The service develops activities to provide support and guide professionals from social and other municipal services, and leads the work in elaborating reports and recommendations regarding mediation of intercultural conflicts. In addition, activities and actions to prevent conflicts, raise awareness and educate on the topic are carried out. When a conflict arises, the service acts to: acknowledge and notify the conflict; analyse the claims and searching for prior information; contact the parties in conflict; establish mediation and/or negotiating processes with the parties involved; specify and commit to agreements and their follow-up; and close the conflict.
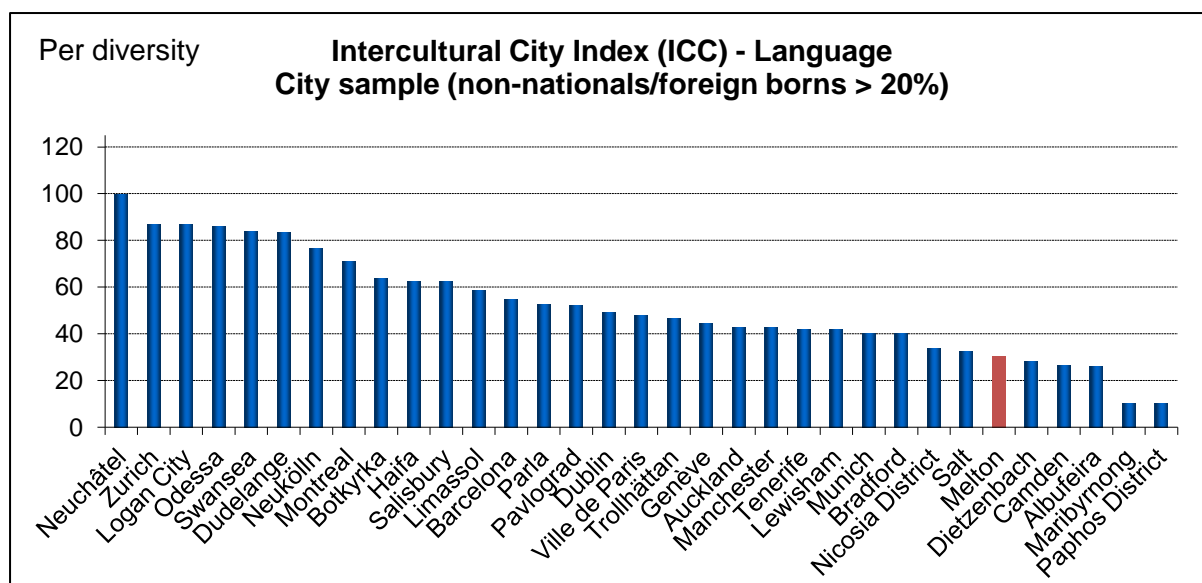
Bergen, Norway, has set up a generalist municipal mediation service which also deals with cultural conflicts. Bergen also provides mediation services in neighbourhoods and on streets, actively seeking to meet residents and discuss problems. This service is provided by the Community Youth Outreach Unit in Bergen.

ICC programme resources on intercultural competence and mediation are available here.

LANGUAGE

The provision of courses and other facilities for people with migrant backgrounds to learn the receiving country's language(s) is important to ensure social and economic integration. It does however need to be supplemented with activities which highlight the value of other languages, and enable people with migrant origins not only to preserve and transmit their languages to their children and other members of the community, but also to take pride in them as a heritage enriching the local community. An intercultural city promotes multilingualism as a resource for education, business, tourism, cultural life, etc. It underlines the value of all languages present in the city, for instance by giving opportunities to diverse language speakers to express themselves in their mother tongue in public and at cultural events and by promoting all events that offer opportunities for linguistic exchanges and mixing.

Melton achieved a rate of 31%, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 58%, but slightly higher than its 2017 rate of 26%. Further progress could be achieved in this area as it is the case across most cities, but Melton City Council evidence an understanding of this challenge and there is potential to build on the steps already taken.[14]
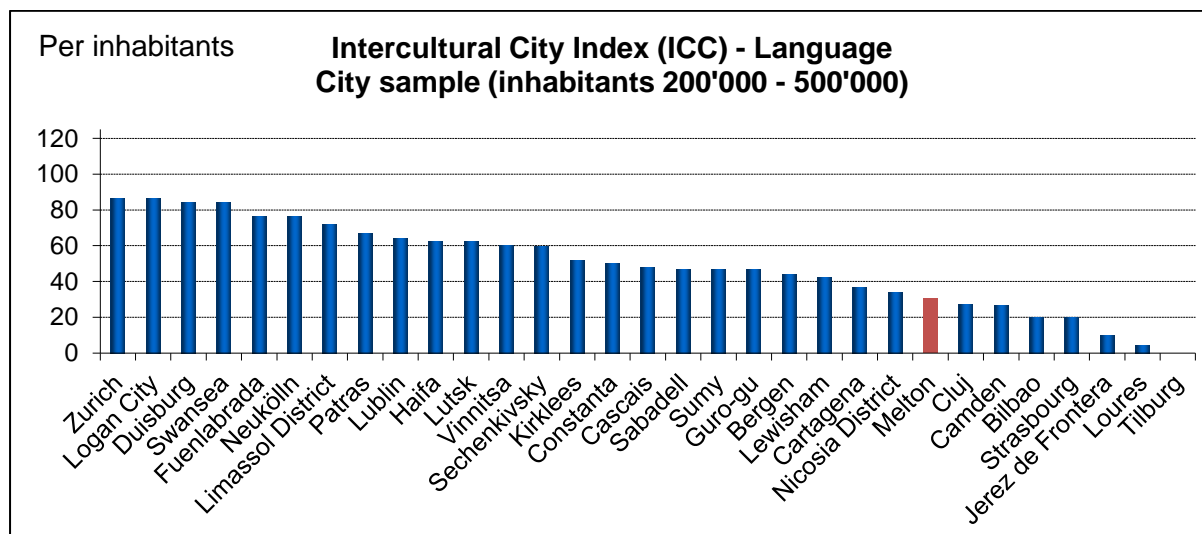
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Language
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)
Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Language
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)
Per diversity

Melton City Council supports access to relevant language services by members of diverse communities through a variety of initiatives. The Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) provides free English language classes to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants. Local service providers in Melton, such as Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services, offer a range of language programmes tailored to the needs of diverse community members. The Refugee Council of Australia website offers access to a database of free or low-cost English classes for diverse community members settling in Australia.

Melton City Council offers spaces for service providers and groups to use to organise language programmes or activities. It lists a range of community and business service providers on its Local Directory which residents can use to identify the service they need. Melton City Council leverages its community networks through such as the Intercultural Advisory Committee, and the Melton Interfaith Network, to promote language learning opportunities for diverse community members.

However, while Melton City Council recognises the crucial role that language skills play in helping new and arriving diverse community members successfully integrate and thrive, it recognises the lack of access to English language

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[14] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 31%, while the city sample achievement rate is 44%.

education in the area, and Melton City Council is advocating for the Victorian State Government to establish a language school in Melton. Within this focus, however, there is limited recognition for specific groups, such as women, that might be hard to reach in the provision of such language learning programmes.

Melton City Council supports projects that promote positive images of diverse community through community grants, events, and arts and culture programmes. These initiatives provide financial support, cultural celebrations, and artistic platforms to promote understanding and appreciation of different languages and cultures in the community. There is however limited focus evident on language diversity as a resource for intercultural engagement, and as a source of diversity to be valued and explored.

Recommendations

Multilingualism could usefully be developed as a focus in the work of the City of Melton on language diversity. This would advance language diversity as a resource and as a stimulus for positive interactions.

Barcelona, Spain, deploys efforts to boost the learning of languages that make up the linguistic ecology of its neighbourhoods. A learning programme for family members' languages was launched to: foster multilingualism in the city and within the educational system; enable and strengthen links between the educational community – schools and Parents' Associations – and the communities of each neighbourhood; and turn schools into a welcoming and meeting space for families from various cultural contexts. In one district, a programme was developed in several schools to encourage mother tongues to be learned by children and Catalan to be learned among the families participating outside school hours. In another district, Romanian language was taught in one school, under the World in My School programme, and an Arabic-learning course, all outside school hours. In another district, the Interculturality Service has a mother-tongue programme with two Arabic groups and one Urdu group operational in two schools.

It would be valuable for the City of Melton to focus on harder to reach groups within culturally and linguistically diverse communities, in English language programmes being developed. Language barriers can cause particular isolation for women.

The local administration of Novellara, Italy, created a project providing Italian language courses dedicated to women from foreign communities living in Novellara. Capable and trusted female mediators, spread the word and the project was well received and led to a further series of initiatives that turned the course from simple language class to a civic education course, with seminars dedicated to safety, childcare, recycling and conscious food shopping. The goal of the project was to keep the women involved in the town life even after the end of the Italian courses, with meetings, sewing and cooking classes.
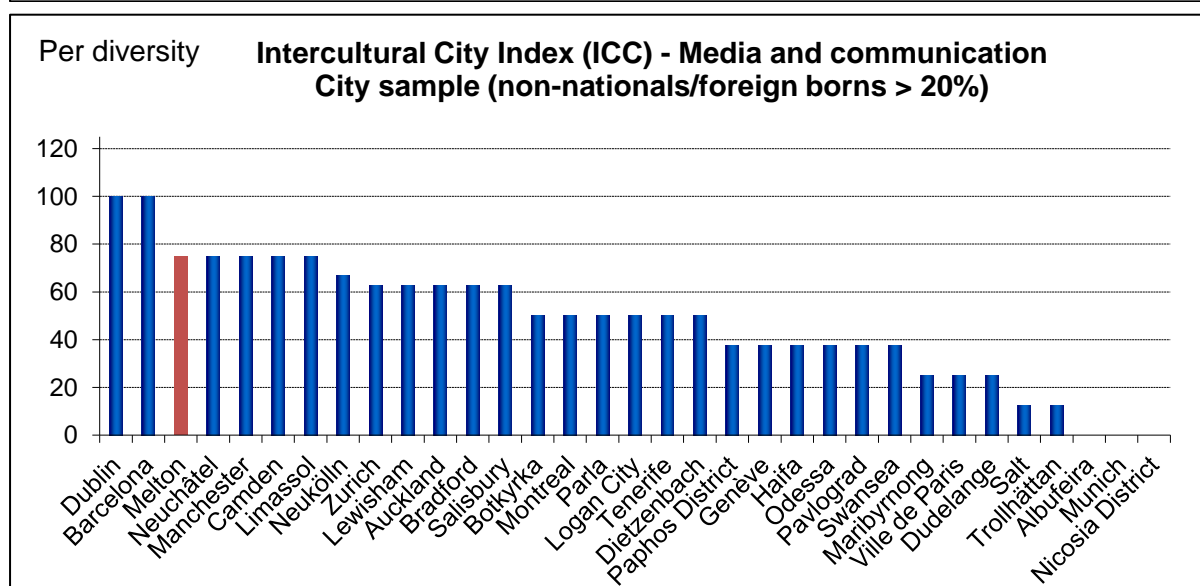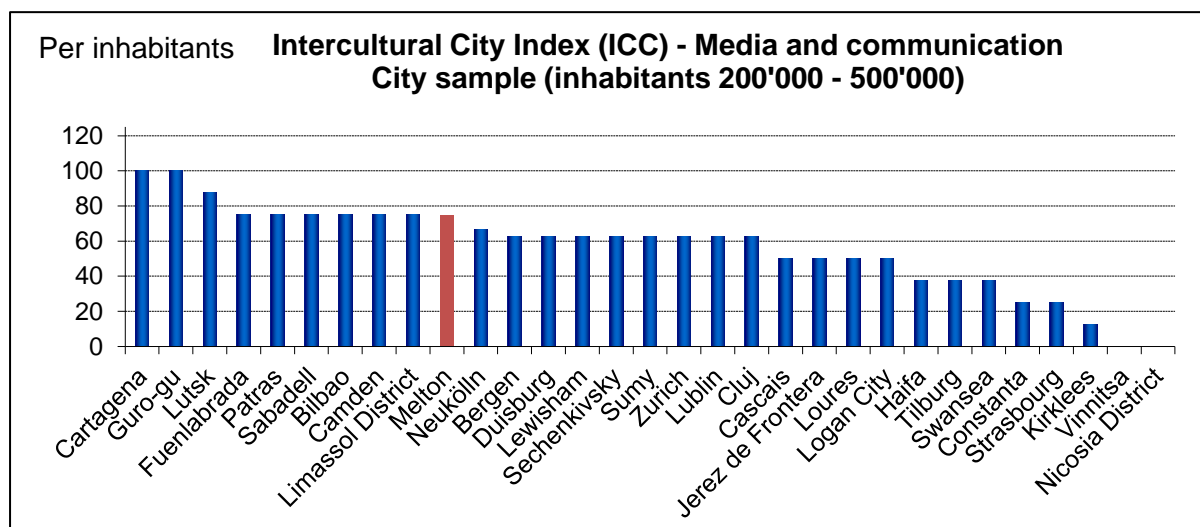
The City of Melton might usefully test out creative ways of celebrating language diversity and sharing language diversity as a resource.

