

ADVANCING ANTI-RACISM IN WESTERN SYDNEY

Towards a regional anti-racism framework

A CENTRE FOR WESTERN SYDNEY AND
WESTERN SYDNEY COMMUNITY FORUM ISSUES PAPER



**CENTRE FOR
WESTERN SYDNEY**



western sydney
community forum



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocols, and out of recognition that the campuses of Western Sydney University occupy the Traditional Lands of multiple Aboriginal Nation and Language Groups, the authors of this document acknowledge and offer our deepest respects to the Darug, Eora, Dharawal, and Wiradjuri peoples. In addition, we pay our respects to the surrounding Aboriginal Nations and Language Groups that may also have connections to these lands, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who visit, learn, and work at Western Sydney University.

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TOWARDS A REGIONAL ANTI-RACISM FRAMEWORK

JULY 2024

A Centre for Western Sydney (CfWS) and Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) Issues Paper.

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KEY POINTS

1

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices must be centred

Anti-racism work in Western Sydney must centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and experiences, particularly those living and working in the Western Sydney region.

2

Western Sydney presents a distinct set of opportunities and challenges

Western Sydney's strengths should be drawn on, including its increasingly educated and diverse population. Challenges also need to be considered, including linguistic barriers, and the impacts of international conflicts and crises on local relations and wellbeing.¹

3

Racism is a structural and systemic issue

Structural and systemic racism permeates institutions, policies, and societal norms, perpetuating disparities and injustices and causing negative health and social impacts including the loss of valuable contributions, knowledges and cultural practices.

4

Anti-racism frameworks are required

Official anti-racism frameworks can assist organisations and governments in identifying, measuring, addressing and improving outcomes for racially and ethnically minoritised communities.

5

Data is essential

Racism in Australia is consistently underreported, and data collection on incidents and experiences of racism, as well as on anti-racism initiatives, policies and best practices, should adopt holistic, systematic approaches.²

Dr Rhonda Itaoui
Director,
Centre for Western Sydney



FOREWORD



Nestled amidst the bustling streets and vibrant communities of Western Sydney, we find ourselves at the heart of one of Australia's most culturally diverse regions. Our neighbourhoods are alive with over 100 languages, traditions from over 170 countries, and strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Yet, the great potential of our diversity has not been fully realised due to the undercurrents of racial disparities. These disparities ripple through the fabric of our daily lives, hindering opportunities in education, employment and healthcare – ultimately shaping the inequities that persist in the region.

A recent report from the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)³ advocates for a National Anti-Racism Framework and calls for all levels of government to show leadership in addressing systemic racism. The report highlights the need to build racial literacy and to improve the capabilities for researchers to track and report on instances of racism.

Many of the AHRC's recommendations similarly emerged at a local level, here in Western Sydney when we engaged with a range of stakeholders on the complexities of identity and belonging within Western Sydney's multicultural nexus.

Like the AHRC report, this issues paper calls for official anti-racism frameworks to assist organisations and governments in improving outcomes for racially and ethnically minoritised communities. Our issues paper also highlights the undeniable importance of data, which guides our actions and informs our policies surrounding the impacts of racism in Western Sydney. It is with data that we craft our narrative for change, ensuring our approach is both evidence-based and resonates with the needs of communities in the region.

As the Director of the Centre, I am continuously inspired by the stories of resilience within our community. There is a palpable need to rise against systemic barriers and champion a future that celebrates the strength of our diversity. The Centre for Western Sydney is devoted to this cause and committed to peeling back layers of racism to reveal and utilise the rich tapestry of cultures that make up our communities.

Building on our work in this space, we look forward to hosting the Strengthening Social Cohesion Conference later this year in partnership with Engagement and Advancement at Western Sydney University. This gathering is set to be a confluence of ideas and aspirations – a space where thought leaders, policymakers and community members come together to weave a narrative of change through dialogue, collaboration, and commitment to action.

Billie Sankovic
Chief Executive Officer,
Western Sydney
Community Forum

CEO'S MESSAGE



Western Sydney is a dynamic hub of diversity, reflecting the rich mosaic of cultures that call Australia home. Yet, within this diversity lies the shadow of racism and inequality, casting a cloud over the opportunities for people to thrive. It is imperative that we address these challenges head-on, fostering a community that is inclusive, cohesive, and free from inequalities that impact people's health, access to education, employment and services, and their overall quality of life.

