SOCIAL PLANNING

Community Engagement Report
Social Cohesion Plan

24 March 2026

Randwick City Council
a sense of community

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Acknowledgement of Country

Randwick City Council pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the land, the Bidjigal and Gadigal people, and acknowledges the living and continuing culture of the Traditional Custodians of this land. We recognise that Traditional Custodians have occupied and cared for this Country over countless generations, and we celebrate their ongoing contributions to the life of this area.

Alternative formats and translated versions

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Executive Summary

Randwick City Council is developing a Social Cohesion Plan 2026–2031 to strengthen community resilience, belonging and connection across the Local Government Area (LGA). Social cohesion is the foundation of an inclusive and liveable city where people feel safe, valued, and able to participate fully in community life.

To inform the Plan, Council undertook community and stakeholder engagement from mid-2025 to February 2026. Approximately 600 people participated through an online survey, targeted pop-ups, a youth forum, a social cohesion forum, stakeholder interviews and workshops with community organisations, Council teams and the Cultural Diversity and Equity Community Advisory Committee.

Feedback highlighted:

- Randwick City is widely seen as diverse, welcoming, and community-minded, with beaches, parks, libraries and community facilities playing a central role in everyday connection.
- People value the area's natural assets, public spaces, cultural diversity and strong network of local services and community organisations.
- While overall cohesion is strong, some residents experience barriers to belonging and equitable access, particularly people from diverse cultural, linguistic and spiritual backgrounds and those with intersecting identities.
- Some community members experience racism, discrimination or antisemitism, which can affect feelings of safety and trust.
- Language and communication barriers limit access to information, services and engagement for some residents.
- Housing stress, cost of living pressures and limited access to health and mental health services impact wellbeing for parts of the community.
- Some suburbs experience place-based disadvantage, with fewer services, facilities and transport options.
- Young people highlighted the need for more inclusive spaces, opportunities to connect and better access to mental health support.
- Residents strongly support more multicultural and intercultural place-based events.
- There is a strong desire for greater participation in decision-making and more diverse representation in leadership.
- Stakeholders emphasised the importance of clear, accessible communication and visible leadership that promotes safety, trust and inclusion.

This report summarises the engagement approach and insights gathered, which will directly inform the development of the Social Cohesion Plan 2026–2031.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

As Randwick City's population continues to grow and becomes more culturally diverse, it is integral that communities and places are socially cohesive, connected and resilient. Research shows that socially cohesive communities have better health and wellbeing outcomes, stronger economies, lower levels of crime and discrimination and are more resilient in the face of emergencies and social change. For example, the *Mapping Social Cohesion Report* by the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute shows that higher levels of social cohesion are associated with improved wellbeing, increased trust, greater resilience and better social and economic outcomes[1].

Randwick City Council (Council) is developing a *Social Cohesion Plan 2026-2031* (Plan) to strengthen inclusion, belonging, and multiculturalism in the city. The Plan will:

- Provide strategic direction for Council's resources, partnerships and community engagement to promote inclusion and belonging.
- Strengthen Council's commitment to multiculturalism and social cohesion.
- Ensure that diverse communities are actively engaged, and that Council is responsive to their needs.

Council engaged Cred Consulting to design and deliver a program of community and stakeholder consultation to inform the Plan.

1.2. Purpose of engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders about the Social Cohesion Plan.
- Inform the community and stakeholders about the concept of social cohesion and why it is important for Randwick City.
- Understand the current state of social cohesion in Randwick City and the sense of community connectedness, inclusion and belonging.
- Explore challenges and opportunities to strengthen social cohesion in Randwick City.

1.3. Engagement program

Approximately 600 people participated across all engagement activities.

The engagement program consisted of a mix of online and in-person opportunities for community and stakeholders to participate in. It included:

- an online survey
- four targeted pop-ups
- a youth forum
- a social cohesion forum with civic and spiritual leaders including Rabbis, community service providers, and local organisations
- three workshops with the Inner East Sydney Multicultural Interagency (IESMI), Randwick Cultural Diversity and Equity Community Advisory Committee and Council teams assigned actions
- Seventeen external stakeholder interviews.

[1] Scanlon Foundation Research Institute (2024), *Mapping Social Cohesion*

The below table summarises the community and stakeholder engagement program, including number of participants reached by activity.

Consultation Method	Participant Profile	Participant Number
Online community survey	• Broader community members	319
Pop-Up consultations	• Broader community members • Targeted cohorts (CALD)	48
Workshops	• Inner Eastern Sydney Multicultural Interagency • Randwick Cultural Diversity and Equity Community Advisory Committee • Council teams assigned Actions	36
Forums	• Social Cohesion Forum • Youth Forum	179
Stakeholder interviews	• Eastern Beaches Police Area Command • Multicultural NSW • NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet • Sydney Multicultural Community Services • Community and Faith Leaders • Service providers and Community Organisations • Academic	19
TOTAL		**601**

2. What we heard

Engagement across all activities shows that Randwick City is a diverse, welcoming and community-minded place. People value the area's natural assets, public spaces, cultural diversity and strong network of local services. At the same time, not all residents experience belonging or equitable access, and several systemic and emerging challenges shape how people connect, participate and feel safe.

Randwick City is diverse, welcoming and connected

Across all engagement activities, people described Randwick City as culturally diverse, inclusive and generally welcoming. Everyday interactions in beaches, parks, libraries and community hubs play a significant role in fostering connection and belonging. Local services and grassroots organisations were consistently recognised for their commitment to community wellbeing and their strong partnerships with Council.

Stakeholders also highlighted Council's responsiveness during crises, noting examples where Council acted quickly to support affected communities. Some community leaders emphasised the importance of promoting positive stories about migrant communities, local contributions and acts of kindness to strengthen cohesion.

"My family and I… love most about living in the Randwick area is its diversity, respectful, inclusive and welcoming to all people."

Not everyone experiences belonging or equitable access

Despite these strengths, some community members face barriers to participation, connection and support. Older people, people with disability, young people, LGBTQIA+ residents, CALD communities, people experiencing family violence and those accessing drug and alcohol services were identified as more likely to experience isolation or limited access to services. Place-based disadvantage in parts of Maroubra, Malabar and La Perouse contribute to inequitable outcomes.

Stakeholders also noted that some cultural groups experience discrimination when using community facilities but may not report it due to language barriers or lack of confidence.

Communities expressed a need for programs that are informed by stronger planning and cultural insight, ensuring activities are well-designed, relevant and responsive to the needs of specific cultural groups.

"There are big social disparities… Randwick has the highest difference between suburbs."

Discrimination and racism affect safety and cohesion

Experiences of racism, antisemitism and discrimination were raised across multiple engagement activities. These experiences impact people's sense of safety and belonging and contribute to social tension. Participants called for stronger leadership, public messaging and community education to address racism and promote respect.

Stakeholders emphasised the need for initiatives that counter hate speech and promote compassion, unity and shared values. Some communities expressed a need for greater understanding of the pressures they face and for Council to help challenge stereotypes and misconceptions.