In Lyon, France, Les Artpenteurs are a multidisciplinary theatre company that works within a diverse neighbourhood, with many returnees from North Africa, established families from migrant backgrounds and new immigrants. The theatre company approaches the languages of their area as an undervalued resource. The poetry project placed languages in a public space, with workshops with migrants where people were encouraged to find poems or other texts in their language, and helped translate them in French. Individuals were trained, and recitals filmed. Their mission was set as to ensure that all languages should be heard, even if only by one listener.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Traditional and social media have a very powerful influence on attitudes towards cultural diversity and other diversities. Much of the information people access is generated by international newsgroups, national media, or by private persons in the case of social media. Nevertheless, there is still much the city authorities can do to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to positive intercultural relations. In its communication, an intercultural city constantly highlights the positive contribution of people with migrant/minority backgrounds to the social, cultural and economic development of the city. More importantly, the city partners with local media agencies so that they purvey a similar message and cover events occurring in the city in an objective and unbiased way.

Melton achieved a rate of 75%, considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 46%, but also considerably lower than its 2017 rate of 100%.[15] The variation in scoring between 2017 and 2023 can be explained by updates made to the ICC Index questionnaire in 2019, as well as slightly differing answers. Overall, this rate does reflect another strong dimension to the City of Melton's performance under this index.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Media and communication
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)
Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Media and communication
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)
Per diversity

Melton City Council's Communication Policy is grounded in Melton City Council's intercultural commitment and is in line with relevant federal, state, and local government legislation, including the Local Government Act 2020 and its own Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. This ensures that Melton City Council's communication efforts are aligned with its broader goals and objectives. The Communication Policy contributes to improving the visibility and image of people from diverse backgrounds in local media, but it is not made clear how the Communication Policy leads to an interaction with local media to secure such a result. There is a commitment that the next iteration of the policy will be even more focused on inclusion and diversity.

Melton City Council Communications Department uses a variety of media to reach out to its primary audience, including various cultural and linguistically diverse communities, among others. By using its communication channels effectively, Melton City Council seeks to build a more inclusive and diverse community, where everyone's contributions and perspectives are valued and celebrated. However, the means by which such communication can contribute to more inclusive and diverse communities is not made clear and the potential of emphasising diversity and inclusion in values-led communication does not appear to be addressed.

Melton City Council's Communication Department is responsible for ensuring that all organisational information reaches its intended audience through a variety of communication platforms such as mayoral speeches, press

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[15] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 83%, while the city sample achievement rate is 47%.

releases, the website, and social media posts. It highlights diversity as an advantage in its several types of communication, which would contribute to this goal of inclusive and diverse communities. For example, Melton City Council's Cultural Diversity page provides an overview of activities and programmes it is undertaking in the intercultural space, and its local Intercultural Cities webpage publicly highlights its commitment to promoting diversity as an advantage. However, it is not made clear how the challenges of constructing and communicating such messaging are addressed.

Melton City Council does not directly provide support for advocacy, media training, mentorship, or the setting up of online media start-ups specifically for journalists from diverse communities. However, Melton City Council Community Grants Programme and networks can enable diverse community media organisations and groups access support for training and development purposes. While there is commitment to supporting the growth and development of diverse community media, the support provided to date appears quite narrow in form and scale, with reference limited to support for two initiatives for: the preservation of indigenous stories with a media company; and the facilitation of the production of culturally related broadcast content.

The Communications Department is responsible for monitoring all media coverage, including social media, that can impact Melton City Council and its residents. In response to media coverage that can have adverse effects on a particular community, Melton City Council has taken a stance to address negative perceptions. In 2018, Melton City Council publicly opposed the characterisation of local Africans as gang members in the media. In 2015, Melton City Council responded to far-right anti-Islam protests by promoting understanding and respect for cultural diversity. These are positive examples which could usefully be a precursor to a more sustained engagement with local media and a focus that might go beyond extremes of inappropriate coverage to capture more subtle stereotyping that can prevail.

Suggestions

The City of Melton has valuably addressed instances of significantly negative coverage of cultural and linguistic groups. It might usefully consider building on such challenges when made with communication campaigns of its own to communicate an alternative through its values of diversity and inclusion and promoting these values in a creative and engaging manner.

In Oslo, Norway, OXLO - Oslo Extra Large is a long-term awareness-raising campaign initiated by the Mayor in response to a racist murder. Through this campaign the city sought a more tolerant city, free from racism and prejudice. The campaign was based on the City's special values document, which focuses both on citizen and municipal activities. The cornerstones of this document are tolerance, mutual respect and understanding. This campaign has a particular focus on children and young people and includes an annual OXLO week, an OXLO prize, OXLO ambassadors, and local activities.

The City of Melton could usefully consider taking more focused actions to inform and shape a media coverage that would be free of stereotypes and racism. This could be undertaken in partnership with other entities.

Donostia/San Sebastian municipality, Spain, funds a local NGO, SOS Racismo, to operate an observatory for media treatment on migration and diversity issues with daily updates provided on its findings.

ICC programme resources on communication and public awareness are available here.

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Although cities have little or no competence in foreign policy, they can actively seek to make connections in other countries to develop business relations, exchange knowledge and know-how, encourage tourism, or simply acknowledge the ties the city may have elsewhere. An intercultural city actively encourages interactions with the outside world and in particular with the cities, regions or countries of origin of its inhabitants.

Melton achieved a rate of 75%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 46% and also higher than its 2017 rate of 67%. This score places the City of Melton higher than the average along with a stimulus to further progress this focus.[16]

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[16] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 75%, while the city sample achievement rate is 68%.

Per inhabitants

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - International outlook
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)**

Cities (left to right): Cascais, Duisburg, Lutsk, Neukölln, Sumy, Vinnitsa, Limassol District, Lublin, Cluj, Bilbao, Guro-gu, Logan City, Fuenlabrada, Seche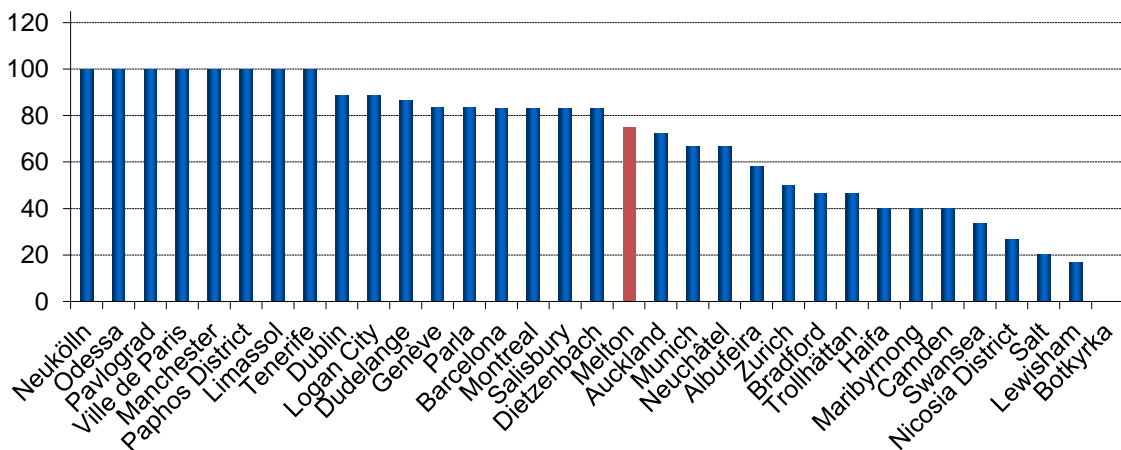nkivsky, Tilburg, Cartagena, Melton, Constanta, Patras, Strasbourg, Sabadell, Bergen, Zurich, Haifa, Camden, Swansea, Nicosia District, Kirklees, Lewisham, Loures, Jerez de Frontera

Per diversity

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - International outlook
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)**

Cities (left to right): Neukölln, Odessa, Pavlograd, Ville de Paris, Manchester, Paphos District, Limassol, Tenerife, Dublin, Logan City, Dudelange, Genève, Parla, Barcelona, Montreal, Salisbury, Dietzenbach, Melton, Auckland, Munich, Neuchâtel, Albufeira, Zurich, Bradford, Trollhättan, Haifa, Maribyrnong, Camden, Swansea, Nicosia District, Salt, Lewisham, Botkyrka

Melton City Council has a policy to encourage international cooperation in economic, scientific, cultural, and other areas. This is demonstrated in Melton City Council being the first accredited UNESCO Learning City in Australia. As a UNESCO Learning City, Melton City Council effectively mobilises its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education, revitalise learning in families and communities, facilitate learning for and in the workplace, extend the use of modern learning technologies, enhance quality and excellence in learning, and foster a culture of learning throughout life. However, it is not clear if this is a way of working or if it is underpinned by a particular policy and strategy that looks wider than this particular and valuable development in relation to inclusive learning and a culture of lifelong learning, and includes a targeted focus on the intercultural dimension.

There are financial provisions made for Melton City Council to encourage international cooperation in economic, scientific, cultural, and other areas. The [City of Melton Lifelong Learning Festival](#) in 2022, was made possible with support from the Melton Town Centre Revitalisation board and funding from the Victorian Government. The festival involved a programme of free events covering a range of topics and celebrated lifelong learning in all its forms. The festival was delivered as part of Melton City Council's commitment as a UNESCO Lifelong Learning City. It is not made clear however whether there are dedicated funding lines for international cooperation itself.