The WALU Anti-Racism Week, delivered by the Western Sydney Community Forum in collaboration with various agencies, was not just an event – it was a collective endeavour to ignite change. Throughout the week, Western Sydney voices came together in a spirit of unity, engaging in dialogue, sharing ideas and taking meaningful action to challenge racism.

Guided by the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders, the insights of academics, the leadership of communities, the creativity of artists, and the passion of young people, the week's events were a testament to our shared commitment to anti-racism and inclusive practices.

This Issues Paper, developed in partnership with the Centre for Western Sydney, represents a significant milestone in our journey toward adopting an anti-racism framework in Western Sydney. I congratulate the Centre for Western Sydney for working with us to develop this paper as an important step forward in combating racism and exclusion.

It has been a few years since our organisation commenced an introspective journey into anti-racism and anti-racist practice and it is our hope that partners in community will find value in this paper to inform an anti-racism framework for Western Sydney and pave the way to a more just and inclusive future for all.





UNDERSTANDING RACISM AND ANTI-RACISM

ANTI-RACISM IN WESTERN SYDNEY

Research shows that racism remains a key issue in Australia, creating unfair and inequitable outcomes.⁴

Racial discrimination has been found to impact people's socio-economic status, educational attainment, employment opportunities,⁵ access to housing,⁶ access to healthcare,⁷ social cohesion and belonging, and to have a cumulative, harmful impact on people's health,⁸ safety and wellbeing.⁹

In Western Sydney, one of the most multicultural regions in Australia and home to a significant population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, there is a growing body of literature that recognises the complexities and real-world effects of both structural and interpersonal racism.¹⁰

Community, academic and Local Government anti-racism initiatives have long grappled with racism in the region.

The Challenging Racism Project at Western Sydney University has conducted numerous studies in the region, including 'The Local Anti-Racism Project', focusing on regionally specific anti-racism strategies and 'The Ordinarity of Australian Muslims Project'. The latter project comprehensively documented the experiences of Australian Muslims in Sydney, including their experiences of racism, participation in the labour force, and civic and voluntary participation.¹¹

Western Sydney's diversity is a major strength, bringing multiple perspectives, languages, talents and innovative opportunities.

Despite the richness this diversity brings, racism acts as a formidable barrier, obstructing the region from fully harnessing its potential. Systemic, structural, and interpersonal racism undermines the capacity of individuals to thrive and contribute to the region's growth and prosperity.¹²

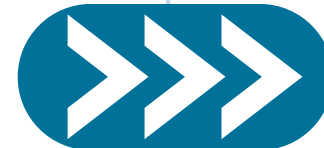
With 40.9% of Western Sydney residents being born overseas, 47.5% speaking a language other than English at home, and almost 55,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, it is critical that anti-racism frameworks provide the support and interventions required for communities. In addition, existing research shows that geography and spatial context can shape how racism manifests and is experienced.¹³

Western Sydney's unique multicultural context requires a tailored approach.

To lay the groundwork of an anti-racism framework in Western Sydney, this Issues Paper captures key insights from a week-long anti-racism event hosted by WSCF in February 2024, including a workshop delivered in partnership with the CfWS and the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), on working towards an Anti-Racism Framework for Western Sydney.

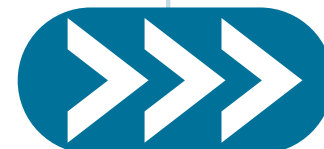
The insights from the workshop and week provide a preliminary roadmap for advancing the development of an anti-racism framework tailored with and for the Western Sydney region. It identifies key priorities for future areas of work.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF RACISM



Structural and systemic racism

Structural and systemic racism are related concepts and often used interchangeably. They refer to how societal structures, such as housing, education, employment, healthcare, media and criminal justice systems, perpetuate racial inequality through historical and ongoing patterns of discrimination and disadvantage.¹⁴ They acknowledge that racial bias and discrimination are pervasive and entrenched across multiple interconnected systems and institutions, and are often so embedded they are assumed to reflect the natural order of things.¹⁵



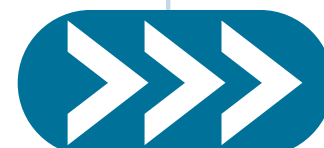
Interpersonal racism

Interpersonal racism occurs at the more individual level and can include making negative comments, bullying, harassing, intimidating, ignoring, distrusting or treating others less respectfully due to racial perceptions.¹⁶ Interpersonal racism can occur in-person, online or via other personal interactions and communications.



