[Council name] Anti-Racism Strategy [year–year]

Councillor briefing – endorsement for public exhibition

[Meeting name] · [Date] · [Name, position]

Based on the Model Anti-Racism Strategy for Local Government, published by the Anti-Racism Community Collective: antiracismstrategy.org

What tonight’s decision is

You are being asked to

- Endorse the draft strategy for [number] days of public exhibition.
- Note that a further report will come back to Council after exhibition, with a summary of submissions.

You are not being asked to

- Adopt the strategy. That comes back to Council after exhibition.
- Commit new funding. Additional funding goes through the [annual budget process].
- Select the final actions. They can change in response to submissions.

Endorsing the draft for exhibition is not adopting it. The strategy comes back to Council with every submission summarised, and it can be changed before you adopt it.

The recommendation in full is on slide 10. Draft strategy: Attachment [1].

Why consider an anti-racism strategy

2 in 5

people in Australia born in Africa or Asia said they had experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months

Scanlon Institute, 2025

15%

of people who had experienced racism had ever reported it to an organisation — so recorded figures understate the problem

Victoria University, 2025

442

validated reports of racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the national Call It Out register in one year

Jumbunna Institute, UTS, 2024–25

The Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework (2024) asks governments to fund and support local anti-racism action. Few councils have a strategy, and the Commission found local government tends not to see racism as its responsibility.

What the strategy is

1 A plain-English strategy

Ten years, delivered through four-year action plans aligned with the council term.

2 For every background

Covers racism in all its forms, with a distinct focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

3 [number] practical actions

Each with a lead team, a timeframe, an indicative cost and a measure of progress.

4 Built on a tested template

Based on the Model Anti-Racism Strategy for Local Government.

Six pillars

1

Respecting First Nations peoples

Work with Traditional Owners; make council culturally safe. Complements the [Reconciliation Action Plan] rather than repeating it.

2

Leading by example

A fair workplace, trained staff and councillors, and spending that supports an inclusive local economy.

3

Fair and welcoming services

Services, facilities, grants, venues and communications that work for everyone.

4

Connected communities

Bring people of different backgrounds together and back the community groups already leading this work.

5

Reporting and responding

Reporting information that is easy to find, a record of incidents, and a plan for responding.

6

Partnerships and advocacy

Work with community organisations, neighbouring councils and other governments; speak up for the community.

What it commits council to

Principles	Six plain-English principles, beginning with “We recognise racism exists and we will speak up against it”.
Actions	[number] actions across the six pillars, each with a lead team, timeframe, indicative cost and measure.
Cost	[number] actions use existing resources by changing how current services are delivered. Additional funding of [$] over four years, considered through the [annual budget process].
Reporting	An annual progress report to Council. [Optional: a short public progress summary each year.]
Review	Actions and budget every [2–3] years; a new four-year action plan in years 4 and 8; a full review in year 10.

One test, applied to every community

- **Council does not rank communities or forms of racism.**
- The Australian Human Rights Commission's description of how racism works sets the frame. One common definition then decides whether something is racism against a community – First Nations peoples, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and people of Asian, African, Arab, Palestinian and Pasifika background.
- Harmful stereotypes and dehumanising language are racism in their own right, whoever uses them.
- Policies, statements and positions council has already adopted are listed in the strategy and continue to apply.

Overseas conflicts

"Criticism of a government or its policies, in Australia or overseas, is not in itself racism. It becomes racism when it targets people because of their background or faith, or relies on harmful stereotypes about them."

Strategy, Section 3.2

A separate strategy for each community ends up ranking them. One common definition means no community has to argue for its place in the document, and council is not asked to decide which racism matters most.

If racism rises against one community

1

Notice

Stay alert to reports from the community, community organisations, police and media.

2

Listen

Contact local organisations representing the affected community to understand what is happening and what would help.

3

Act

Focus existing actions on that community — a public statement, safety checks at community places, targeted information, support for community-led responses.

4

Report

Include what council did in the next progress report to Council.

No new strategy is needed. Actions suited to a targeted response are marked ◎ in the action plan, so council can respond within days rather than months.

Questions you are likely to be asked by the community

? Does it cover antisemitism and Islamophobia?

Yes. Both are named, along with racism against First Nations peoples and other communities, and one common definition applies equally to all.

? Does it replace our Reconciliation Action Plan?

No. It complements the [Reconciliation Action Plan] and does not repeat its actions.

? Is there really a racism problem here?

Local data is limited because most racism goes unreported. The strategy adds questions to council's community survey to build local evidence.

? Can we deliver it with current resources?

Mostly. Actions were chosen for a council of our size and most change how existing services are delivered.

Seven questions and answers, in full, are in the one-page councillor briefing handout.

What happens next

1 Tonight

Endorse the draft for public exhibition

2 [number] days

Public exhibition and community engagement

3 [Month]

Report back to Council with a summary of submissions

4 Then

Adoption, and actions into the [delivery program]

Recommendation

That Council:

- Endorses the draft [Council name] Anti-Racism Strategy [year–year] (Attachment [1]) for public exhibition for [number] days.
- Notes that a further report will be presented to Council after the exhibition period, including a summary of submissions.