Melton City Council reaches out to foreign students or other youth groups arriving through exchange programmes. All residents, including international students, have access to Council services, including information about local services and facilities such as libraries, sports, and recreation spaces. International students can also participate in the range of culturally diverse activities and events that take place within the municipality. Melton City Council has hosted a number of international education institutions, including recent delegations from Japan, and has participated in various diversity research initiatives by other learning institutions

Melton City Council has not sought to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups as this is not the core business of Local Government and is undertaken at the state and federal levels of government.

Lastly, Melton's participation in the Intercultural Cities network shows its commitment to share resources and information with other cities globally.

Suggestions

The City of Melton could usefully develop a strategy or plan or policy, with a dedicated budget, to establish its ambition for international cooperation and set out the strands of activity it would pursue in this regard.

Montreal, Canada, has an explicit, long-term policy for encouraging international co-operation, the 'Strategic framework for the international relations of the city of Montreal: urban diplomacy working for the Montreal community and the world'. The strategy supports several activities aimed both at promoting Montreal abroad and at conducting real municipal diplomacy at the international level in areas such as living together and inclusion, economic development, the climate, migration, human rights and democratic metropolitan governance. The strategic framework is implemented through the operating budget allocated to the International Relations Office. Montreal is also the seat of the International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together, a network that brings together some 50 cities and mayors from across the world to exchange experiences on social cohesion, diversity and inclusion.

Melton City Council could build on its involvement with the Intercultural Cities Programme to grow and sustain a networking and develop collaborations specifically around issues of interculturalism and the principles of equality, diversity, participation and interaction. In this it could also look beyond this network to make links with other cities on specific issues of cooperation around interculturalism, that go beyond the focus on inclusive learning and lifelong learning.
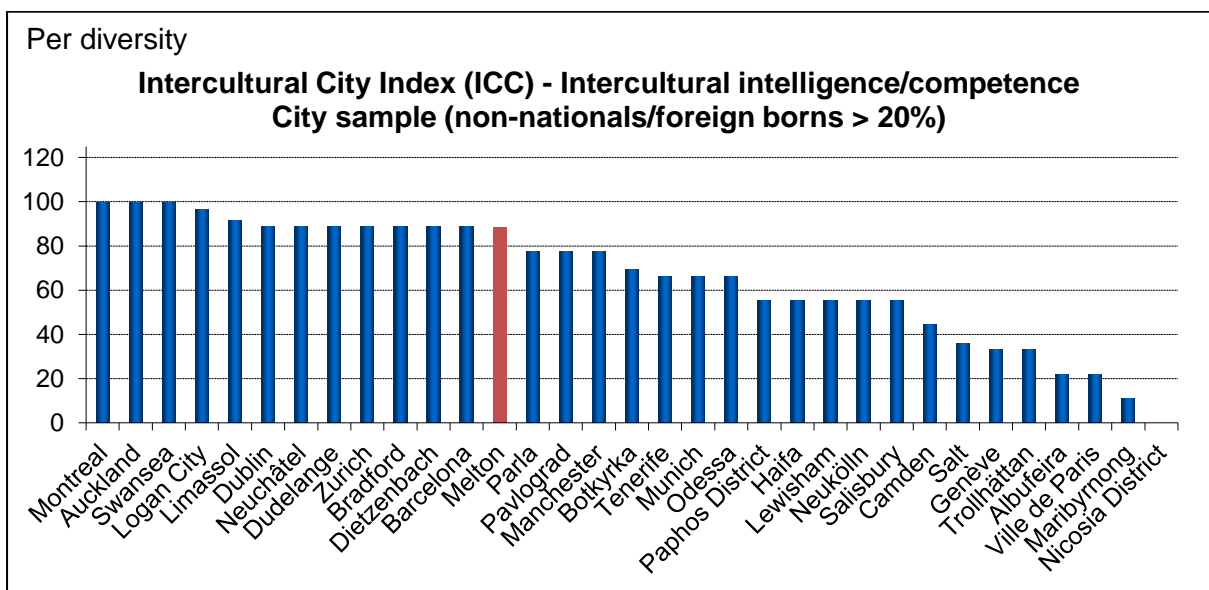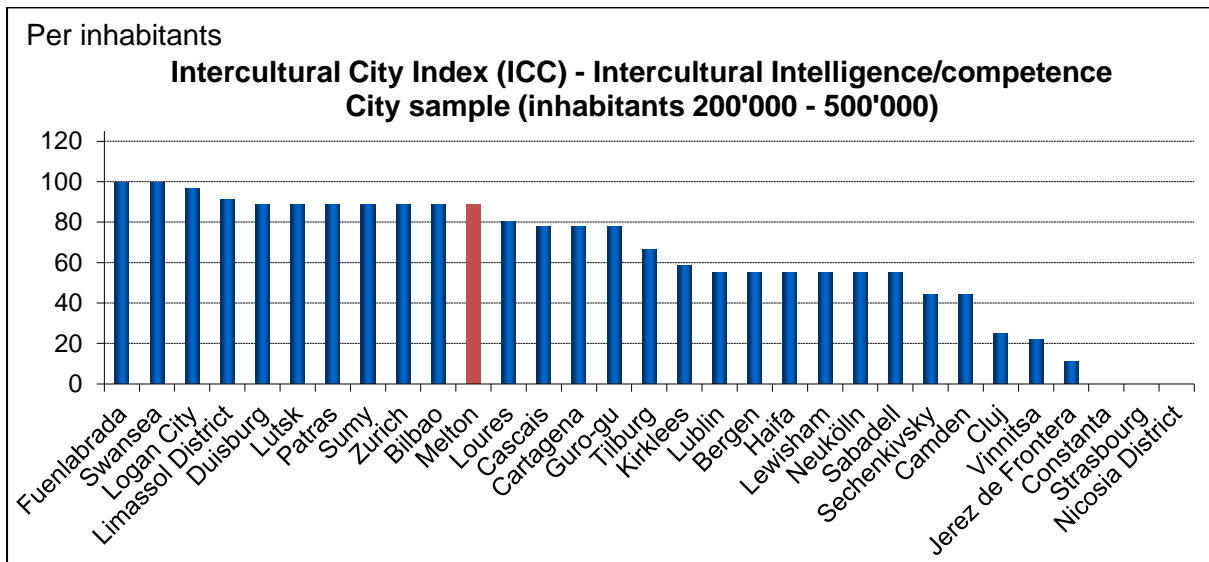
The City Council of Barcelona, Spain, has actively established direct cooperation with cities, such as Medellin, Maputo, different Palestinian cities, Havana, and the Tangier-Tétouan corridor, among others. These experiences, based on horizontal dialogue and the reciprocity of the political and technical teams, have become true channels for the exchange of knowledge and technical expertise for institutional strengthening, the definition of policies and the provision of public services. All exchanges are based on a municipal agenda, in which the participation of different departments was significant. This has become one of the main assets of the City Council's work on international cooperation.

INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE

Nobody can be an expert in all the languages and cultures that coexist in contemporary cities. Yet, in an intercultural city, officials have an intercultural "mind-set" which enables them to detect cultural differences and modulate their responses accordingly. Intercultural intelligence and competence require a specific know-how when dealing with unfamiliar situations and not an in-depth and often elusive knowledge of all cultures. Such sensitivity and self-confidence is not commonly-seen. It is a technical skill which can be acquired through training and practice. In an intercultural city, the authorities view such skills as equally important and essential to the good functioning of the city as the other professional and technical skills usually expected from public employees.

Melton achieved a rate of 89%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 69% and also higher than its 2017 rate of 78%. This reflects another area of strength in the City of Melton's portfolio.[17]

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[17] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 92%, while the city sample achievement rate is 57%.

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Intercultural Intelligence/competence
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)**

Per diversity

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Intercultural intelligence/competence
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)**

Melton City Council gathers statistical and qualitative information about diversity and intercultural relations to inform its policy formulation process, using demographic data and feedback from community members to understand the diversity within the community and to develop policies that reflect the needs and perspectives of the community. Melton City Council can disaggregate data collected into specific groups, such as by cultural background, to gain a more nuanced understanding of the community. However, in a number of areas covered by the index data has emerged as a gap, specifically in education and in employment within the administration.

Informal methods of data collection can be important in a context of data gaps. Melton City Council's 'Curious About Culture' Programme provides opportunities for staff, external providers, and community members to engage with community leaders and learn about different cultural practices, traditions, and aspirations.

Melton City Council also has a legal obligation to document its engagement with the community under the Local Government Act 2020. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Department of Health, Department of Education, and data from State level departments assist Melton City Council in its decision-making process.

Melton City Council conducts an annual Community Satisfaction Survey, which is undertaken by an independent research company and involves door to door interviews with 806 (in 2023) randomly selected residents. The survey sample reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of the city, with 40% of respondents coming from households that speak a language other than English at home in 2023. The survey asks residents about their perceptions of the local sense of community.

The survey found that agreement with the statement 'the Melton community is welcoming and supportive of people from diverse cultures and backgrounds' was at moderate to strong levels (67% strongly agreed, 31% were neutral

to somewhat agree, and 2% disagreed in 2023). This question was valuably introduced in 2023. However, the data made available does not indicate how the data might breakdown across the cultural diversity of the city to identify the perspectives of the different groups on this key question. The survey further examined the statement 'Melton City Council respects, reflects, and is inclusive of our diverse community' with 66% strongly agreed, 32% were neutral to somewhat agree, and 2% disagreed in 2023. It further explores 'Melton City Council respects, reflects and is inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons', with 66% strongly agreed, 31% were neutral to somewhat agree, and 3% disagreed in 2023. Again, however, the data is not broken down by cultural background.

The Community Satisfaction Survey includes a question on perceptions of safety in public spaces. In 2023, 72% of respondents felt 'very safe' in the public areas of the City of Melton during the day, whilst 5% felt 'unsafe'. 41% of respondents felt 'very safe' and 15% felt 'unsafe' at night-time. The survey further includes questions that assess residents' experiences with regards to their sense of belonging in the local community with 60% strongly agreed, 34% were neutral to somewhat agree, and 6% disagreed in 2023. Again, however, the data is not broken down by cultural background.

Melton City Council also receives feedback from diverse communities through its internal and external networks, which allows it to stay informed about the experiences and needs of different groups and to continuously improve its services to ensure that all residents feel safe and included in the local community.

Melton City Council promotes intercultural competence among its officials and staff in administration and public services, offers various training programmes, including an Intercultural Communication Skills Programme and a Working with Interpreters programme, which are delivered using a blended approach of online and workshop-style discussions. Data on take-up and impact of such a valuable initiative would be important to track in this regard.

Melton City Council collaborates with other organisations to build its intercultural capacity. For example, in 2021, the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission provided human rights training for Councillors, Council staff and members of Intercultural Advisory Committee, African Communities Working Group and Melton Interfaith Network.

The department responsible for implementing the new Intercultural Strategy is also tasked with orienting all levels of Melton City Council and building intercultural competency across the organisation. These includes staff briefing as well as activities such as 'Curious About Culture' cultural competence sessions which are open to Council leaders and staff and focus on new and emerging cultural groups in the municipality.

Suggestions

Melton City Council could usefully build on its annual Community Satisfaction Survey initiative, with its focus on diversity and its engagement with the diversity of culturally and linguistically diverse groups to present further of its findings in a manner that captures any difference in perspectives across these groups.