Everyday racism

Everyday racism refers to everyday 'micro' aggressions. It can be harder to see than overt or other interpersonal racism and is not always violent or deliberately hurtful. It can include comments and questions that people may even think are complimentary, but when faced regularly can harm people's wellbeing. For example, touching someone's hair or expressing surprise at someone's competence.¹⁷



Overt racism

Overt racism is the deliberate intention to denigrate based on racial assumptions, and it can include physical harm. In Australia, there are anti-discrimination laws aimed at protecting people from discrimination and harassment, including racism,¹⁸ but this does not mean overt racism does not exist. Racist abuse directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elite athletes is one example of overt racism in Australia.¹⁹



WHAT IS ANTI-RACISM?

Anti-racism is a practice that goes beyond individual actions and attitudes. Being anti-racist means addressing racism in “your practices, your procedures, your policies, the way you do things, how you put your communications out to the world.”²⁰ It is not about being simply “non-racist” but about putting values into action to become actively “anti-racist”.²¹

The AHRC is developing a National Anti-Racism Framework, due for release in September 2024. The development of the framework, initiated in March 2021, seeks to respond to enduring community calls for national action after heightened experiences of racism and racial inequality, particularly during the first few years of the COVID-19 pandemic.²²

In addition, a new Australian Race Discrimination Commissioner, Giridharan Sivaraman, was appointed by the AHRC in March 2024. Commissioner Sivaraman's priority is to progress a National Anti-Racism Framework to help guide Australia's collective efforts to comprehensively combat racism. Upon his appointment, Commissioner Sivaraman commented:

“Australia urgently needs a national, coordinated approach to anti-racism that must be legally adhered to and empowers people to take meaningful action.”²³

Numerous studies have shown that having active anti-racism initiatives and frameworks is essential in addressing the damage caused by historical and ongoing racism.²⁴

Frameworks based on deep contextual knowledge to guide at the local level are just as important as the national. In Western Sydney there are many organisations working towards anti-racism frameworks and policies, including local councils, businesses, advocacy, community and research groups.

Developing a framework for Western Sydney could provide a common language and set of aspirations for anti-racism work across the region. It would support individual businesses, communities, government and other organisations to work together through data sharing, best-practice development, and expert-driven advice to create a blueprint for comparable areas across the state and nation.

In doing so, the region's diversity would be leveraged to reach the full potential of Western Sydney and aid in building a socially just and equitable society.

WESTERN SYDNEY'S DIVERSE POPULATION IS GROWING

The region is projected to reach **3.4 million** people by 2041, accounting for **61% of Greater Sydney**, and **10.8% of Australia**.



It is currently home to over **2.6 million** people and accounts for **53.3% of Greater Sydney** and **10.1% of Australia**.