"Living near the beach… I and my children have had direct experiences of racism because of our skin colour."

Language and communication barriers limit access and participation

Language barriers remain a significant challenge for many residents. Participants highlighted the need for clearer, simpler communication, more translated materials and multilingual signage, particularly for safety information and essential services.

Stakeholders emphasised that traditional engagement methods, such as surveys, are not always accessible to CALD communities. Some stakeholders also noted that frontline staff play an important role in connecting with CALD communities who may not engage through traditional methods.

"When we hear about something happening it's always in a single language… would be good to include more languages."

Housing stress, cost of living and access to services are major pressures

Housing affordability, cost-of-living pressures and limited access to health and mental health services were consistently identified as major challenges. These pressures contribute to social isolation, financial stress and reduced wellbeing, particularly for renters, low-income households and older people. Concerns were also raised about crime, antisocial behaviour and the affordability and availability of community facilities.

"It is undeniable that people are in a cost-of-living crisis and there is a lot of external pressure on families and individuals."

Young people want more spaces, events and opportunities to connect

Young people described feeling disconnected due to social cliques, limited inter-school activities and the impacts of social media. They want more inclusive spaces, regular youth-focused events, leadership and employment pathways, and easier access to mental health support.

"There's no interactions between friendship groups at school; we're only socially connected in our bubbles."

People want to be involved in shaping a more connected and inclusive city

There is strong appetite for greater participation in decision-making. Many residents want more opportunities to provide feedback, more diverse representation in leadership and better engagement with marginalised or underrepresented groups.

"There are voices missing in the room. We need to think about whose perspective we are missing."

People want more inclusive, multicultural and place-based events

Residents want more opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity and connect with neighbours. Large multicultural festivals and smaller local events were both strongly supported. People emphasised the importance of events that are family-friendly, affordable and reflective of Randwick's diverse communities.

"Create cultural events so that people feel included and make people from all communities come together and collaborate."

Some participants also suggested opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring councils on multicultural events and initiatives.

3. What this means for Randwick

The consultation shows that people experience social cohesion in different ways, shaped by culture, language, identity, life stage and access to services. While experiences vary, the themes raised across the engagement are consistent and point to clear priorities for strengthening inclusion, belonging and connection in Randwick City. These themes also align with state and national trends, indicating that Randwick is experiencing local expressions of broader social, economic and cultural shifts.

Across the engagement, communities expressed a need for stronger connection, clearer communication, and visible leadership that actively promotes unity, challenges discrimination and demonstrates care for communities during times of tension or shock**.** People want to feel safe, respected and valued, and they want Council to play an active role in supporting understanding, trust and shared community pride.

Service providers emphasised the need for coordinated responses, culturally informed programs and stronger pathways between Council, services and community groups. Community leaders highlighted the importance of promoting positive stories, celebrating contributions and strengthening the values of kindness, compassion and mutual respect.

CALD communities expressed a need for more accessible communication channels, including multilingual information and culturally appropriate platforms such as WeChat, Rednote and Douyin. Stakeholders also highlighted that frontline staff play an important role in connecting with communities who may not engage through traditional methods, helping to bridge language, cultural and trust barriers. Young people emphasised the importance of safe spaces, opportunities to connect and support for mental health and wellbeing, while residents experiencing financial stress or limited access to services identified the need for more localised support and accessible facilities.

Across all groups, people expressed a need for Council to take a clear public stance against racism, antisemitism and discrimination, and to visibly support affected communities following harmful or traumatic events.

Overall, the engagement indicates that social cohesion in Randwick is strong, supported by diverse communities, valued public spaces and active local services. At the same time, some residents experience barriers to belonging, safety and access, highlighting the importance of clear communication, culturally informed approaches and localised support to ensure all community members feel connected and included.

4. Conclusion

The insights gathered through this engagement, viewed alongside Randwick's diverse community profile and broader social and cultural trends, highlight several factors that shape how people experience connection, belonging and safety in Randwick City. Participants included community members, service providers and cultural and faith representatives, offering a range of perspectives on the conditions that support social cohesion locally and the areas where some residents experience barriers.

Everyday Connection and Community Belonging

Feedback highlighted the importance of everyday interactions at beaches, parks, libraries and community facilities, which play a central role in fostering belonging and wellbeing.

Implications for the Social Cohesion Plan:

- Support opportunities for informal connection through programs, events and activation of shared spaces.
- Promote positive local stories that reflect Randwick's diversity and strengthen shared community identity.
- Continue facilitating networks and partnerships that help build neighbour to neighbour connection.

Equity, Access and Inclusion

While cohesion is strong overall, some residents experience barriers to belonging, safety and access, particularly people from culturally, linguistically and spiritually diverse backgrounds and intersecting identities.

Implications for the Social Cohesion Plan:

- Strengthen culturally informed and accessible communication, including multilingual information.
- Improve visibility of services, supports and community facilities through clear, accessible information channels.
- Consider localised approaches in areas where residents experience reduced access to services or amenities.

Addressing Racism, Antisemitism and Discrimination

Experiences of racism, antisemitism and discrimination were raised across multiple engagement activities and can undermine feelings of safety, trust and connection.

Implications for the Social Cohesion Plan:

- Promote messages and initiatives that reinforce respect, safety and shared community values.
- Support community-led efforts that build understanding and respond to harmful incidents.

- Strengthen partnerships with services and community groups to support affect communities.
- Demonstrate visible Council leadership in addressing racism, antisemitism and discrimination.

Communication and Information Access

Language and communication barriers limit access to information, services and engagement for some residents, particularly CALD communities.

Implications for the Social Cohesion Plan:

- Improve clarity, accessibility and consistency of Council communication across channels.
- Expand multilingual communication and use culturally relevant platforms where appropriate.
- Provide more face-to-face or community-based information opportunities.
- Tap into and leverage existing communication channels within the community.

Localised Support and Service Navigation

Residents experiencing limited access to services or place-based disadvantage need more localised support and clearer pathways between services.

Implications for the Social Cohesion Plan:

- Strengthen coordination and referral pathways through partnerships with local services and organisations.
- Improve visibility of local supports through accessible communication channels.
- Consider localised engagement and connection opportunities in suburbs with fewer facilities or transport options.