Melton City Council could look to building a context within which to ensure staff can put learning from intercultural training into practice. This could include a focus on supporting management practice in this regard and the development of guidance materials for use in the workplace by staff that have done the training.

In Auckland, New Zealand, the 'Together We're Auckland' communications guide helps the Auckland Council communicate a sense of togetherness, diversity, collaboration and a positive outcome and community spirit. With the support of this guide, the Council aims to ensure that every Aucklander feels included in what is happening at Auckland Council and that they feel represented and part of the city they live in.

A further evolution of the training offered by Melton City Council could be considered with a view to strengthening intercultural competence beyond communication and interpretation. This could focus on political leadership for diversity, management of diversity and management for diversity, competency in identifying and addressing issues of racism, and in recognising the practical implications of cultural diversity and making adaptations for these.

The 'Intercultural competent city' methodology developed in Botkyrka, Sweden, might serve as a resource in this regard. Botkyrka understands an intercultural competent city as thinking, acting and planning in an intercultural manner. This includes the involvement of all sectors of the municipality in the coordinated development of intercultural actions and policies, and covers three elements. The first key element is a clear political commitment, where such a political commitment is shared by all political parties based on an inclusive approach to democracy. A cross-party consensus on intercultural integration is deemed fundamental. Another key element is the development of a critical, systematic and constructive analysis of the practices and activities within the

administration, at both strategic and operational levels. The third key element is to set up a global strategy for inclusive integration, and to regularly monitor it. This includes a focus on guidelines to all the departments within the municipality, recognition of intercultural competence as a key component of human resources for both employees and managers, and development of anti-discrimination and equality data and indicators.

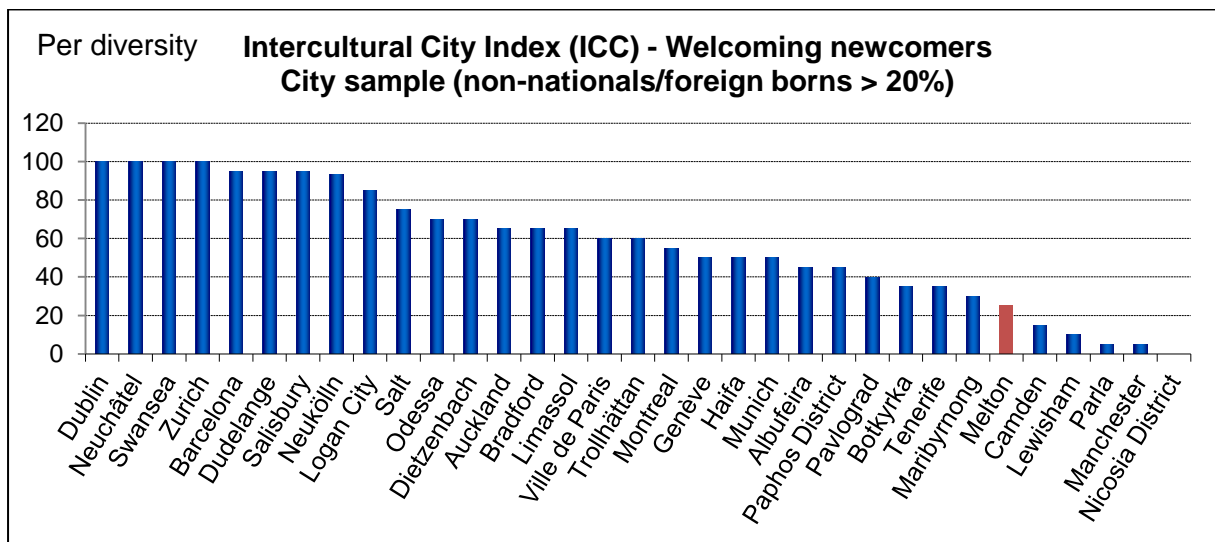ICC programme resources on intercultural competence are also available here.

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

People arriving in a city for an extended stay, whatever their circumstances (expats, migrant workers, spouses, refugees, unaccompanied minors, retired persons, etc.), are likely find themselves disorientated. The less familiar they are with the new environment, the more support they will need to feel comfortable and confident enough to start building a new social and professional network. The way in which the city coordinates and effectively delivers various support measures strongly conditions their capacity to integrate or, conversely, their tendency to remain confined to a cultural "ghetto". This also depends to a great degree on whether the rest of the city's population is open to the idea of welcoming newcomers in their capacity as residents and citizens or, on the contrary, is accustomed to viewing newcomers as outsiders who pose a potential threat. Again, it is the message the authorities convey on diversity, in communication or through concrete actions, that determines to a certain degree attitudes towards newcomers.

Melton achieved a rate of 25%, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 58% and also lower than its 2017 rate of 40%. The variation in scoring between 2017 and 2023 is mostly due to the updated ICC Index questionnaire where questions are more specific than those answered by Melton in 2017. Overall, welcoming newcomers is one of few areas that appear to pose a challenge to Melton to further develop its approach.[18]

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Welcoming newcomers
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

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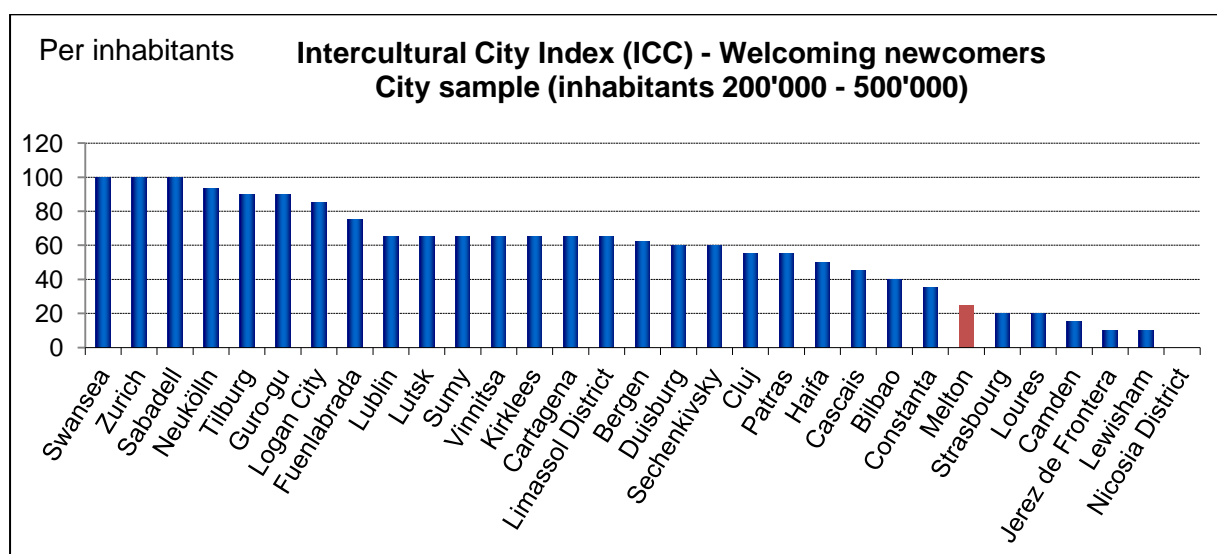
[18] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 25%, while the city sample achievement rate is 63%.

Per diversity **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Welcoming newcomers**
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)

Melton City does not have a designated agency, unit, person, or procedure to welcome newcomers and does not appear to have a comprehensive city-specific package of information and support for newcomers. Melton City Council does, however, organise annual citizenship ceremonies in collaboration with the Australian Federal Government's Department of Home Affairs. These ceremonies provide an opportunity for new citizens to learn about their rights and obligations, such as the right to vote during elections.

A range of settlement services and support are available to new arrivals, including family members, unaccompanied minors, refugees and asylum seekers, students and migrant workers, through public agencies and civil society at the Federal, State and local levels. Key areas addressed by these services include: employment; education and training; health and wellbeing; managing your finances; transport; housing; civic participation - sports and recreation; and language services. These are areas covered in the National Settlement Framework which commits the three tiers of government, Commonwealth, state and territory and local government, to work together to support the settlement of migrants and humanitarian entrants in Australia.

Melton City Council is an active member of the Western Settlement Outcomes Network. This alliance of settlement service providers and local councils works to advocate and coordinate service delivery for new or recent arrivals including those on humanitarian visas.

Melton City Council does not organise a public ceremony to greet people arriving to live in the city. However, Melton City Council does organise the annual citizenship ceremonies, which are opportunities for new citizens to be welcomed and learn about their rights and obligations, including registering to vote. Melton City Council supports several annual public events, programmes, and activities, such as Harmony Week, Refugee Week, and Cultural Diversity Week, which seek to acknowledge and welcome the growing diversity within the municipality. Melton City Council also works with settlement service providers, such as the Migrant Resource Centre, Wyndham CEC, and MiCare, who specialise in assisting new arrivals in the area.

Melton City Council is an associated member of Welcoming Cities Australia.

Recommendations

Melton City Council could usefully develop a more focused welcoming policy for new arrivals and range of tools and supports to put this into practice.

Auckland Council, New Zealand, and Immigration New Zealand (a central government agency responsible for bringing people to New Zealand to enhance New Zealand's social and economic outcomes) have signed a partnership agreement to leverage collective skills and resources in order to maximise the contribution that migrant skills and investment make to Auckland. This includes a Welcoming Communities Programme which welcomes newcomers, recent migrants, former refugees and international students, and emphasises the importance of participation and connecting newcomers with locals. The programme is based on a standard with eight outcomes: inclusive leadership; welcoming communications; equitable access; connected and inclusive communities; economic development, business and employment; civic engagement and participation; welcoming public spaces; and culture and identity.

