



The Case for a Multicultural Centre in Cairns

Cairns Regional Council (CRC) is committed to fostering an inclusive, cohesive and open society and to developing strategies that promote equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for the Cairns region, regardless of culture, ethnicity, religion or gender.

As part of this commitment, in 2000, CRC established a Multicultural Advisory Committee to provide guidance and support to Council regarding issues affecting people living in the CRC local government area who are from different cultural and language backgrounds.

The Committee works in partnership with Council and the community to:

- Increase the understanding of issues affecting people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. Provide guidance and support in responding to those issues.
- Increase the appreciation of our community's cultural diversity and recognise the value of the contributions that all communities can make.
- Encourage and assist people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds to use Cairns Regional Council services.
- Assist Council staff who provide those services, to become more accessible and to communicate more clearly with those customers.
- Promote fairness, harmony and participation through the practice of positive community relations that will benefit all people.

Similarly, in December 2013, the Australian Government recognised that Australia's multicultural character gives us a competitive edge in an increasingly globalised world and formalised Australia's approach to multiculturalism with The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy.



Multiculturalism is in Australia's national interest and speaks to fairness and inclusion. It enhances respect and support for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. It is about Australia's shared experience and the composition of neighbourhoods. It acknowledges the benefits and potential that cultural diversity brings.

Australia's multicultural policy embraces our shared values and cultural traditions. It also allows those who choose to call Australia home the right to practice and share in their cultural traditions and languages within the law and free from discrimination.

Cairns - A multicultural city

Cairns is a rapidly growing region and, as the population increases, so do our rates of diversity.

2011 census data reveals that 20% of the city's population is born overseas and 11% speak a language other than English at home and a comparison with 2006 data further reveals that the rate of residents born overseas is increasing.

Cultural diversity has always been a signature of Cairns' population. Traditionally the birthplaces of those born overseas have been predominantly the UK, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea and this is still the case today.

However, an analysis of the visa streams through which new arrivals to Cairns are arriving reveals a changing trend.

1274
total

Family Visa Entries



■ Japan ■ Thailand ■ Philippines ■ PRC (China)
■ South Korea ■ Indonesia ■ Veitnam
■ Former USSR ■ Laos ■ India

446
total

Humanitarian Visa Entries



■ Bhutan ■ Nepal ■ Laos ■ Rwanda
■ Sierra Leone ■ DR of Congo ■ Burundi ■ PNG
■ Indonesia ■ Guinea

Birthplace - ranked by size

Cairns Birthplace	2011			2006			Change 2006 to 2011
	Number	%	Regional QLD %	Number	%	Regional QLD %	
United Kingdom	7,041	4.8	4.6	5,888	4.6	4.5	+1,153
New Zealand	4,816	3.3	4.1	4,124	3.2	3.5	+692
Papua New Guinea	1,908	1.3	0.3	1,428	1.1	0.3	+480
Japan	1,540	1.1	0.3	1,248	1.0	0.3	+292
Philippines	1,457	1.0	0.6	940	0.7	0.4	+517
Germany	1,045	0.7	0.5	914	0.7	0.5	+131
South Africa	686	0.5	0.7	354	0.3	0.5	+332
Italy	684	0.5	0.3	664	0.5	0.4	+20
India	672	0.5	0.4	298	0.2	0.2	+374
United States of America	555	0.4	0.3	437	0.3	0.3	+118
Netherlands	508	0.3	0.3	487	0.4	0.4	+21
Thailand	504	0.3	0.1	352	0.3	0.1	+152
South Korea	489	0.3	0.2	220	0.2	0.1	+269
Canada	419	0.3	0.2	332	0.3	0.2	+87
China	387	0.3	0.3	256	0.2	0.2	+131
Ireland	353	0.2	0.2	278	0.2	0.2	+75
Indonesia	322	0.2	0.1	241	0.2	0.1	+81
Malaysia	292	0.2	0.2	221	0.2	0.1	+71
Cook Islands	289	0.2	0.0	194	0.2	0.0	+95
Fiji	287	0.2	0.1	154	0.1	0.1	+133
Switzerland	244	0.2	0.1	258	0.2	0.1	-14
Laos	220	0.2	0.0	152	0.1	0.0	+68
France	212	0.1	0.1	165	0.1	0.1	+47
Bhutan	211	0.1	0.0				
Sri Lanka	206	0.1	0.1	135	0.1	0.1	+71
Zimbabwe	190	0.1	0.2	93	0.1	0.1	+97
Poland	173	0.1	0.1	174	0.1	0.1	-1
Vietnam	171	0.1	0.1	94	0.1	0.1	+77
Austria	149	0.1	0.1	153	0.1	0.1	-4
Hong Kong	147	0.1	0.1	147	0.1	0.1	0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011.
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.
Excludes countries with fewer than 20 people, or less than 0.1% of the total population.(Usual residence data)