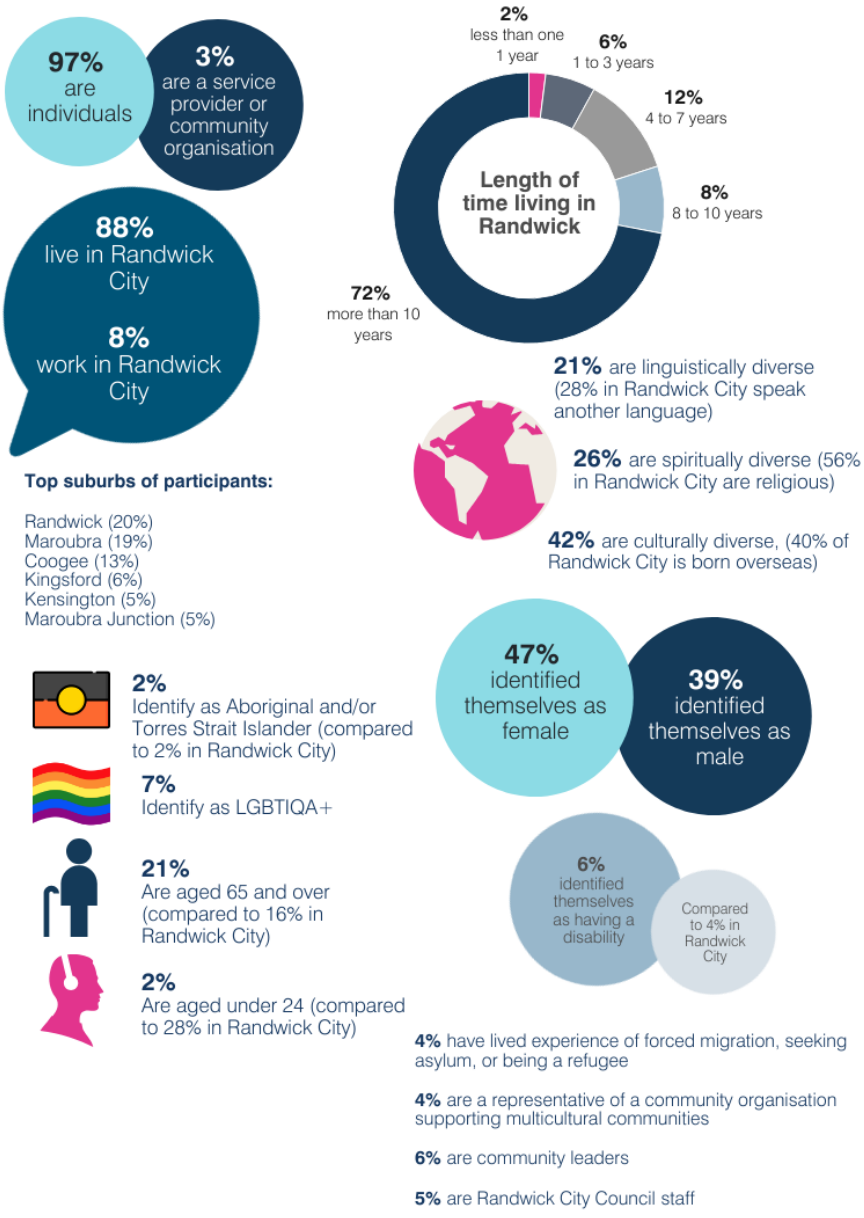
These insights reinforce the importance of connection, inclusion and participation as core foundations of social cohesion in Randwick City. They also highlight where some residents experience barriers to belonging, safety and access. Together, these findings provide a clear evidence base for the Social Cohesion Plan 2026–2031, ensuring it reflects community experience and aligns with Council's role in creating welcoming, equitable and connected communities.

A. Appendix

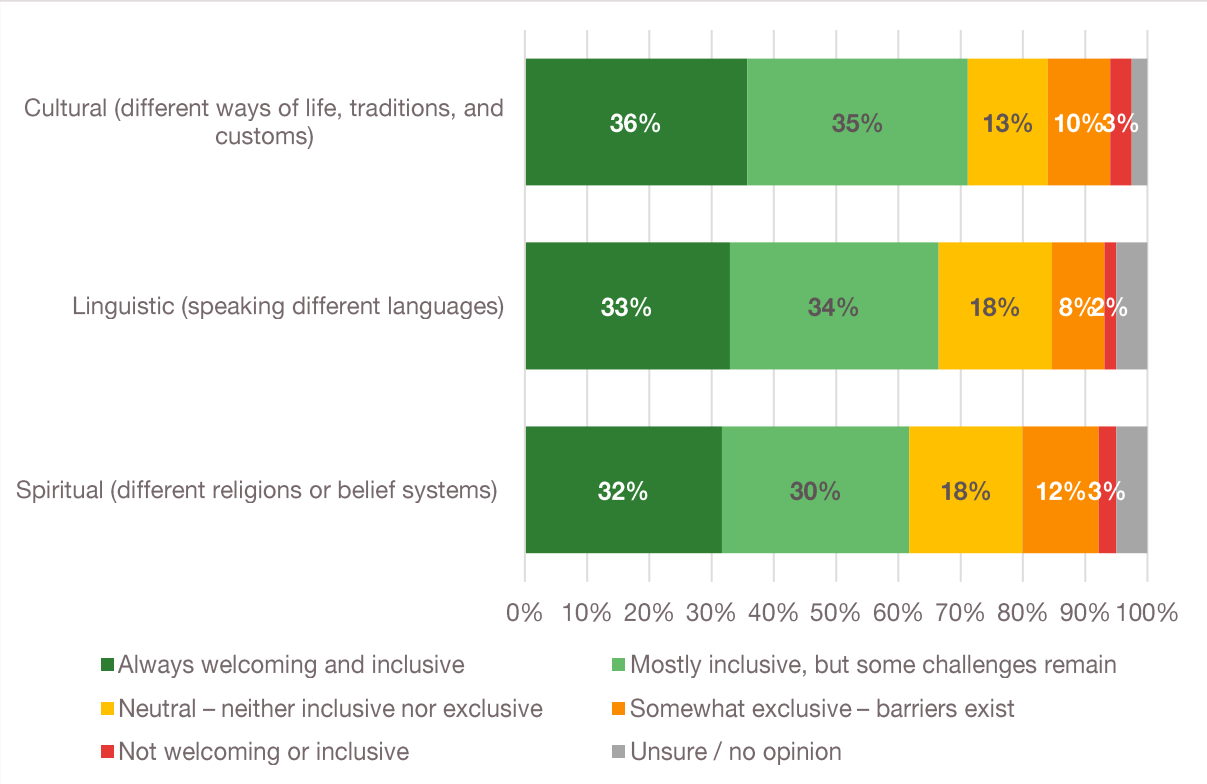
A.1. Survey

An online survey was available via Council's Have Your Say platform from 20 March to 4 May 2025. The survey was originally developed to inform a Multicultural Plan and therefore had a strong focus on cultural diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism. As Council's focus expanded to include a broader social cohesion focus, the survey results provide valuable insights into the experiences, perceptions and priorities of CALD communities in Randwick City. It also helps understand the current state of social cohesion in Randwick City and explore challenges and opportunities to strengthen social cohesion.