The city of Braga, Portugal, developed the 'BragaIncoming Programme', a digital tool to help newcomers with information for their adaptation into the host society. This programme was developed as part of a welcoming and social integration policy. The app is also a means of contact between the municipal entities and the communities already settled in the city. The app contains information about schools, parishes, health centres, and consulates alongside a strong focus on cultural aspects, and is regularly updated, and is free and easy to get.
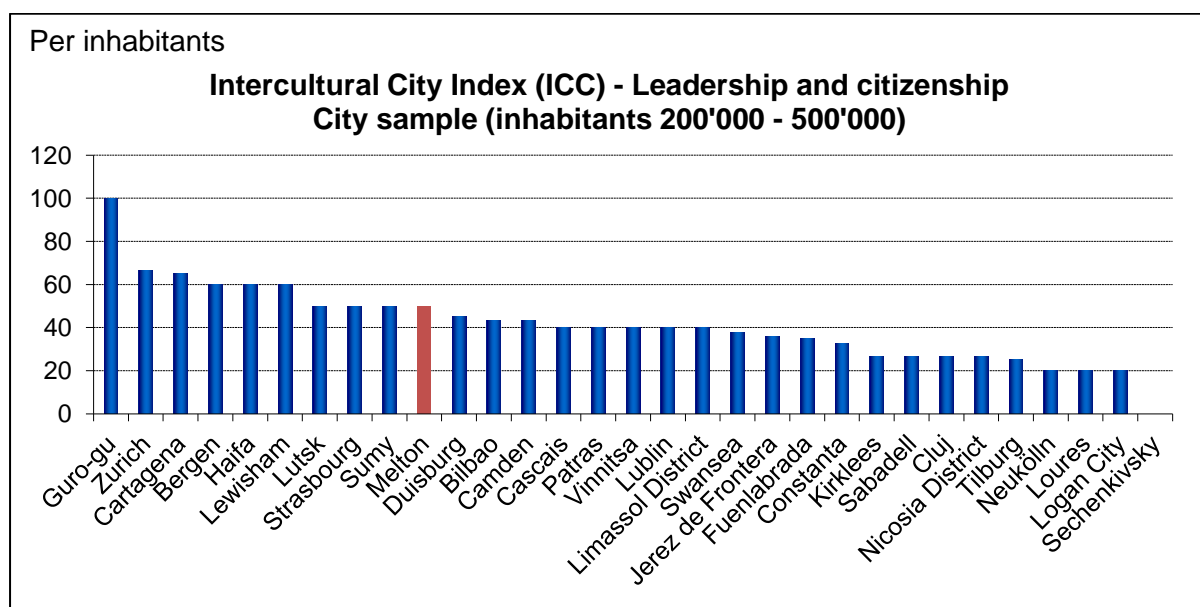
Copenhagen's Host Programme, Denmark, facilitates encounters between newly arrived migrants and Copenhageners who wish to volunteer as hosts. It contributes to promoting social ties, dialogue, tolerance and respect on an equal footing between all inhabitants in the city. It also ensures that newly arrived inhabitants to the city are familiar with the city's services, job market, and educational systems. It is coordinated by the city's Department for Integration and Language which is responsible for administration of the Integration Act in the municipality of Copenhagen. The programme is operated in close collaboration with the Danish Refugee Council and the Foreningen Nydansker. The benefits of the programme according to newly arrived inhabitants range from making new friends, to meeting people in similar professions, to finding out about public services, to entering the labour market.

ICC programme resources on refugees and welcoming policies are also available here.
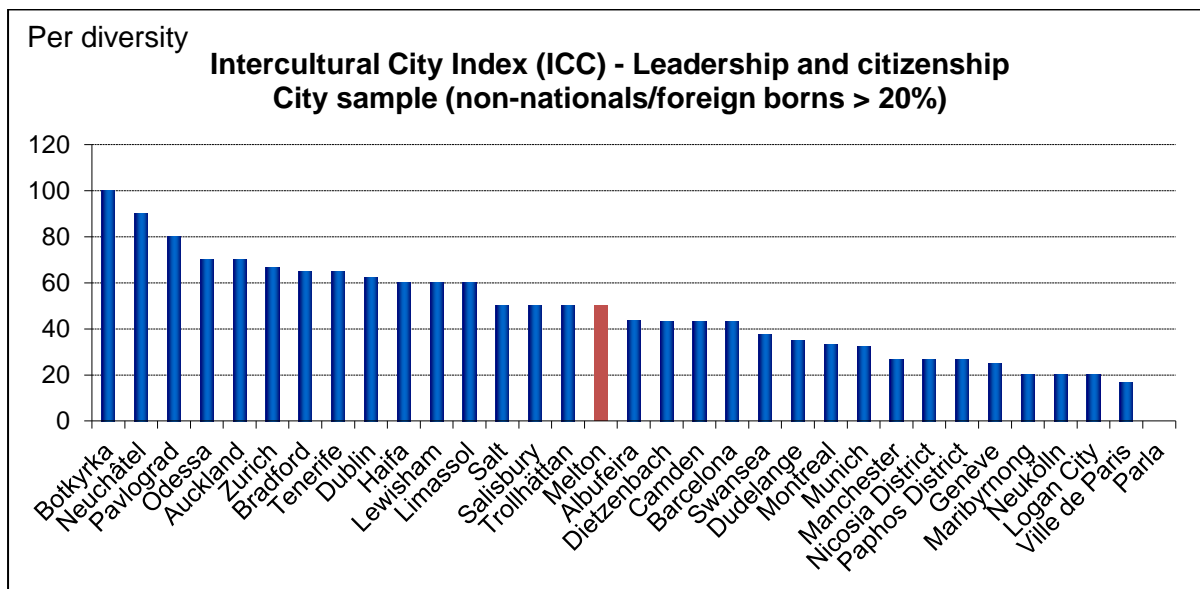
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP

The most powerful and far-reaching action a city can take to be more intercultural is to open up democratic representation and decision-making to all residents of the city irrespective of their origin, nationality or residence status. Formal political rights at the local level are determined nationally or at the regional level in some federal states. Nonetheless, there is much that a city council can do to influence the way in which diverse groups interact and co-operate around the allocation of power and resources. An intercultural city strives to include all residents in the policy-making process and ensures thereby that public services are provided according to their diverse needs and not according to their cultural or political proximity to public decision-makers.

Melton achieved a rate of 50%, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 58% and also higher than its 2017 rate of 40%. Melton presents a performance of merit here that offers good foundations for further evolution.[19]

Per inhabitants
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Leadership and citizenship
City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)

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[19] Melton's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 70%, while the city sample achievement rate is 52%.

Per diversity

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Leadership and citizenship
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)**

Foreign nationals cannot stand as candidates in local elections as, according to the Victoria Electoral Commission only Australian citizens or an eligible British subject can stand as a candidate. Foreign nationals cannot vote in local elections, as voting in Victorian council elections is restricted to people who are residents or ratepayers of the municipality. There are elected members of the city's municipal council that are foreign-born or dual nationals.

Melton City Council recognises the importance of involving all residents in decision-making and planning through its Community Engagement Policy. There are several independent consultative bodies through which people with migrant/minority backgrounds can voice their concerns and advise Melton City Council on diversity and integration matters. The Intercultural Advisory Committee works to support Melton City Council in being inclusive of all people and acknowledging the contribution of diverse communities within the municipality. The African Communities Working Group advises on policies and issues impacting the African community and advocates on their behalf. The Melton Interfaith Network fosters interfaith harmony and religious pluralism by building sustainable relationships and enhancing interfaith capacity. In addition, the City of Melton Conversations portal provides an opportunity for all residents to provide input on various council policies and strategies, with a multilingual feature to enhance its reach. Community members can enhance their participatory skills through Council training and learning programmes.

Local Councils do not have a mandate over the representation on public boards. Those standards are set at the State and Federal levels. In the State of Victoria, where Melton City Council is located, public boards and committees help shape and influence decision and services. These public entities functions include: manage essential services like hospitals, schools and transit networks; do research and advise ministers; manage public assets like parks and state forests; monitor the actions and decisions of public officials; and impose regulations on people or businesses

Public boards are established by legislation, the Governor in Council or by a state minister. The State Government acknowledges the need for more diversity of representation on public boards including those from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, culturally diverse groups, people with disability, LGBTIQA+, women and youth.

Under the Local Government Act 2020, local Councils have a responsibility to enable participatory democracy to support citizens having a stronger voice in shaping their community's future, which must be reflected in Council's community committees and working groups representation.

Suggestions

In a context where foreign nationals cannot stand nor vote in local elections, Melton City Council usefully has a number of participatory structures in place. Attention could usefully be given to underpinning the influence that can be exercised by such structures, the accountability to their communities, and their capacity to make a difference for their communities. In this it could usefully look to the practices developed in other cities to identify elements that could be made use of.

The Ansan City, South Korea, Ordinance on Non-nationals and Multicultural Families Support provides for the operation of a non-national's Council. The council advises on various support projects and advocates on behalf of

non-nationals. The council consists of 19 members that represent China, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Cambodia. Ansan City also runs a non-nationals Monitoring Group. This is not a compulsory committee to supervise public services, but its roles include: to understand developments and trends among non-nationals, collect their voices, survey the city's administration for non-nationals, and make recommendations for improvement. Currently the group consists of 33 people representing Mongolia, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Russia, Cambodia, Thailand, Japan, and Nepal. Non-nationals' involvement in citizen-participatory budgeting is also institutionally guaranteed. They are involved in the Citizens Communication Committee and residents' associations in each Neighbourhood.

The Local Council of Immigration in Bilbao, Spain, is a collegial body that has consultative and informative roles. It is designed to guarantee the democratic participation of immigrant associations and their interaction with other agents involved in the development and promotion of integration and coexistence policies in the different areas of political, cultural, economic and social life in the City of Bilbao. Its objectives are to: participate in the integration and intercultural coexistence programme led by Bilbao City Council; promote access to information for the foreign population and improve communication; encourage the exchange of information, work in common and the coordination of activities between immigrant associations; strengthen immigrant associations; and be an interlocutor of the situation of the immigrant population and communicate the information to Bilbao City Council. Twenty associations of migrants, local political parties and the Councillor of Equality, Cooperation and Coexistence take part in the Local Council of immigration.

ICC programme resources on political and public participation are also available here.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Racism, xenophobia, homophobia, intolerance against certain religious groups, gender discrimination, prejudice and ethnocentrism, are all conducive to discriminatory attitudes and practices. They often subsist in people's minds despite laws proscribing discrimination against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation. An intercultural city assures every effort is made to ensure non-discrimination in all of its policies, programmes and activities. The city works in partnership with civil society organisations and other institutions that combat discrimination and offer support and reparation to victims. It also communicates widely on the risks discrimination presents for social cohesion, quality of life and the local economy.

Indicators on anti-discrimination have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 42 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Melton's rate of achievement in the field of anti-discrimination is 88%. This is a positive result for Melton on a key element and encourages further innovation on this important issue.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Anti-discrimination

Melton City Council has carried out a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate against residents with migrant/minority backgrounds. The review was conducted in line with key legislative requirements outlined under Australia's Human Rights Framework (2010), Multicultural Australia (United, Strong, Successful): Australia's Multicultural Statement (2017), and Victoria's Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. The review was, positively, conducted to deliver on Melton City Council's commitments through the Intercultural Cities programme. It would be useful to clarify how the review sought to capture institutional forms of discrimination and what recommendations emerged.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, a statutory body that provides advice on human rights and equal opportunity law to the Victorian Parliament, has developed a set of anti-discrimination regulations for local government. Locally, the Melton City Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 sets out the strategic and planning directions for Council, wherein the Council has committed to responding to diverse community needs and tackling the disadvantage, stigma and discrimination. However, this appears to fall short of a dedicated and binding document setting standards on and addressing the issue of discrimination and the various forms this might take.

Melton City Council offers a dedicated service, 'Reducing Racism', to advise and support victims of discrimination. This service is an initiative of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission with the objective of engaging communities experiencing discrimination. It aims to help them understand their rights, learn how to exercise them, and make reporting racism more accessible. Melton City Council's website provides a link to the Community Reporting Tool, and encourage anyone who faces any form of racism or discrimination to speak out and use this tool to make a report.

While civil society organisations who work in this space of advising and supporting victims of discrimination can apply for support from Melton City Council, under the Community Grants Programme or through the Council Community Networks, to assist diverse communities who are experiencing discrimination, it is not made clear if they do and the extent and adequacy of funding that might be made available.

The Community Satisfaction Survey programme does include a focus on community satisfaction of Council services and facilities alongside a focus on diversity. However, it does not serve to explicitly monitor or research the extent and character of discrimination in the city.