Population growth from 2016 to 2021



+1.36% Western Sydney
+0.2% Rest of Sydney²⁶

Migration accounts for a substantial part of this growth

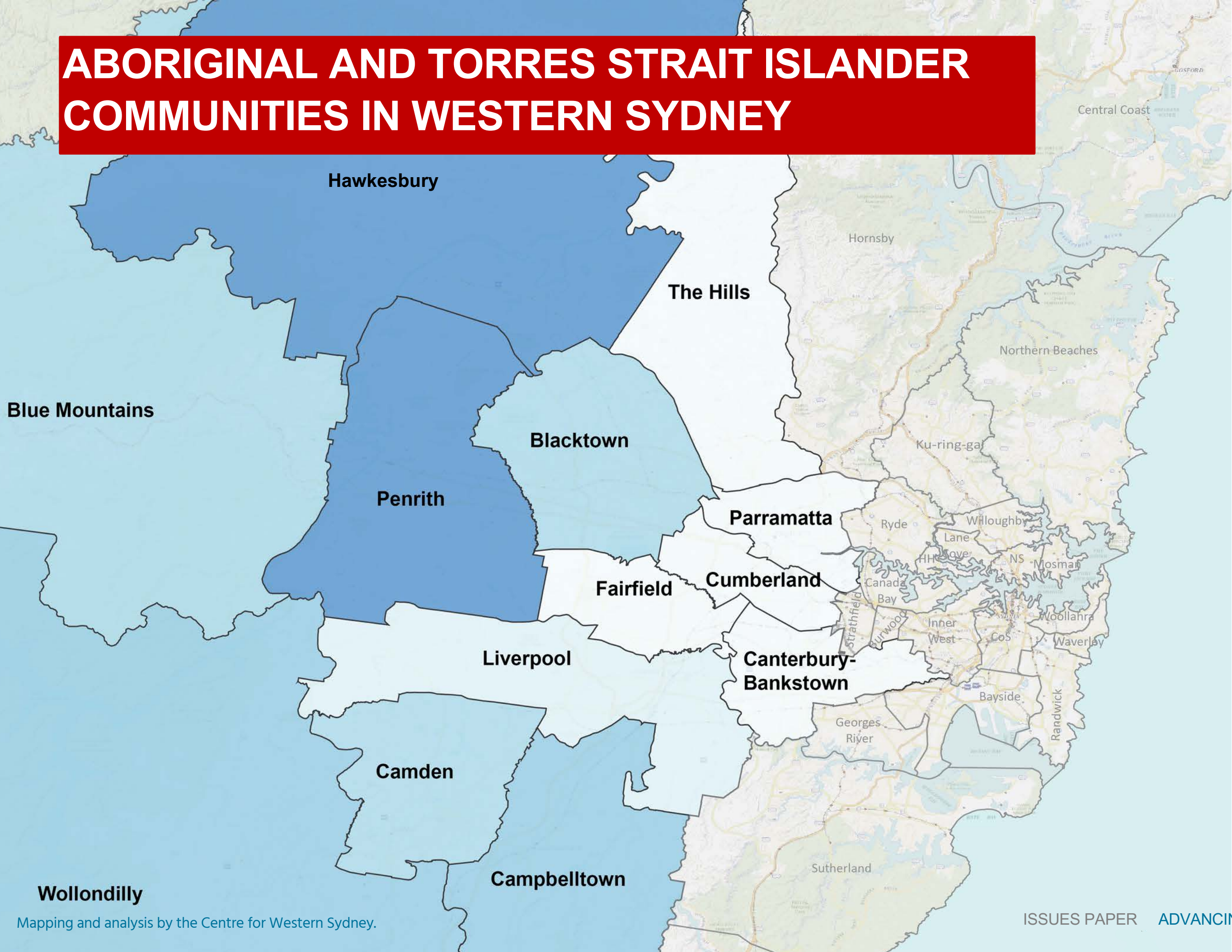


- 40%** of Western Sydney residents were born overseas
- 60%** of new arrivals to Australia choose to settle in Western Sydney
- 75%** of people with a humanitarian visa who arrived in NSW over the past 10 years were settled in Western Sydney

Number of humanitarian visa holders
Western Sydney: 5,268
Rest of Sydney: 434



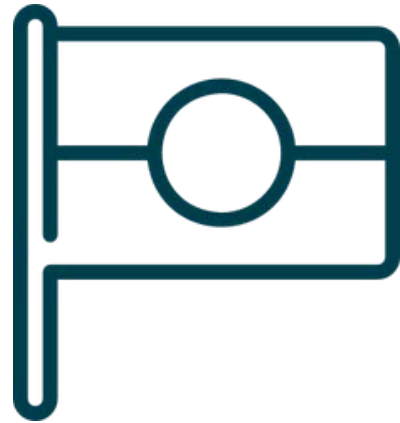
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN SYDNEY



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % of population

5%	Penrith
4.8%	Hawkesbury
4.4%	Wollondilly
4.1%	Campbelltown
3.2%	Camden
3%	Blacktown
2.7%	Blue Mountains
2.1%	Western Sydney
1.6%	Liverpool
0.9%	Rest of Sydney
0.8%	Parramatta
0.8%	Canterbury-Bankstown
0.7%	Fairfield
0.6%	Cumberland
0.6%	The Hills

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN SYDNEY



Nearly **55,000** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people call Western Sydney home



There were nearly **13,000 more** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in Western Sydney recorded in 2021 compared to 2016

There are **6 local government areas (LGAs)** with more than **3,000** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:



Blacktown: 11,806



Penrith: 10,928



Campbelltown: 7,207



Camden: 3,875



Liverpool: 3,832



Hawkesbury: 3,257

WESTERN SYDNEY IS RICH IN DIVERSITY



Home to people from 170 countries

The region is home to people from more than **170 countries** who speak over 100 different languages and dialects.