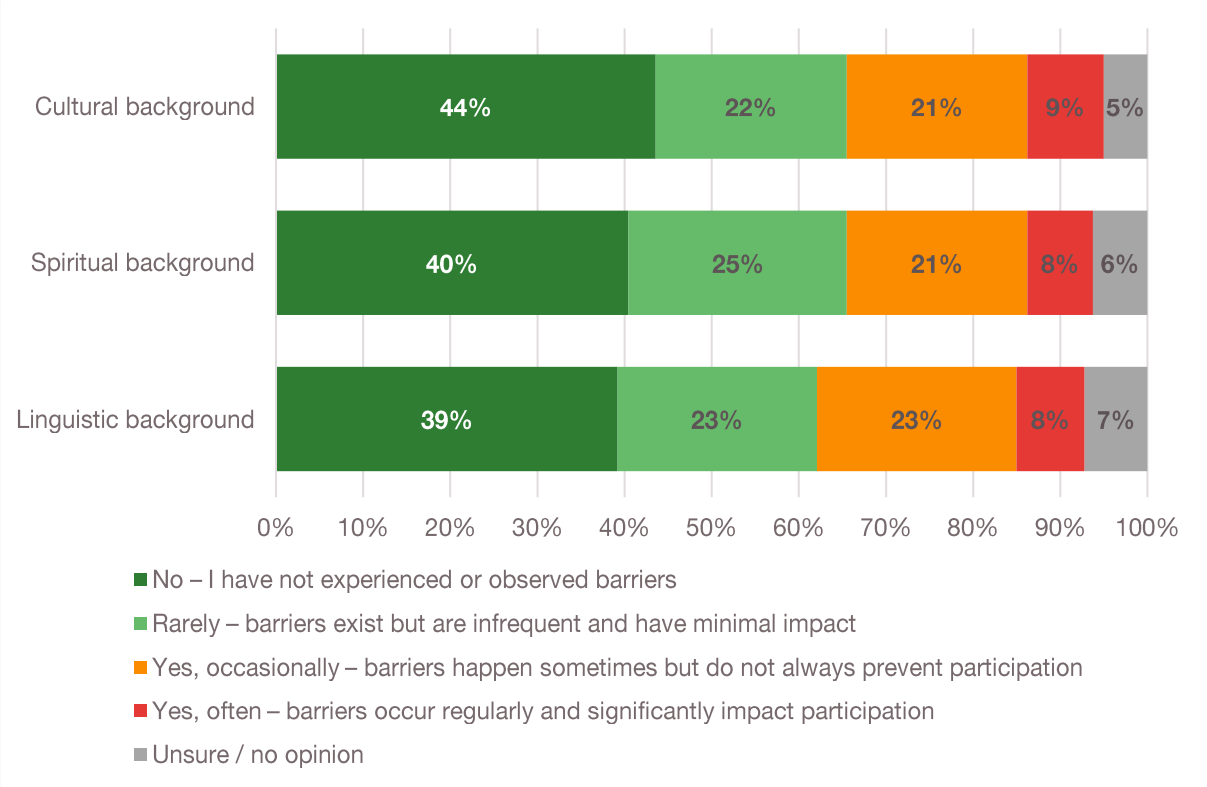
A total of 319 surveys were completed.



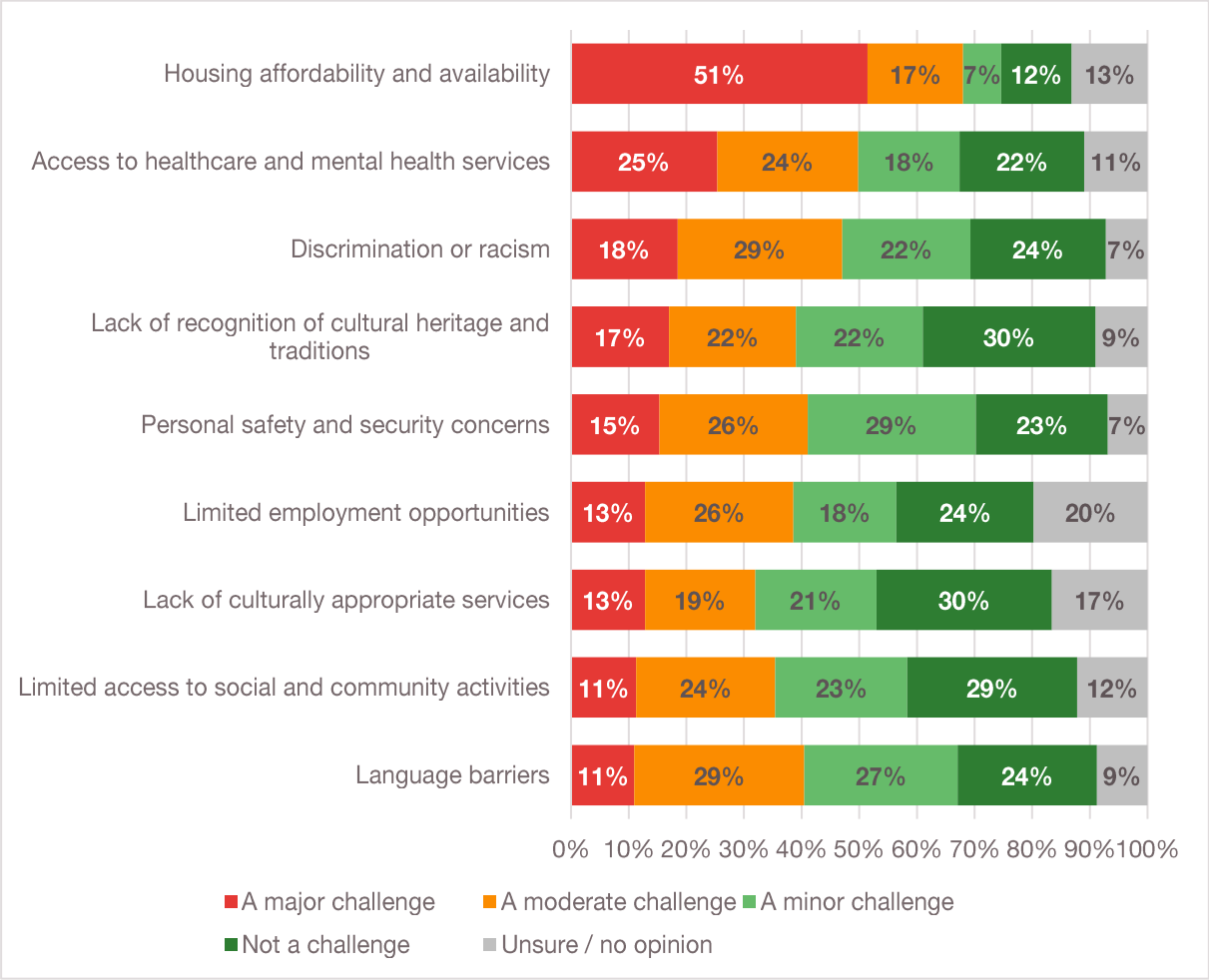
Question: How inclusive do you think Randwick City is for people from diverse cultural, spiritual and linguistic backgrounds?