Melton City Council has publicly acknowledged that racism is a barrier to community inclusion which was exacerbated by the lack of appropriate services within the municipality. More recently Melton City Council noted that racism has an impact on local community health and wellbeing in its Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. This recognition created the space for its Intercultural Plan. However, there is limited initiative evident that is explicitly directed at anti-discrimination campaigns or awareness raising about discrimination. Melton City Council can point to its 'Reducing Racism' initiative, a community tool to help at risk communities report discrimination to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, and to its 2021 hosting of the 'Talking about Racism, Rights & Support' event during Cultural Diversity Week for staff, and its engagement with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission in a programme for preventing and reporting discrimination.

Melton City Council does not have an anti-rumours strategy that follows the official Council of Europe methodology.

Suggestions

Melton City Council could usefully develop further initiatives to explicitly track, monitor and research issues of discrimination and the various forms this can take, individual and institutional, and involving direct discrimination, indirect discrimination and issues of harassment.

The Barcelona Discrimination Observatory, Spain, works to make visible any situations of discrimination in the city, and to contribute to the scale and design of the actions required to address such situations. The observatory is a partnership initiative involving the: Office for Non-Discrimination of the Barcelona City Council; Human Rights Resource Centre of the Barcelona City Council; and Board of Organisations for the Assistance of Victims of Discrimination which is currently made up of 26 social entities that assist victims of discrimination. The observatory publishes an annual report on discrimination, with a specific topic in particular focus in each edition, addressing discrimination by individuals, private organisations/companies, public authorities, and police forces.

Dublin City Council, Ireland, conducted an equality review of its provision of social housing supports and homelessness services on the ground of racial or ethnic origin. It followed up with the preparation of an Equality Action Plan to implement the recommendations made as part of the review. An equality review involves an examination of policy, plans, procedures, and practices in an organisation, to assess the extent to which

discrimination and harassment are prevented, diversity is acknowledged and accommodated, and equality is promoted and achieved Recommendations are made on foot of the review to support the preparation of an equality action plan to improve the performance of an organisation in these areas.

Melton could usefully explore opportunities to sustain and further evolve its work on promoting awareness of discrimination issues, zero tolerance for discrimination, and a valuing of equality.

Leeds, UK, runs regular anti-discrimination campaigns by taking part in an annual Hate Crime Awareness Week through Safer Leeds. These campaigns involve engagement with and support for partners, across a range of agencies, including third sector, voluntary organisations and residents. Initiatives have included a Twitter hashtag #LeedsNoPlaceforHate, bespoke localised public facing sessions in communities, and convening of staff networks within its own workforce to run specific campaigns, provide training and raise awareness of services for a range of protected groups.

Melton could usefully establish and secure agreement on a standard in relation to anti-racism, diversity and equality, that it would apply within its own systems and structures and that it would encourage other institutions to likewise adopt and apply such as standard.

The City of Turin, Italy, and fifty-eight civil society organisations signed the 'Patto dei Beni Comuni per Torino Antirazzista' (Common Goods Pact for Antiracist Turin) in 2021. The document contains actions, projects, and mutual commitments. It guarantees a unified and strategic approach and a direct involvement of communities and people of different backgrounds and origins in the phases of conception, implementation and evaluation of policies. The planned activities are grouped in five lines of action: events and initiatives; spaces; empowerment; access to services; and education; and culture. The City and the civic actors commit themselves to: organising events and initiatives in the intercultural and antiracist field, giving back a voice to people and communities who suffer several forms of discrimination on a daily basis; providing tools and guidance for accessing city goods and services, in particular registry and civic services; issuing calls for tenders for municipal spaces; and ensuring health services with a gender perspective; training City employees and operators, and volunteers of civil society; setting up round tables and forum for discussion and exchange in the field of human rights education and antidiscrimination; designing and making visible safe spaces free from racism, fascism and sexism; and codesigning and seeking funds and financing for the implementation of activities and projects.

ICC programme resources on systemic discrimination are also available here and resources on anti-rumours are available here.

PARTICIPATION

Inclusion, power-sharing and participation are the golden keys of intercultural policy-making. A range of studies have demonstrated that inclusive integration policies produce better outcomes in terms of social cohesion, trust in the administration, safety, quality of services, welfare, good governance and economic growth. People with different backgrounds and experiences can bring innovative solutions to common challenges, as well as anticipate problems that might arise. Conversely, when people encounter barriers to participation, or otherwise choose intentionally not to participate, they may, passively, withdraw from social and public life or choose, actively, to live outside prevailing social customs and law. An intercultural city actively seeks the participation of all residents in the various decision-making processes that affect life in the city. By doing so, it increases support, and thereby the sustainability of local policies, while at the same significantly reducing the economic costs of social exclusion and instability.

Indicators on participation have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 42 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Melton's rate of achievement in the field of participation is 86%. This result positions Melton as a strong performer and allows room for further creative evolutions.
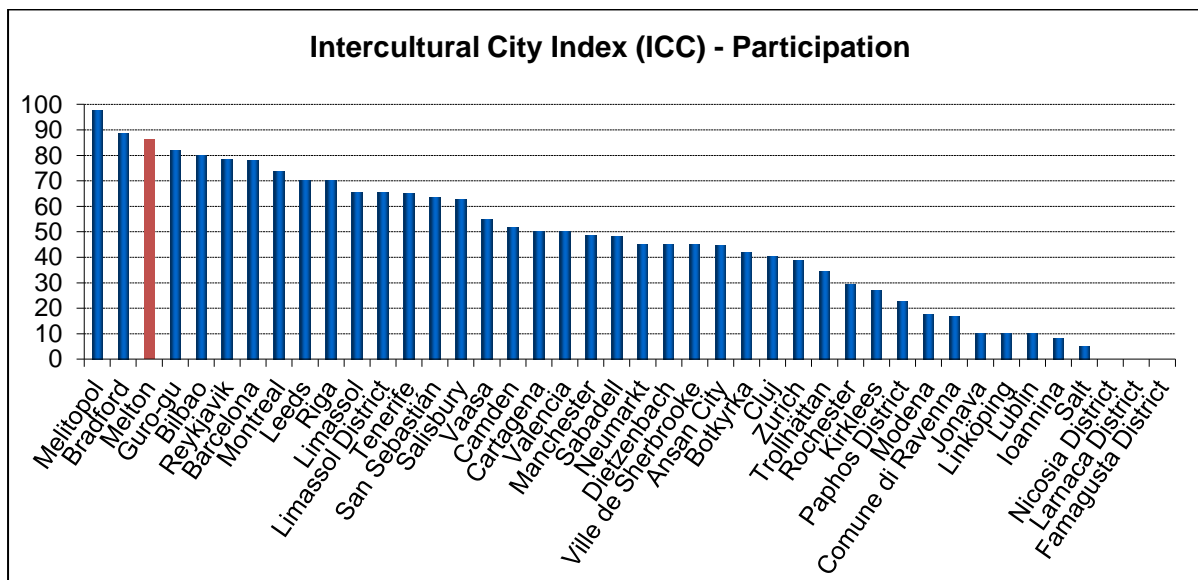
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Participation

Melton City Council has utilised a variety of community consultation techniques and approaches to support the development of the forthcoming iteration of the Intercultural Plan. These consultations were guided by the Intercultural Cities Index themes. Over 430 community members and stakeholders participated in the community engagement process, which included an online survey, in-person pop-ups, workshops, and meetings with key stakeholder groups. The engagement questions sought to understand the experiences and views of community members. Over 350 community members engaged through the online survey, with 54% identifying as women, 43% identifying as men, and 60% speaking a language other than English at home. Additionally, 22% identified as LGBTIQA+, and 12% identified as a person with a disability.

Melton City Council utilises public participation networks to access community input on a variety of issues that can impact residents, and can be associated with specific Council services or other broader social issues. In terms of participatory budgeting, Councils are required by law to undertake various planning and reporting functions. This ensures that they responsibly manage resources and are accountable to the public. They are required to consult with the public while exercising these functions. Melton City Council has the flexibility to convene special committees or working groups to help address a specific need or issue. Melton City Council has also utilised other participatory approaches including community forums, workshops, and info-booths. However, overall the particular engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse groups is not identified and the particular needs of these groups to secure their participation and influence are not addressed.

The Local Government Act 2020 Act promotes deliberative engagement practices, which prioritise authentic engagement, good representation of the community, consideration of all views, and transparent decision-making processes that ensure participants are fully informed. The Act does not prescribe any specific types of engagement that Councils must employ. However, it does require the use of deliberative engagement practices in developing certain documents and processes, including strategic and financial plans. The particular engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse groups in Melton in this does not appear to be specifically monitored.

Current Federal and State laws seek to ensure that no one is discriminated against for a particular role due to their racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual orientation. Victoria State's Diversity on Victorian Government Board Guidelines provides advise on how increase participation from more at-risk cohorts such as culturally and linguistically diverse people. This positive context is enabling but action at the level of Melton city on fair representation of culturally and linguistically diverse groups is not made apparent.

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020, there is an obligation to ensure that gender equity is mainstreamed into Council's policies, processes and services with specific reference to an intersectional approach when it comes to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Melton Council recognises intersectional gender inequality, as central to efforts aiming to address discrimination, disadvantage, and inequity. The Intercultural Plan focuses on increasing connections and understanding, and fostering inclusion, equality and prosperity surrounding gender and sexual identity. Melton Council has pursued its commitment to gender equality through the implementation of its Equality & Respect Strategy 2030 and its Melton City Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025. However, the intersectional dimension to these is not made clear.

Melton City Council could usefully explore approaches to building capacity and empowering culturally and linguistically diverse groups in creating leadership, platforms and organisations through which to engage in an influential manner with the City Council and in its deliberations. It could further track and monitor the scale and impact of this participation.

Barcelona, Spain, has taken actions to promote the participation of people with diverse cultural and national backgrounds in Barcelona's participation areas. The long-term goal is to ensure that the current cultural and religious diversity of the city is equally recognised and represented in the participation areas and channels of the City Council. Areas of work and objectives include to: recognise and spotlight cultural diversity to strengthen the participation of people from different and diverse native and cultural backgrounds and their grouping in the channels of participation provided by the Barcelona City Council to the overall population; deepen the knowledge about sociocultural realities and needs related to citizens' participation and contribute to the promotion of autonomous and self-organised spaces for communities through joint work in collaboration with actors of diverse cultural and native backgrounds; strengthen the capacity of civil servants and other agents at the service of the City Council to actively incorporate the intercultural perspective in actions aimed at promoting citizens' participation and intercultural mediation; incorporate intercultural diversity criteria in the municipal communication channels and media; and facilitate the exercise of political rights of people residing in the city of Barcelona.

Melton City Council might consider developing, within its work on gender equality, targeted measures on women from culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

In Botkyrka, Sweden, has taken action to empower foreign-born women with a particular focus on entering the labour market and/or education. The action sought to ensure that the; labour market is open to foreign-born women; participants feel that activities that are being done lead to empowerment and increased life space; and participants feel that they have choices in life and know how to use the possibilities that are offered to them. Activities include: networking; language-courses; vocational training; psycho-social support; training for staff working with the women about intercultural approach, value-based policymaking and equal treatment; and basic training in civics for the women.