540
total

Humanitarian Visa Entries



■ Japan ■ South Korea ■ PRC (China) ■ Vietnam
■ Philippines ■ India ■ Italy ■ Thailand ■ Taiwan
■ UK



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What this data reveals is that the cultural make up of Cairns is changing.

But more than this, our diversity is, in itself, becoming more diversified, with many groups being represented in increasing, yet relatively small numbers. And it is these groups who are most in need of assistance.

Typically, because these newer cultural groups are less established in the region, they require help from Cairns Regional Council, other community groups and support services in order to find ways to integrate with the existing community.

The Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) has been working with a range of cultural groups within the region to understand their needs and to devise ways in which they can integrate into the local community without having to sacrifice their cultural heritage.

The MAC consults with all cultural groups in the region, both those that are well established and those just emerging.

For a number of years, one of the strongest themes that has emerged is the need for cultural space where groups can come together for fellowship and cultural practice.

Challenges

New arrivals to Cairns under Family or Humanitarian visas face a range of challenges, including:

- little or no understanding of English;
- difficulty in finding / meeting others from their culture leading to lack of identification with others in the community; and
- lack of shared cultural/ritual practice leading to loss of identity and isolation.

*"A nation's culture resides in the hearts
and in the soul of its people."
Mahatma Gandhi*

Having the ability to retain strong connections to cultural heritage is a very important factor in how well new migrants settle in a new city and culture.

Without sustained links to their culture, migrants can experience social isolation and loss of identity, which in turn impacts on their ability to assimilate into the culture of their new home.

The celebration of cultural heritage requires space, either temporary or permanent. This space is both for social fellowship and networking but also for ritual practice and traditional celebration which can require both performance and outdoor space.

The MAC had received anecdotal feedback over a period of years that there is a lack of both available and appropriate space for hire in the Cairns Regional Council region and so, in 2012, decided to undertake a formal survey to examine both what is currently available and what is needed.

An online survey was created and distributed amongst all known cultural groups. It was advertised on Facebook, the Council website and via a direct e-mail network.

This report presents the findings of this survey which clearly indicate that there is a need for a shared multicultural space in Cairns.

RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the Multicultural Advisory Committee that Cairns Regional Council consider ways in which such a shared space multicultural centre could be funded and developed in order to support both the established and emerging multicultural groups that call our region home.

Community Needs Assessment Survey Quick Facts

21 responses representing 26 cultural groups received within 2 months

14 responses said that current space used does not meet the needs of the group

11 groups said that they can not access the current space when they need

19 groups said that Cairns could benefit from a shared multicultural space

6 groups use Community for their activities, followed by 3 use their homes, followed by Schools, churches and other community facilities.

Workshop and activity space is the highest in demand and mostly used on monthly and weekly basis. Followed by Stage and Performance average use 1 – 3 times a year.