More people born overseas

40.9% of Western Sydney residents were born overseas
39.4% in the Rest of Sydney.



Parents born overseas

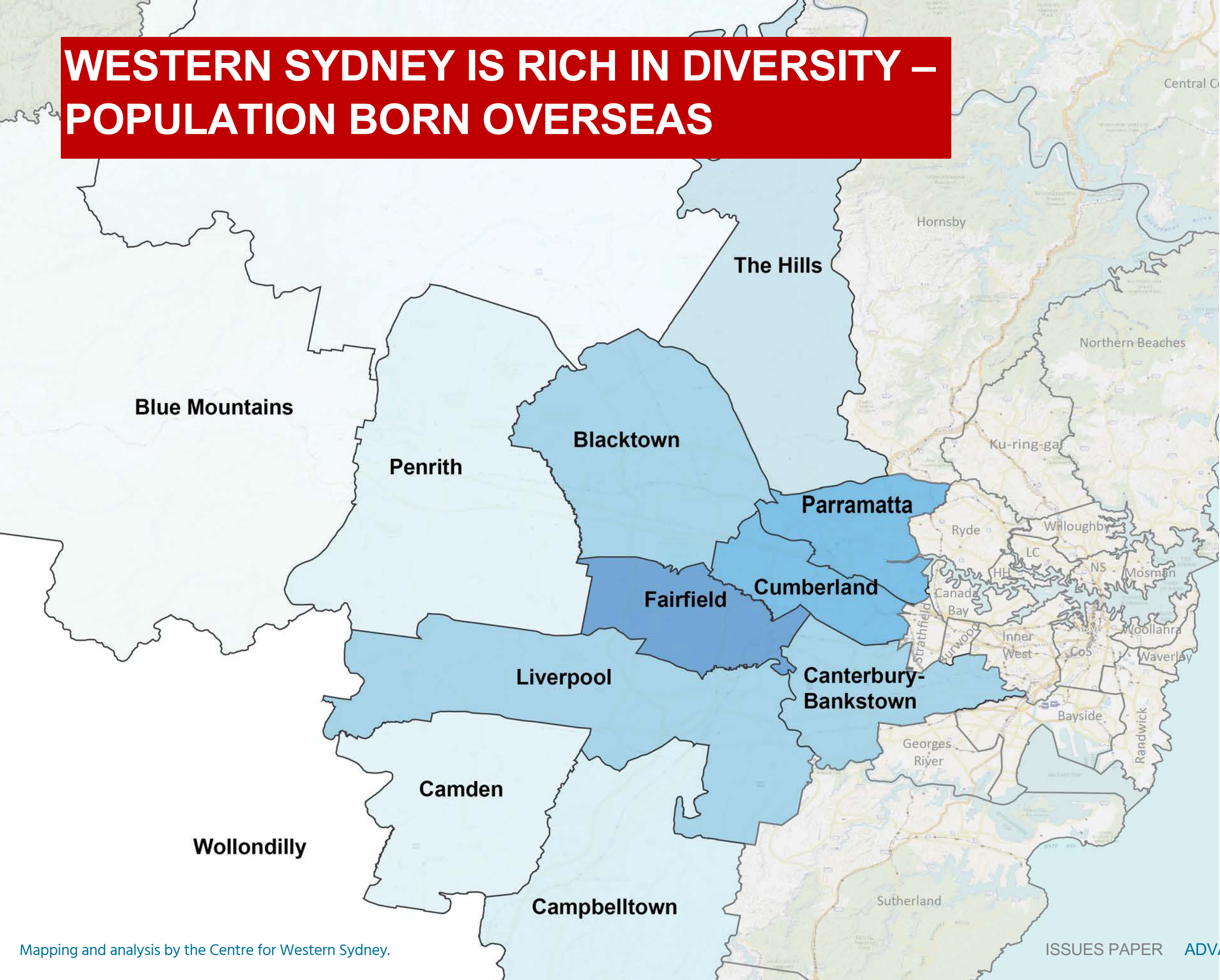
Almost three-quarters of the population (**74%**) have one or both parents born overseas.



Increasing percentage of people born overseas

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of people born overseas increased by **19.8%**.