More specifically Melton City Council could look to ensuring the participation of women in its structures for engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The city of Sabadell, Spain, has taken several measures to guarantee that gender equality is well represented in organisations that work with the municipality and participate in the decision-making on issues related to the reception and inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities. The lines of action for the Gender Plan 2018-2022 include the empowerment of migrated and Roma women and the promotion of their associative activity; as well as the diversification of the participants in the different spaces of participation and decision making incorporating the intersectional perspective. The "Espacio Mujeres" (Women's Space) programme in different neighbourhoods, provides personal tools to women and creates links for them within the community. It offers relational learning spaces and provides different activities focused on the physical and mental health of the participants, and also offers to foreign women with little command of the language, the opportunity to participate in activities in the neighbourhood and the city.

ICC programme resources on political and public participation are also available here.

INTERACTION

Interaction between people of all kinds is what gives the intercultural city its distinctive value. Identity is not 'given' in a passive sense, but something which is 'enacted' and defined through interaction. In spite of protective laws, prejudice and discrimination can thrive where there is segregation or a lack of contact and dialogue between people. There is ample evidence to prove that, under certain conditions, the more contact people with different backgrounds and lifestyles have with each other, the less likely they are to think and behave in prejudicial ways. Therefore, an intercultural city develops, in partnership with other organisations, a range of policies and actions to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups.

Indicators on interaction have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 42 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter.

Melton's rate of achievement in the field of interaction is 63%. This reflects a positive performance by Melton while leaving room for improvement based on the work already carried out.
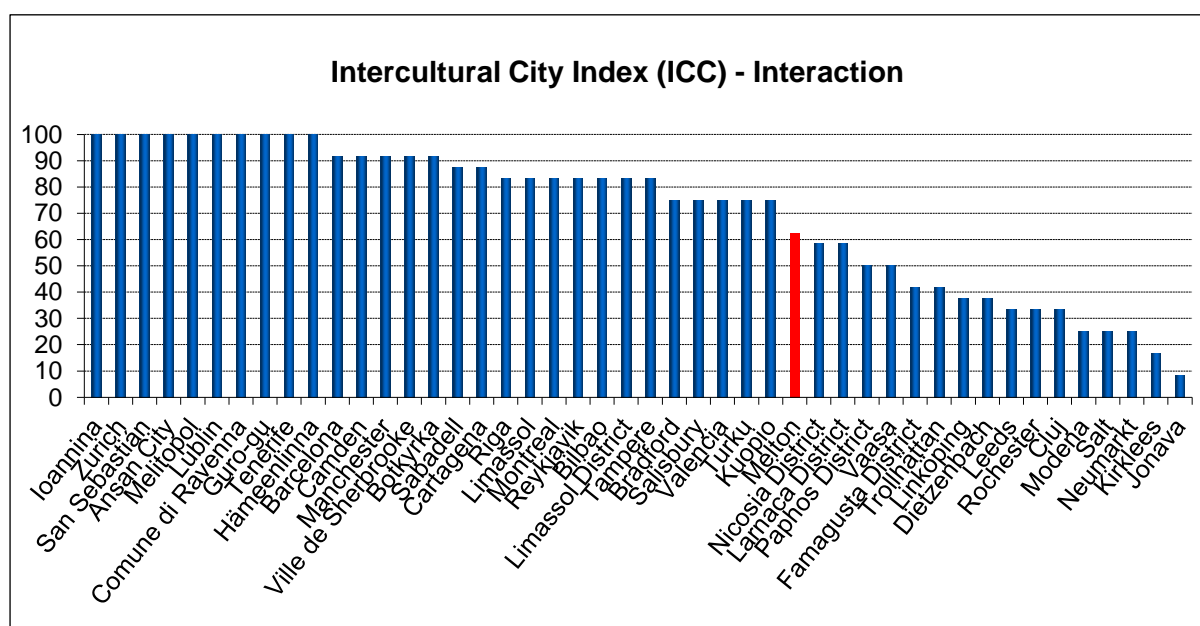
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Interaction

Melton City Council interacts with civil society and grassroots organisations to promote intercultural inclusion directly or indirectly, in the municipality every year. These interactions are captured and recorded by Council staff depending on their work purpose and applicable government regulation. The nature of Melton City Council's Community Planning Department means its officers have an elevated level of interactions with civil society and grassroots organisations within and outside the municipality. Because of the specialised work, each unit undertakes maintenance of their respective list or database of civil society or grassroots that they interact with, and units share this contact information to enhance service or programme delivery as needed. However, it is noted that lists are incomplete and not regularly updated.

To enhance the delivery of its services, Melton City Council actively builds relationships with civil society and grassroots organisations, resulting in the formation of networks, including those to promote interculturalism. Collaborative networks provide an opportunity for exchanging knowledge and skills, understanding each other better, and voicing concerns, sharing experiences, celebrating successes, and learning from one another. Melton City Council's policies, strategies, and action plans provide the necessary guidelines for ongoing engagement with civil society and grassroots organisations. Some of the active networks in which Melton City Council engages with civil society and grassroots organisations include the Intercultural Advisory Committee, Melton Interfaith Network, African Community Working Group, New & Emerging Communities, Western Settlement Outcome Network, and Welcoming Cities Network.

Teacher training is not a municipal competence and the Melton City Council does not address teacher skills in intercultural communication and pedagogy.

Suggestions

Melton City Council might consider developing a targeted focus on supporting the development, capacity and empowerment of organisations within and representative of culturally and linguistically diverse groups to enhance the quality of interactions already being engaged in by Melton.

In Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain, an initiative has been taken to support culturally diverse Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), involving grants to culturally diverse people and NGOs to implement projects which promote the participation of migrants, ethnic minorities and local citizens in activities that foster coexistence and interaction. These projects consist of: welcoming, awareness raising, participation and training activities. They aim at increasing the visibility, acknowledgement and respect of rights, diversity, languages and religions, and fostering interculturality as an asset in different areas such as education, youth, human rights, gender equality and others. This initiative empowers citizens with a migrant or ethnic background and those associations working in favour of

interculturality, supports them to build up their own projects, provides them the chance to enhance the value of their own cultures, and enables them to bring together local people and other culturally diverse citizens.

Melton City Council could develop and convene initiatives of formal dialogue with culturally and linguistically diverse groups and their representative organisations on topics of shared importance such as issues of systemic racism, intercultural ambitions, and cultural expression and preservation.

In Montreal, Canada, the Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal (OCPM) published a report in June 2020 on a consultation on systemic racism and discrimination in the City. The consultation took two years and involved more than 7,000 contributions, both in person and online. The goal of the consultation was not to verify alleged facts, but to draw a portrait of the current state of affairs, highlight the solutions proposed and enlarge perspectives to guide public decision-making. The Commission established for this consultation made recommendations addressing four strands identified as required for strategic change: recognising the problem, measuring the problem, defining goals that lead to concrete actions, and being accountable for these actions. It found that combating racism and discrimination had been neglected in favour of a focus on the integration of immigrants. The internal policies and practices of the City and its role in the production and perpetuation of inequalities had not been subject to any review.

ICC programme resources on anti-rumours are also available here and resources on intercultural competence and mediation are available here.

According to the overall Intercultural Cities Index results, Melton has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 75 (out of 100 possible points).

COMMITMENT	✓	The City of Melton has a positive institutional framework in place to underpin and give expression to its commitment to intercultural principles, with a cornerstone policy, an Intercultural Plan, and institutional structures for dialogue.
	✗	A dedicated body or a cross-departmental co-ordination structure with responsibility for implementing the intercultural strategy from within Melton City Council is not identified.
EDUCATION	✓	Melton City Council encourages local schools to participate in programmes, activities, and events that promote diversity and social cohesion.
	✗	Little focus emerges in this work on curriculum development to reflect cultural diversity, schools taking steps to ensure cultural competence of staff, and schools having policies and procedures to deal with intercultural issues.
NEIGHBOURHOODS	✓	Melton City Council encourages interaction among diverse community members by: setting up intercultural mechanisms at a city-wide level; and hosting annual events and activities. Melton City Council's Community Activity and Learning Centres and hubs provide opportunities for community members to engage with others through a range of cultural and faith activities.
	✗	This city level approach does not appear to reach directly into interactions between neighbourhoods. The approach lacks reference to a proactive element to secure positive interactions between members of different groups.
PUBLIC SERVICES	✓	Melton City Council has a Recruitment Policy dedicated to promoting fairness and inclusivity in its hiring process, aiming to create a diverse workforce by considering applicants from various backgrounds. It is actively collaborating with sports and recreation service providers to enhance accessibility for a diverse range of community members.
	✗	While a 'Fair Play' policy is planned, there is no specific policy noted in place to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse groups in public service provision. Lack of equality data is evident in relation to tracking the migrant/minority background of public sector employees.
BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	✓	Melton City Council promotes diversity and non-discrimination practices across a broad range of enterprise through the Venture Melton Business Network, promotes diversity and inclusiveness through the Melton Business Excellence Awards, and is committed to supporting and encouraging businesses from ethnic minorities to expand their reach.
	✗	While Melton City Council promotes social inclusion through its sustainable procurement policy to support businesses within the municipality and generate local employment, the approach does not include for more specific requirements on such businesses in relation to their policies and systems to give effect to values of diversity and inclusion, with specific reference to cultural and linguistic diversity.
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE	✓	Melton City Council has interculturalism as a criterion when allocating funds to associations and initiatives, as the priorities listed in the Council and Wellbeing Plan form part of decision-making related to budgetary expenditure. Melton Arts and Culture programme includes cultural projects and exhibitions that bring people from different backgrounds together. Melton City Council enables public debate, discussion, and campaigns on cultural diversity and living together.
	✗	The approaches outlined to stimulate public debate appear largely of a formal nature with an emphasis on feedback and consultation, and, as such, a broader focus for debate and more informal approaches might be needed.
PUBLIC SPACE	✓	Melton City Council's Community Facilities Access Policy outlines its commitment to making its facilities accessible and equitable to all members of the community, and Melton City Council encourages intercultural mixing and interaction in its public spaces, by offering a diverse range of facilities and programmes. This work is to be

	✗	further strengthened by Council's ongoing 'Welcoming Spaces' initiative. The libraries positively offer local programmes for diverse audiences, including language practices and assistance with citizenship tests. A proactive dimension to secure participation from and interaction between diverse communities in public spaces and a focus beyond welcoming that would include addressing the issue of accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse groups in the design and functioning of public spaces are not evident.
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	✓ ✗	Relationships Australia Victoria provides family and relationship support services including dispute resolution and training to diverse communities. The Migrant Resource Centre North West Region provides personal advocacy supports. The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria provides free dispute resolution services. Overall, the focus developed in this field is more on family relationships, individual advocacy, disputes between parties, and dealing with individual complaints, all of which are valuable and some of which take a positive intercultural approach, but the focus is less evident on the inter-communal dimension to conflict.
LANGUAGE	✓ ✗	Melton City Council supports access to relevant language services by members of diverse communities through a variety of initiatives, and offers spaces for service providers and groups to use to organise language programmes or activities. There is limited focus evident on language diversity as a resource for intercultural engagement, and as a source of diversity to be valued and explored.
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	✓ ✗	Melton City Council's Communication Policy is grounded its intercultural commitment and contributes to improving the visibility and image of people from diverse backgrounds in local media Melton City Council Communications Department uses a variety of media to reach out to its primary audience, including various cultural and linguistically diverse communities. In response to media coverage that can have adverse effects on a particular community, Melton City Council has taken a stance to address negative perceptions. The means by which Melton City Council's communication would contribute to more inclusive and diverse communities is not made clear and the potential of emphasising diversity and inclusion in values-led communication does not appear to be addressed.
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK	✓ ✗	Melton City Council encourages international cooperation in economic, scientific, cultural, and other areas, and is the first accredited UNESCO Learning City in Australia. Melton City Council reaches out to foreign students or other youth groups arriving through exchange programmes. All residents, including international students, have access to Council services. It is not made clear if international cooperation is underpinned by a particular policy and strategy nor that it looks wider than inclusive learning and a culture of lifelong learning, nor that it includes a targeted focus on the intercultural dimension.
INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE	✓ ✗	Melton City Council gathers statistical and qualitative information about diversity and intercultural relations to inform its policy formulation process, can disaggregate data collected into specific groups, such as by cultural background, and conducts an annual Community Satisfaction Survey whose sample reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of the city and whose content has a focus on inclusion and diversity. Melton City Council promotes intercultural competence among its officials and staff, offering training programmes, and collaborates with other organisations to build its intercultural capacity. In a number of areas covered by the index equality data has emerged as a gap, specifically in education and in employment within the administration. Data gathered in relation to inclusion and diversity in the Community Satisfaction Survey is not broken down by cultural background.
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	✓	A range of settlement services and supports are available to new arrivals, including family members, unaccompanied minors, refugees and asylum seekers, students and migrant workers, through public agencies and civil society at the Federal, State and local levels. Melton City Council is an associated member of Welcoming Cities Australia.