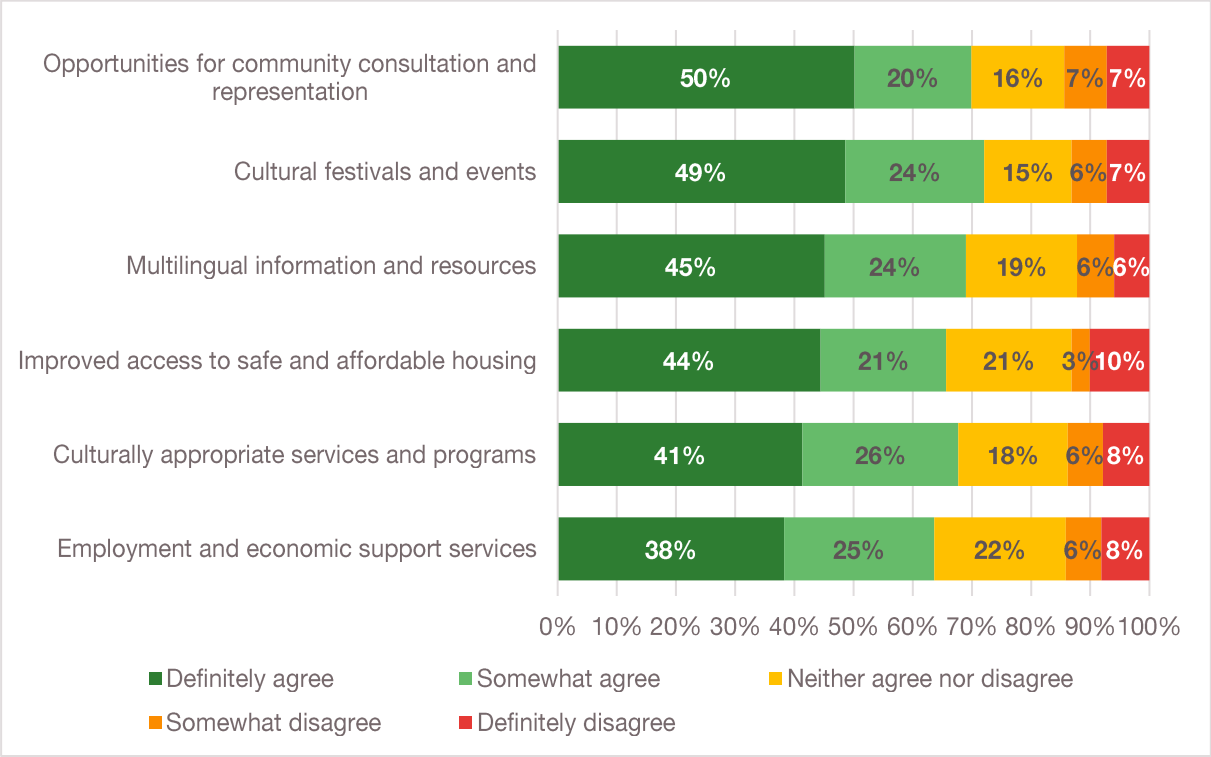
Question: Have you or someone you know experienced barriers in accessing services, opportunities, or participation in the community due to your cultural, spiritual or linguistic background?



Question: How significant are the challenges for diverse communities in Randwick City?

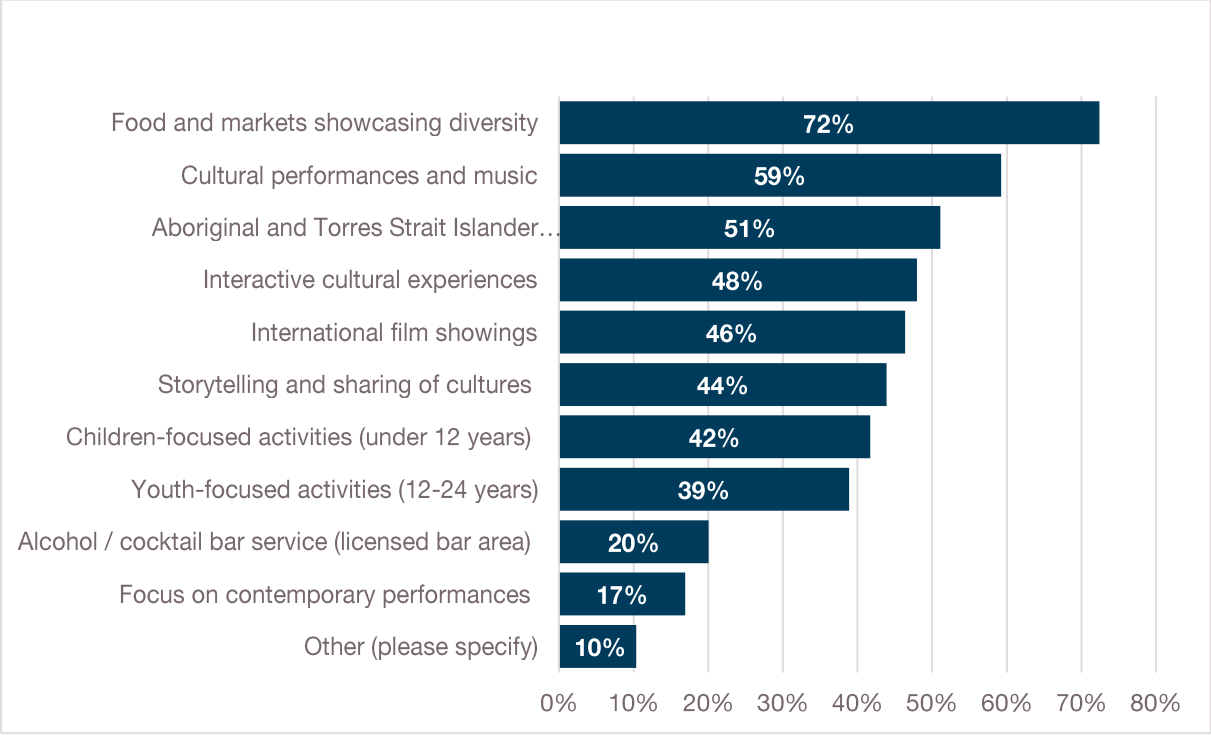


Question: How much do you agree or disagree that different types of support or services would contribute to multicultural communities feeling more included and supported in Randwick City?



Question: Would you be interested in attending a major multicultural festival in Randwick City?

