



SUTHERLAND SHIRE

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION FRAMEWORK



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework

Sutherland Shire Council is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and community. This Framework serves as an overarching charter of intent and principles, setting out Council's approach and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and guiding how these principles are reflected across our plans and initiatives.

Targeted strategies and plans sit beneath this Framework and address the specific needs, experiences, and actions relevant to each diverse group. Together, they form a cohesive and coordinated approach to equity and inclusion across Council's work.

Plans aligned to this Framework include:

- a. Community Development Strategy
- b. Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- c. Reconciliation Action Plan
- d. Multicultural Action Plan
- e. Identity and Interest actions
- f. Anti-racism actions
- g. Workforce Strategy (DEI Components)

The set of guiding principles within this Framework provide the lens through which plans are

developed and implemented. They are intended to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are not seen as separate initiatives but form a shared approach and attitude that shape how we lead and serve our community and employees.

Council is committed to enabling both a workplace and a community that reflect and promote these principles, creating an environment where employees feel a sense of belonging and can bring their authentic selves to work, and where our plans, initiatives and actions are responsive to the needs and identities of our diverse community.

Through a series of Listening Groups, perspectives were gathered on how Council can better reflect and support diversity across the organisation and the community. The insights from these conversations have directly informed this Framework, ensuring it is grounded in the lived experiences of our people and responsive to the unique characteristics of the Sutherland Shire.

The following Guiding Principles express what we stand for, how we live these commitments, and how we bring diversity, equity, and inclusion to life across our organisation and community.

We show up as **humans**

We challenge bias

We seek to understand

We act with intention

We foster **belonging**

We lead change with courage



We show up as humans

We lead and plan with empathy, actively listen, and approach every interaction with respect.

Amplifiers

- Admitting mistakes and learning from them
- Showing vulnerability and authenticity
- Considerate and thoughtful of others
- Offering support when others are struggling
- Treating people as individuals without judgement

Detractors

- Dismissing or minimising others' experiences
- Making assumptions about others' intentions or needs
- Overlooking emotional wellbeing
- Ignoring the human impact of decisions



We challenge bias

We acknowledge that unconscious bias exists, and we commit to recognising and addressing it.

Amplifiers

- Calling out bias respectfully when it appears
- Using structured, fair decision-making processes
- Encouraging diverse voices
- Seeking feedback from underrepresented groups

Detractors

- Ignoring or excusing biased behaviour
- Relying on the same people for input or opportunities
- Becoming defensive when bias is raised
- Allowing bias to influence planning, hiring or recognition



We seek to understand

We value lived experience and invite diverse voices into our decision-making, design, and planning.

Amplifiers

- Being curious and asking questions respectfully
- Engaging in training that increases our knowledge of inclusion
- Inviting guest speakers or community voices to share perspectives.
- Acknowledging Country and cultural protocols meaningfully
- Engaging with diverse sources of learning

Detractors

- Assuming our own perspective is the default or "right"
- Tokenistic engagement or symbolic gestures without substance
- Dismissing feedback
- Avoiding conversations about race, gender, or identity



We act with intention

We embed equity, inclusion and accessibility into our planning, policies, and practices.

Amplifiers

- Applying an inclusion lens to decision making
- Setting clear goals and measures for inclusion across plans and projects
- Allocating resources and time to ensure inclusion is sustainable, not symbolic
- Consulting diverse voices in policy development

Detractors

- Treating DEI as a “nice to have”
- Making decisions without understanding who benefits or who is excluded
- Concentrating DEI responsibility within one team or division rather than across Council



We foster belonging

We strive to create an environment where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered, whoever they are and wherever they come from.

Amplifiers

- Celebrating cultural, gender, neurodivergent and individual differences
- Creating safe spaces for open dialogue
- Encouraging flexibility and inclusive practices that support diverse needs and circumstances
- Promoting inclusive and respectful language in all communication

Detractors

- Expecting people to conform to one “norm”
- Ignoring exclusionary behaviour and microaggressions
- Overlooking accessibility or inclusion in events and facilities
- Minimising or dismissing concerns about belonging or inclusion



We lead change with courage

We acknowledge that growth can be uncomfortable, but we choose to lead through it, engaging respectfully across generations and perspectives with open dialogue.

Amplifiers

- Standing by inclusive decisions, even when challenged
- Communicating change clearly, with empathy and purpose
- Encouraging constructive conversations that build understanding
- Supporting leaders and teams to navigate discomfort with respect and resolve

Detractors

- Avoiding change to maintain comfort or consensus
- Staying silent when inclusion is questioned or resisted
- Allowing fear of backlash to shape direction
- Failing to explain or model the reasons behind change