	✗	Melton City does not have a designated agency, unit, person, or procedure to welcome newcomers and does not appear to have a comprehensive city-specific package of information and support for newcomers.
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP	✓	Melton City Council has several independent consultative bodies through which people with migrant/minority backgrounds can voice their concerns and advise Melton City Council on diversity and integration matters.
	✗	Foreign nationals cannot stand as candidates in local elections and cannot vote in local elections. Local Councils do not have a mandate over representation on public boards.
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION	✓	Melton City Council has carried out a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate residents with migrant/minority backgrounds. Melton City Council offers a dedicated service, 'Reducing Racism', to advise and support victims of discrimination, an initiative of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission has developed a set of anti-discrimination regulations for local government.
	✗	A focus on addressing institutional forms of discrimination is not made clear, it is not made clear if Melton City Council has a dedicated and binding document in place to set standards on and address the issue of discrimination and the various forms this might take, and there is limited initiative evident that is explicitly directed at anti-discrimination campaigns or awareness. There does not appear to be any specific action to explicitly monitor or research the extent and character of discrimination in the city.
INTERACTION	✓	Melton City Council interacts with civil society and grassroots organisations to promote intercultural inclusion, which interactions are captured and recorded by Council staff. Melton City Council actively builds relationships with civil society and grassroots organisations, resulting in the formation of networks, including those to promote interculturalism.
	✗	It is noted that lists of interactions with civil society and grassroots organisations are incomplete and not regularly updated.
PARTICIPATION	✓	Melton City Council has utilised a variety of community consultation techniques and approaches to support the development of the forthcoming iteration of the Intercultural Plan. Melton City Council utilises public participation networks to access community input on a variety of issues that can impact residents, and can be associated with specific Council services or other broader social issues.
	✗	Action at the level of Melton city on fair representation of culturally and linguistically diverse groups is not made apparent. The particular engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse groups in public participation networks is not identified and the specific needs of these groups to secure their participation and influence are not addressed. There is a positive focus on gender equality but the intersectional dimensions in this and how these are addressed are not made clear.

Melton is to be congratulated on the range and quality of the steps it has taken as an Intercultural City and the clarity of purpose and commitment in this. The framework of the Intercultural City will hopefully continue to serve the city well in realising its ambitions of equality, diversity and interaction in particular with the forthcoming publication of its next Intercultural Plan. We hope that the suggestions made in this report will be a resource in achieving ongoing visible and tangible results as an Intercultural City.

When it comes to the intercultural efforts, with reference to the questionnaire, Melton could enhance the sectors below by introducing different initiatives:

Commitment: The forthcoming 'Inclusive Cities Strategy' could usefully make a more explicit reference to the ICC guiding principles of: ensuring real equality, valuing diversity, fostering meaningful interaction and promoting active citizenship and participation. The City of Melton might usefully consider establishing a mainstreaming policy framework, deploying a mainstreaming procedure for a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the development of its general plans, policies, budgets, programmes and services. The City of Melton might usefully consider evolving its internal institutional structure, with a dedicated brief for interculturalism and driving the articulation of its intercultural principles, and at senior management level.

Education: The City of Melton could usefully expand the intercultural work being done within schools to include a focus on the policies, procedures and practices of schools and on school curricula. Melton could usefully bring its focus and work on cultural competence building to bear in relation to the teaching profession

Neighbourhoods: The work undertaken by libraries could usefully be built on by the City of Melton in a more intense investment in neighbourhood interaction. A more planned and systematic approach to interaction between neighbourhoods might serve the City of Melton and could build on the range of actions in place or committed to.

Public services: The City of Melton could further develop data collection to track progress on the diversity of its employees in terms of culturally and linguistically diverse groups, encompassing their presence and experience, as well as its capacity to meet their specific needs. The focus on interculturalism and service delivery by Melton City Council could usefully look behind what gets delivered, to shaping the manner in which public services get delivered in terms of organisational systems and their design, and the organisational culture that shapes priorities, procedures and practice within an organisation.

Business and the labour market: The Venture Melton Business Network focus on diversity and inclusion could usefully be evolved in an ongoing manner by the City of Melton, if this dimension to the Venture Melton Business Network is to remain attractive and secure ongoing engagement. More focused networking initiatives might assist. The provision of guidance and practical tools by the City of Melton might further assist the performance by businesses in giving expression to values of diversity and inclusion and in focusing on culturally and linguistically diverse groups. Work being done by Melton City Council to support culturally and linguistically diverse entrepreneurs might benefit from tracking emerging thinking in this area and creating the links to access this new thinking.

Cultural and social life: Melton City Council support for cultural sector organisations to take action on the intercultural dimensions of their work could include a focus on supporting a capacity to do so within the sector. Public debate fostered by Melton City Council on issues of cultural diversity and living together might usefully be strengthened by the addition of further endeavours of a more creative and informal nature which would allow for a broader focus for debate and discussion.

Public space: Melton City Council's Community Facilities Access Policy could provide a foundation from which: to strengthen, enable and support the design and management processes for public spaces to have a clear and well-developed intercultural dimension; to ensure a capacity to implement this approach is supported and resourced; and to involve culturally and linguistically diverse communities in these processes. Creativity of approach evident in this regard in the library sector in Melton, could usefully be expanded more widely to parks, squares and community centres.

Mediation and conflict resolution: The City of Melton could usefully consider developing or supporting a dedicated initiative to focus on the prevention and mediation of inter-communal conflict across culturally and linguistically diverse groups. This could usefully include a focus on preventing and addressing all forms of racism, hate speech, and hate crime.

Language: Multilingualism could usefully be developed as a focus in the work of the City of Melton on language diversity. It would be valuable for the City of Melton to focus on harder to reach groups within culturally and linguistically diverse communities, in English language programmes being developed, given language barriers can cause particular isolation for women. The City of Melton might usefully test out creative ways of celebrating language diversity and sharing language diversity as a resource.

Media and communication: The City of Melton has valuably addressed instances of significantly negative coverage of cultural and linguistic groups. It might usefully consider building on such challenges when made, with communication campaigns of its own to communicate an alternative through its values of diversity and inclusion and promoting these values in a creative and engaging manner. The City of Melton could usefully consider taking more focused actions to inform and shape a media coverage that would be free of stereotypes and racism. This could be undertaken in partnership with other entities.

International outlook: The City of Melton could usefully develop a strategy or plan or policy, with a dedicated budget, to establish its ambition for international cooperation and set out the strands of activity it would pursue in this regard. Melton City Council could build on its involvement with the Intercultural Cities Programme to grow and sustain a networking and develop collaborations specifically around issues of interculturalism and the principles of equality, diversity, interaction and participation . In this it could also look beyond this network to make links with other cities on specific issues around interculturalism, that go beyond the focus on inclusive learning and lifelong learning.

Intercultural intelligence and competence: Melton City Council could usefully build on its annual Community Satisfaction Survey initiative, to present its findings in a manner that captures any difference in perspectives across culturally and linguistically diverse groups. Melton City Council could look to building a context within which to ensure staff can put learning from intercultural training into practice, including a focus on supporting management practice in this regard and the development of guidance materials for use in the workplace by staff that have done the training. A further evolution of the training offered by Melton City Council could be considered with a view to strengthening intercultural competence beyond communication and interpretation, focusing on political leadership for diversity, management of diversity and management for diversity, competency in identifying and addressing issues of racism, and in recognising the practical implications of cultural diversity and making adaptations for these.

Welcoming newcomers: Melton City Council could usefully develop a more focused welcoming policy for new arrivals and a range of tools and supports to put this policy into practice, including a designated structure.

Leadership and citizenship: Melton City Council has a number of valuable participatory structures in place. Attention could usefully be given to underpinning the influence that can be exercised by such structures, the accountability to their communities, and their capacity to make a difference for their communities.

Anti-discrimination: The City of Melton could usefully develop further initiatives to explicitly track, monitor and research issues of discrimination and the various forms this can take. The City of Melton could usefully explore opportunities to sustain and further evolve its work on promoting awareness of discrimination issues, zero tolerance for discrimination, and a valuing of equality. The City of Melton could usefully establish and secure agreement on a standard in relation to anti-racism, diversity and equality, that it would apply within its own systems and structures and that it would encourage other institutions to likewise adopt and apply such as standard.

Interaction: Melton City Council might consider developing a targeted focus on support the development, capacity and empowerment of organisations within and representative of culturally and linguistically diverse groups to enhance the quality of interactions already being engaged in. Initiatives of formal dialogue with culturally and linguistically diverse groups and their representative organisations on topics of shared importance such as issues of systemic racism, intercultural ambitions, and cultural expression and preservation could usefully be convened by Melton City Council.

Participation: Melton City Council could usefully explore approaches to building capacity and empowering culturally and linguistically diverse groups in creating leadership, platforms and organisations through which to engage in an influential manner with the City Council and in its deliberations. It could further track and monitor the scale and impact of this participation. Melton City Council might consider developing, within its work on gender equality, targeted measures on women from culturally and linguistically diverse groups. More specifically Melton City Council could look to ensuring the participation of women in its structures for engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Melton may wish to consider further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided above for each sector as well as in the Intercultural cities database.

Diversity has become a key feature of societies today and is particularly tangible in urban centres. While people of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and faith backgrounds have immensely contributed to post-war prosperity, inequalities related to origin, culture and skin colour persist, and anxiety about pluralism, identity and shared values is often politically instrumentalised. The challenge of fostering equity and cohesion in culturally diverse societies has become more acute. Cities are uniquely placed to imagine and test responses to this challenge.

The Council of Europe and its partner cities have developed and validated an intercultural approach to integration and inclusion which enables cities to reap the benefits and minimise the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity. A decade after the start of this work, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, produces positive outcomes in terms of creativity, wellbeing and economic development.

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme invites cities in Europe and beyond to explore and apply policies that harness diversity for personal and societal development.