WESTERN SYDNEY IS RICH IN DIVERSITY – POPULATION BORN OVERSEAS

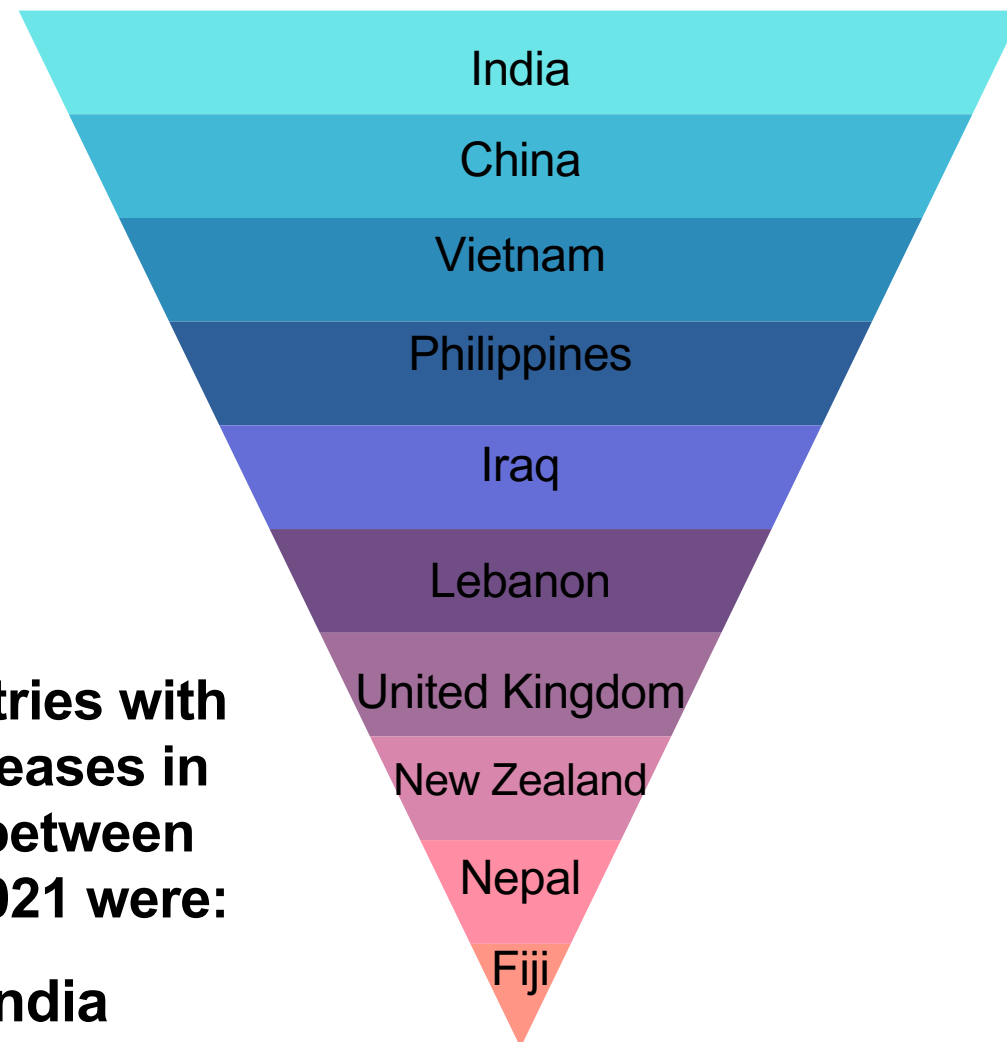


Percentage of population born overseas

56%	Fairfield
53.3%	Parramatta
53.2%	Cumberland
44.6%	Canterbury-Bankstown
44.4%	Blacktown
43.2%	Liverpool
40.9%	Western Sydney
40.4%	The Hills Shire
39.4%	Rest of Sydney
35%	Campbelltown
23.3%	Penrith
23%	Camden
17.4%	Blue Mountains
13.3%	Hawkesbury
11.1%	Wollondilly