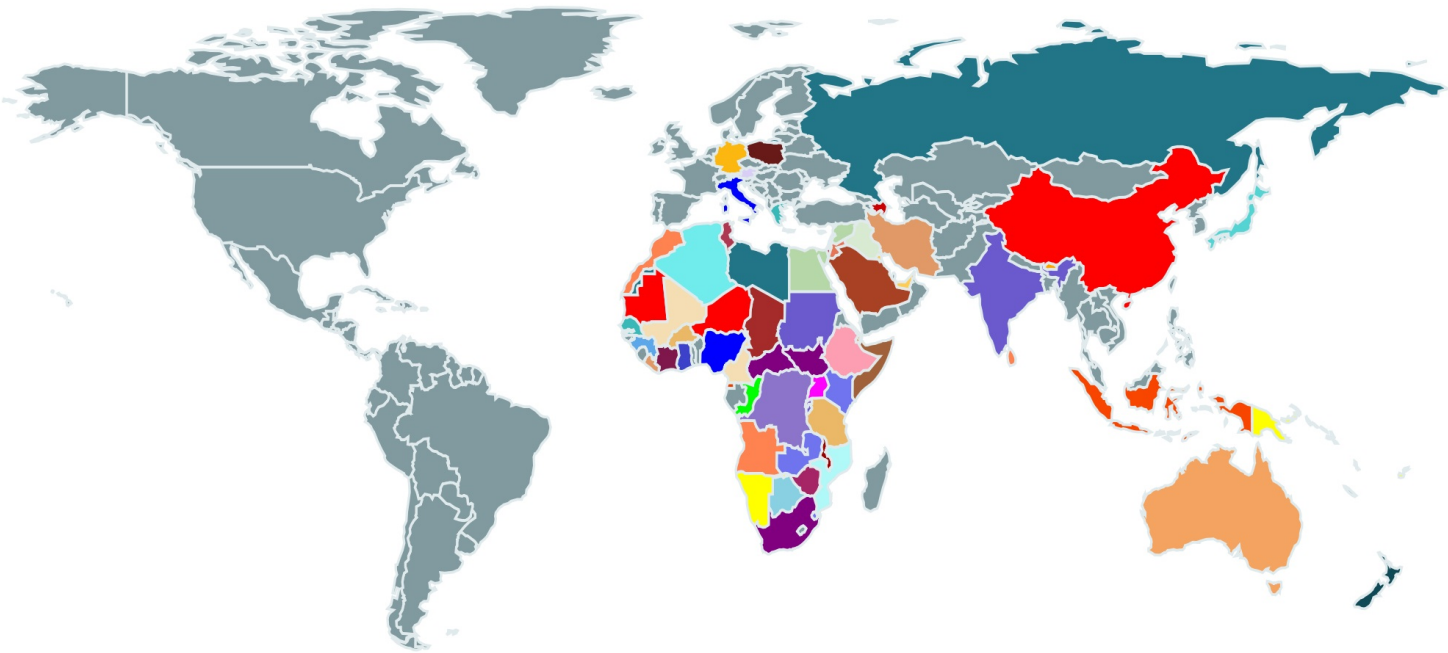
Survey overview - about the respondents

21 responses representing
26 cultural groups received
within 2 months



Groups (62%) Individual/unidentified (38%)
Respondents' profile

Cultures represented



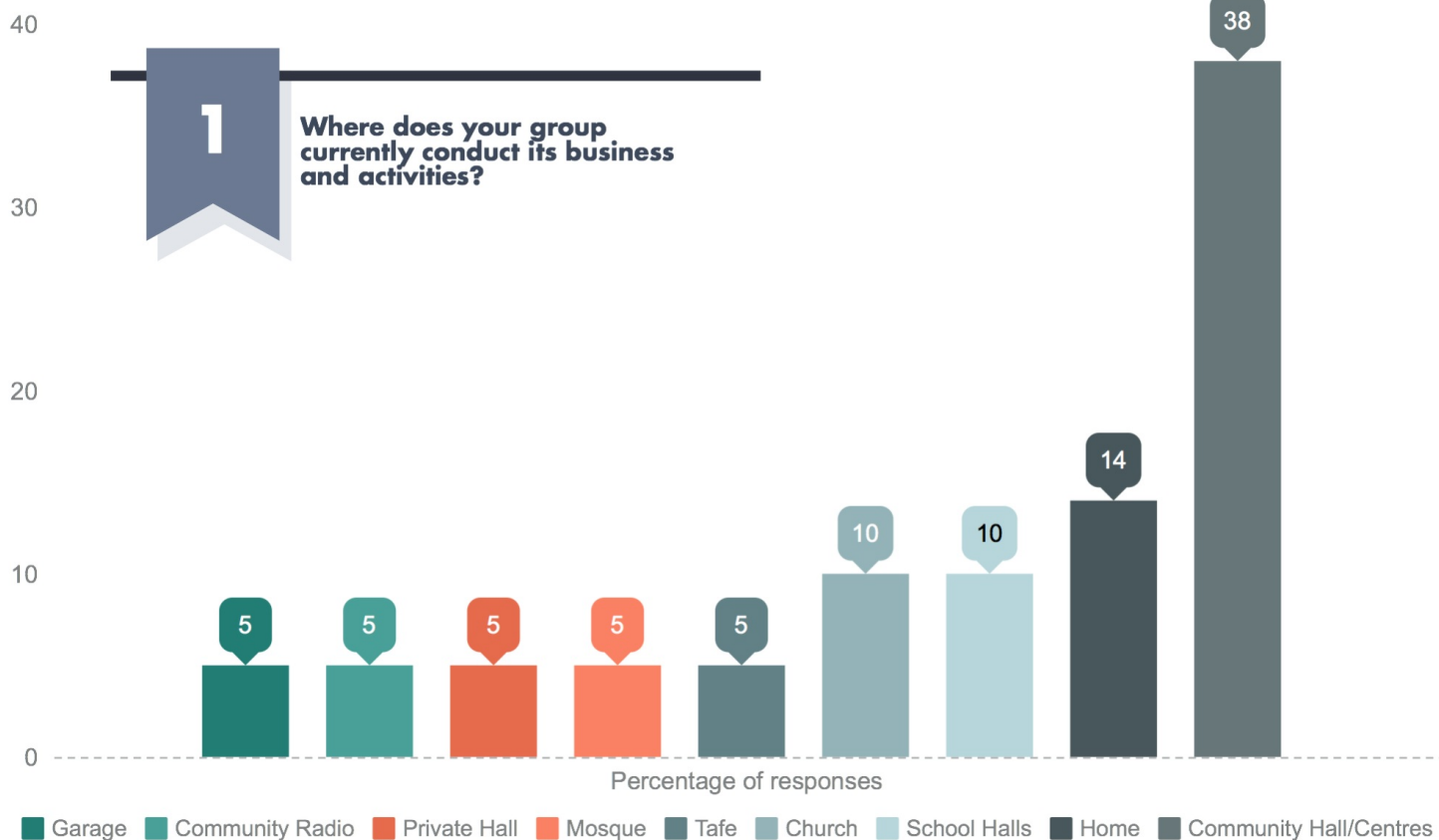
Italian	Chinese	Migrants	Greeks	Polish	Dutch	Pacific Islands
Australian	Hmong	Middle Eastern	Islamic	PNG	African	Indian
Cook Islanders	New Zealand	Samoan	Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islanders	Fijian	Malaysian
Bosnian	Pakistani	Japanese	Spanish	Russian		



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Survey findings



2

Can you access your current space when you need to?



Yes (48%) No (52%)

3

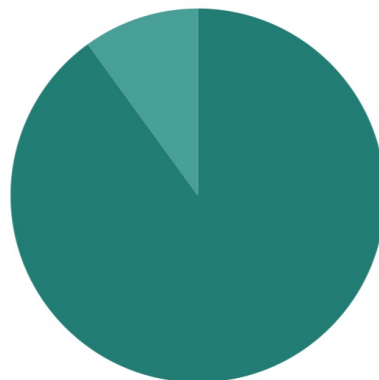
Are there any needs that your current space does not meet for your group?



Yes (67%) No (33%)

4

Do you think Cairns could benefit from a shared multicultural space?