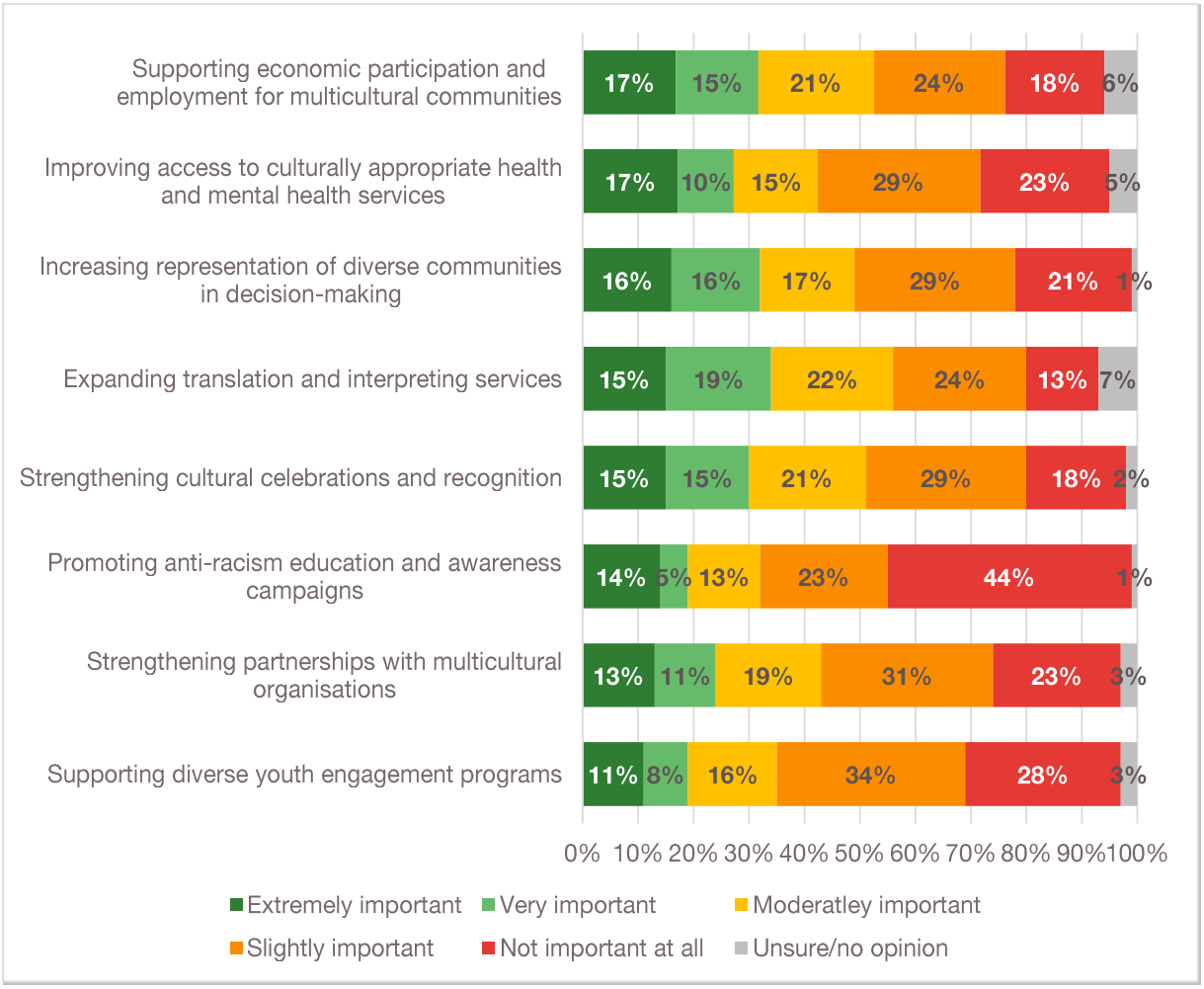
Survey participants were asked if they would attend a major multicultural festival in Randwick City. The majority of participants (68%) indicted they would. 16% indicated they would not, and 15% were unsure.



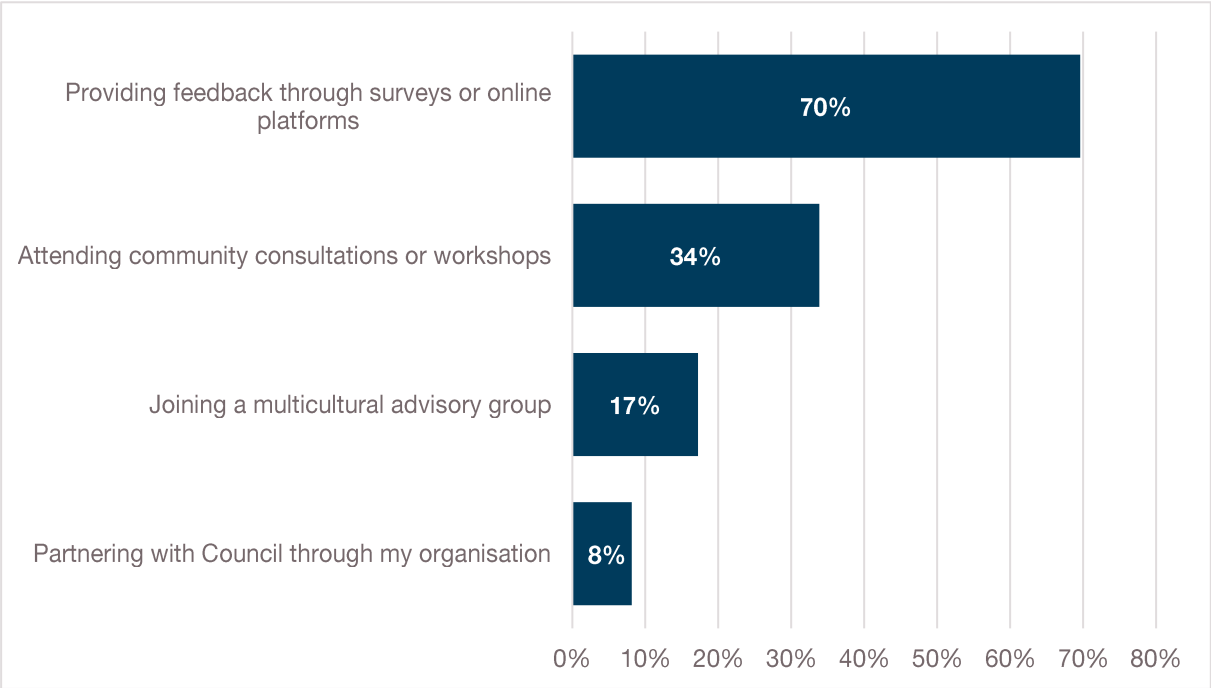
Question: Would you be interested in working with Council to help shape a multicultural event?

Survey participants were asked if they would be interested in working with Council to shape a multicultural event. 22% indicated they would be.

Question: How important is it for Council to prioritise the following in its 2026-2031 Social Cohesion Plan?



Question: Going forward, how you like to be involved in shaping Council's Social Cohesion Plan?



Question: Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or recommendations?

Survey participants were asked, via open-ended question, if there was anything else they would like to share. 121 participants answered this question. The feedback included:

- More opportunities for local communities to celebrate cultural diversity through festivals and events.
- Provide more support to vulnerable cohorts such as women experiencing domestic violence or older people.
- Concerns over diversity efforts being overly politicised or imbalanced.
- A preference for Council to focus on providing basic services and maintenance instead.

A.2. Targeted pop-ups

Three targeted pop-ups were held where over 48 community members participated. The purpose of the targeted pop-ups was to understand the key strengths, challenges and opportunities for social cohesion in Randwick City across key cohorts.

Date and time	Location	Targeted cohort	Number of participants
Wednesday 11 June 2025	Lexo Community Hub, Maroubra	Stakeholders including residents in housing estate, those with lived experience of domestic violence, financial hardship and digital literacy	25
Tuesday 17 June 2025	Lionel Bowen Library and Community Centre, Maroubra	Chinese community members	15
Wednesday 9 July 2025	Lionel Bowen Library and Community Centre, Maroubra	CALD communities	8

Key insights

Randwick City's natural assets, open spaces, cultural diversity and Council services contribute to a strong sense of connection and belonging. Participants at Lexington Hub noted the Hub is an important community space and provides important programs, particularly the food programs.

Common challenges to social cohesion include transport, housing stress, safety and access to essential services. Specific groups, such as CALD community members, carers and young people reported challenges around language barriers, social isolation and limited access to health and mental health support.

Suggestions to strengthen social cohesion included more mental health services, inclusive community events, youth employment initiatives, English language programs and improved transport and safety infrastructure.

Ideas

The top ideas across the pop-ups to improve social cohesion include:

- More access to mental health and wellbeing services, in particular drug and alcohol support services, education around trauma and mental health and peer workers at the Lexington Hub who can liaise with police and Council without breaching of confidentiality.
- Better public transport networks across Randwick City, including more buses towards the CBD and airport.
- Better safety measures in public spaces including more police patrols, pedestrian crossings and more speed humps.
- More opportunities to learn English through libraries and community centres.
- More outdoor gym equipment and free exercise programs for older people.
- More events in parks and open spaces, including cultural events, sporting events, live music and events for older people.
- Careers fairs for young people to support them to find jobs, local internships and volunteering opportunities.
- Skills-building programs for primary school students (e.g. painting) to build individuality and skills for the future.

- Better waste management including more garbage bins along Malabar Road and frequent pick-up of red bins.

A.3. Interviews

Seventeen interviews with stakeholders were conducted from June 2025 to February 2026. Interviews were held via Microsoft Teams.

Stakeholders interviewed included:

- South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) – the local health district that covers the Randwick City area.
- Junction Neighbourhood Centre – a not-for-profit organisation working to provide a diverse range of community services, including aged care services, domestic and family violence support and community development.
- Autism Mates – a not-for-profit focusing on empowerment, friendship and inclusion for people with autism.
- Twenty10 – is an LGBTIQA+ organisation that provides young people with housing, counselling and social support.
- NSW Police – a state government agency protecting the community and property through preventing and investigating crime, maintaining road safety and social order and performing emergency and rescue operations. (two interviews)
- Kooloora Community Centre – a community organisation providing support for families living in Malabar, Chifley and Little Bay.
- Multicultural NSW - the NSW Government agency responsible for promoting community harmony, supporting multicultural communities and strengthening social cohesion across the state.
- Key community and faith leaders - representing culturally, linguistically and spiritually diverse communities across Randwick.
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (two interviews) - the central NSW Government agency providing strategic policy advice, coordination and whole-of-government leadership on issues including social cohesion, disability inclusion and community engagement.
- An academic with expertise in social cohesion.

Key insights

Council is a trusted and committed partner in building social cohesion in Randwick City. They have developed strong partnerships with community organisations and services, and the grants program helps support social outcomes.

Beaches, parks, libraries and Lexington Hub are welcoming, accessible spaces that foster everyday connection, inclusion and belonging.

Older people, people with disability, CALD communities, young people (especially LGBTIQA+) and people experiencing family violence or substance misuse are more likely to face isolation, stigma and limited access to services or safe spaces.

Rising cost of living, lack of affordable housing and place-based disadvantage, particularly in areas like Malabar and La Perouse, are contributing to food insecurity, mental health challenges and social isolation.

Local organisations face funding gaps and high venue hire costs.

Ideas and opportunities

Interview participants suggested the following opportunities for the Plan:

Improve internal Council processes

- Take a place-based approach to social cohesion and understand what micro communities need to connect.
- Develop more partnerships targeted towards improving social cohesion including with NSW Health.
- Review the community grants program to include a social cohesion lens and provide funding to organisations and services delivering social outcomes.
- Ensure a whole of Council approach is taken to social cohesion and get buy-in from all teams.
- Provide more training and awareness of the Sunflower Lanyard program, including posters at local libraries and community centres.

More inclusive events and programs

- Host more regular, affordable place-based events and support not-for-profits running these types of events.
- Continue to partner with agencies such as NSW Police to deliver joint events to build trust and educate the community.
- Provide agencies and services with Randwick City's event calendar each year to allow opportunities for joint events, collaboration and shared programming.
- Run large multicultural events or festivals in open spaces across Randwick City with food stalls and entertainment.
- Explore opportunities to run peer education programs at community facilities (e.g. Lexington Hub) to upskill and build capacity within the community. There is an example of this happening within social housing in Waterloo.

Improve access to community facilities and spaces

- Review the current community venue hire policy and address concerns around affordability.
- Align with the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) around access and inclusion in public spaces, particularly around inclusive parks and playgrounds and disability parking spots.

Improve community education and awareness

- Develop a central database for services, programs and events in the social cohesion space to increase awareness.
- Host a 'Welcome to Randwick City' stall at O-Week at UNSW to engage students, including international students and educate them about services available.
- Develop more campaigns and messaging around social cohesion and inclusion.

Improve collaboration

- Host a quarterly social cohesion forum with government agencies and service providers to provide insights into key social cohesion challenges in Randwick City, share information and collaborate on solutions and ideas.

A.4. Youth forum

The youth forum *Randwick Forum: Youth Ideas in Action 2025* was held on Tuesday 13 May 2025 from 9am to 1pm at Matraville Youth and Cultural Hall. The forum was a half-day interactive event designed to engage young people aged 12–24 years from diverse backgrounds across the Randwick Local Government Area (LGA). A total of 60 young people participated in the forum.

The Forum featured a Social Cohesion station, where participants were given the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas in response to the following questions:

- What does social cohesion mean for you and your friends and family?
- Do you think young people feel socially connected in Randwick? Why or why not?
- How can we make young people feel welcome and part of our community?

Key insights

- Young people value connection, diversity and belonging, and define social cohesion through shared experiences, mutual support, and celebrating differences. They highlighted sport, storytelling, and trusted relationships as powerful tools for building bridges across cultures and backgrounds.
- Opportunities to connect beyond their usual circles are limited, with participants pointing to social cliques in schools and a lack of inter-school or community-wide activities. The youth forum itself was appreciated as a rare chance to meet peers from different schools and backgrounds.
- Events, activities, and safe spaces are key enablers of social connection, especially when designed with young people's interests in mind. Participants called for regular, inclusive programming (not just during Youth Week) in public spaces and community facilities that feel welcoming to young people.
- Young people are eager for more leadership, skill-building and civic opportunities, including youth-oriented volunteering, employment pathways, and cultural education initiatives that promote acceptance and empower them to shape their community.