Yes (90%) No (10%)

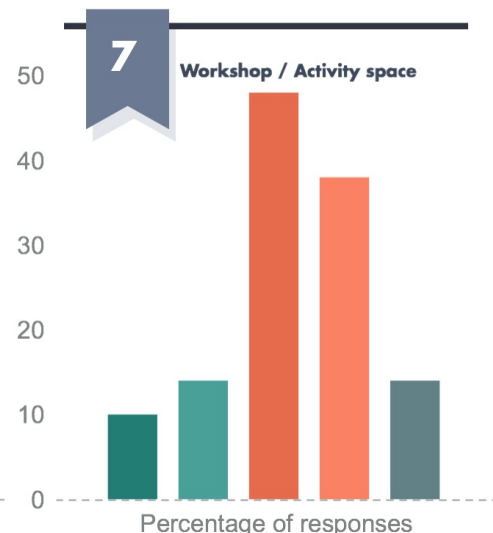
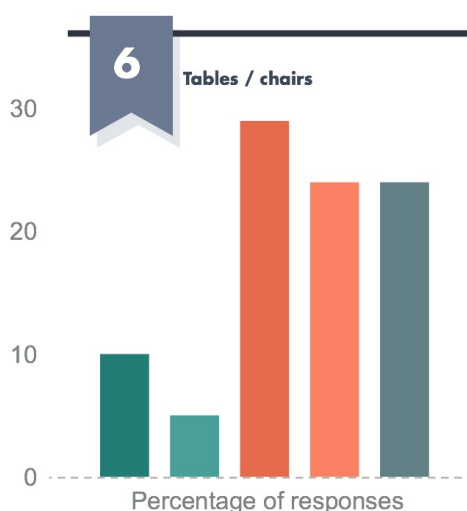
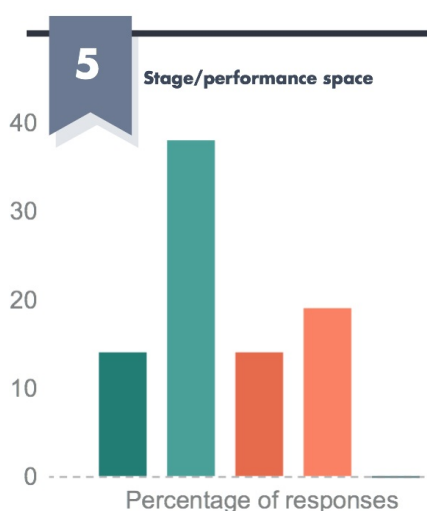


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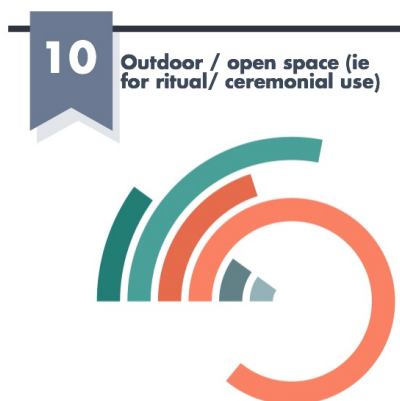
Current Facility Usage

Does not need/do not use Rarely (1-3 times p/a) Monthly Weekly Daily



Current Facility Quality

Very satisfactory Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Very unsatisfactory Unsure Not needed/used by our group



Current Equipment Usage





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Additional facilities and their importance



71%

Fully equipped
kitchen is very
important



57%

A playground
is very
important



57%

Exhibition
space is very
important



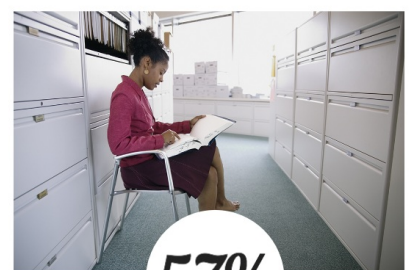
62%

Performance
space is very
important



62%

Toilets/showers
are very
important



57%

More storage
is very
important



52%

Library / video
equipment
is very
important