A.5. Social cohesion forum

A Social Cohesion Forum was held on Friday 13 June 2025 from 9am to 1pm at Clovelly Bowling Club. It brought together civic and spiritual leaders, community service providers and local organisations to explore ways to strengthen belonging, safety, and inclusion across the Eastern Suburbs communities.

The Forum was hosted collaboratively by Randwick City Council Mayor Dylan Parker, Woollahra Municipal Council Mayor Sarah Swan, and Waverley Council Mayor Will Nemesh, to demonstrate local government support in building community wellbeing and connections.

The Forum included interactive roundtable discussions. 119 people attended the Forum representing a range of local services and organisations, including:

- **Local government:** Randwick City Council, Waverley Council, Woollahra Municipal Council, Camden Council and City of Sydney.
- **State and federal government agencies:** Australian Federal Police, NSW Police, NSW Premier's Department, Multicultural NSW and South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.
- **Legal and advocacy services:** Kingsford Legal Centre, Inner City Legal Centre, Inner Sydney Voice, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Incorporated and Ethnic Communities Council NSW.
- **Health and social services:** The Junction Neighbourhood Centre, Lifeline Eastern Suburbs Bondi, Open Support, Holdsworth, Kooloora Community Centre, The Soul Centre, Royal

Hospital for Women, Nurture Next, Mum for Mum, Street Industries, The Equanimity Project, Lokahi Foundation, Disability Gateway, Autism Mates, Weave Youth and Community Services, Moving Forward Together, Soroptimist International Randwick and Eastern Suburbs and Twenty10.
- **Education:** TAFE NSW and Sydney East Community College.
- **Businesses:** Cultural Perspectives, Polaron Connect and Flourish HR.
- **Other organisations and groups:** Indonesian Presbyterian Church Randwick, Never Again Is Now, Waverley Community Men's Shed, Swim for Ukraine and Bondi Beach playgrounds.
- In addition, the Federal Member for Wentworth, Allegra Spender and the State Member for Coogee, Dr. Marjorie O'Neill attended the Forum.

Key insights

Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra have many strengths for social cohesion

Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra have strong foundations for social cohesion. The community is engaged, active and diverse, with well-established grassroots initiatives and volunteer networks. Public spaces such as beaches, parks, libraries, community hubs and halls are widely valued as safe, welcoming and accessible environments for connection and belonging. Local services and councils are trusted and seen as committed to collaboration, equity and social cohesion. These strengths contribute to a civically engaged and connected region, and support strong partnerships across councils, services, government agencies and local businesses.

However, not all community members are able to participate equitably

At the same time, several challenges impact social cohesion across the area. Barriers such as language, digital exclusion, financial pressures, mental health challenges, discrimination and a lack of awareness of available services and events make it harder for some residents to participate fully in community life. Key cohorts who are more likely to experience these barriers include people with caring responsibilities, those from CALD backgrounds, people with disability and newly arrived migrants. Organisations and services working to address these issues are often constrained by short-term funding, silos within organisations and services, staffing limitations and fragmented service delivery, which makes it hard to collaborate and deliver long-term change. Participants also noted there are gaps in representation in leadership, especially for young people and First Nations communities, highlighting the need for more diverse voices in decision-making.

There are clear opportunities for leadership, investment and partnerships to build social cohesion

Looking ahead, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen social cohesion through more inclusive leadership, long-term investment and collaboration. Participants identified the value of shared forums, cross-sector partnerships and coordinated regional planning to align efforts and strengthen impacts. There is also a need for continued investment in public spaces and community facilities, especially in high-density areas, to ensure they remain affordable, inclusive and fit-for-purpose. Councils are well placed to lead this work, through funding, facilitation, advocacy and strategic leadership. They can build trust, enable participation and strengthen social cohesion.

A.6. Workshop – Randwick Cultural Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee

A workshop with the Cultural Diversity and Equity Community Advisory Committee was held on 16 February 2026 at Randwick Town Hall. The purpose of the workshop was to draw on the Committee's lived experience and cultural expertise to strengthen and refine the draft Social Cohesion Plan. A total of ten Committee members participated.

Key insights

Randwick has strong foundations for social cohesion

Participants described Randwick City as a diverse, welcoming and community-minded area. They highlighted the value of cultural and religious diversity, accessible public spaces, natural assets, and strong local institutions. Council's proactive approach to community safety and culturally inclusive events was also noted as a strength.

Some residents experience barriers to participation and belonging

Committee members identified a range of challenges that can affect social cohesion, including isolation among older people and some CALD residents, uneven access to services, and experiences of discrimination. Participants also noted that geographic and social divides across the LGA can contribute to feelings of exclusion for some community members.

Clear priorities for the Social Cohesion Plan

Participants emphasised the importance of reducing community anxiety, strengthening safety and trust, and ensuring actions reflect lived experience. They highlighted the need for sustained engagement with migrants, refugees and people who may be less connected to services, as well as stronger inclusion of young people and culturally diverse communities.

Opportunities to strengthen communication and representation

Members noted the importance of clear, accessible communication, including multilingual information and culturally appropriate channels. They also highlighted the need for diverse representation in decision-making processes and for Council to continue building trust through transparent engagement and reporting.

Support for inclusive events and community connection

Participants expressed strong support for multicultural and intercultural events that bring communities together. They emphasised the value of events that are accessible, family-friendly and reflective of Randwick's cultural diversity, and noted opportunities to strengthen local connection through place-based activities.

A.7. Workshop – Inner East Sydney Multicultural Interagency

A meeting was held with the Inner East Sydney Multicultural Interagency (IESMI) on Tuesday 17 June at Randwick Community Centre. The IESMI is a network of 104 members from 73 agencies that meets five times a year to build capacity and share across providers working in the multicultural, migrant, refugee and asylum seeker space.

Key insights

Language and communication barriers limit access and participation
Participants highlighted the need for clearer, more accessible communication, including translated information, signage and advertising. They noted that language barriers continue to affect residents' ability to access services, understand safety information and participate in community life.

Access to services and facilities is uneven across the region
Service providers observed that many essential services are located outside Randwick City, requiring residents to travel significant distances. They also noted a shortage of affordable community venues for programs, events and group activities, which limits opportunities for connection and support.

Funding and resourcing constraints impact service delivery
Participants reported that limited and short-term funding restricts the reach and continuity of

programs supporting multicultural communities. These constraints make it difficult to meet growing demand and to deliver long-term, place-based initiatives.

Opportunities to strengthen awareness and community connection
Members emphasised the importance of increasing community awareness of available services and programs, and identified opportunities to support connection through outdoor activities, culturally relevant programs and accessible community events.

Value of collaboration and regional partnerships
Participants highlighted the benefits of stronger collaboration between councils and service providers across the Eastern Suburbs and neighbouring LGAs. They noted opportunities to share resources, co-deliver programs and build on successful regional initiatives that support migrant and refugee communities.

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