WESTERN SYDNEY IS RICH IN DIVERSITY – COUNTRY OF BIRTH AND ANCESTRY

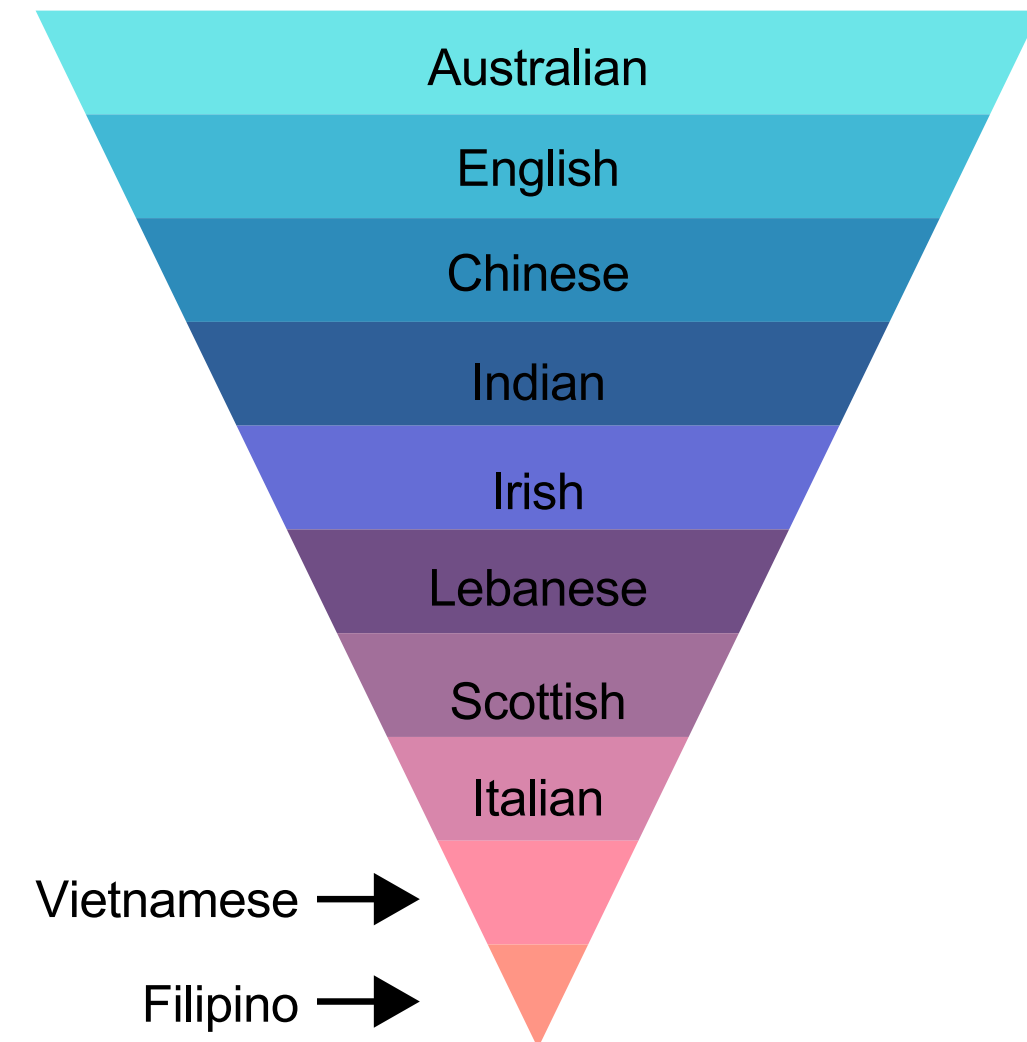
TOP 10 OVERSEAS BIRTH COUNTRIES



The 4 countries with largest increases in birthplace between 2016 and 2021 were:

- ➔ India
- ➔ Nepal
- ➔ China
- ➔ Iraq

TOP 10 ANCESTRIES



All top 10 ancestries increased in number between 2016 and 2021 except for Irish and Scottish, which decreased.

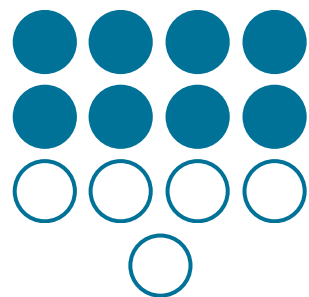
WESTERN SYDNEY IS RICH IN DIVERSITY – ANCESTRY AND CITIZENSHIP



Fairfield is the only LGA where Australian or English ancestry is not in the top 3, with the dominant ancestries being Vietnamese, Chinese and Assyrian/Chaldean.



In Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, and Parramatta, the most populous ancestry for each LGA is a non-English speaking country.²⁷



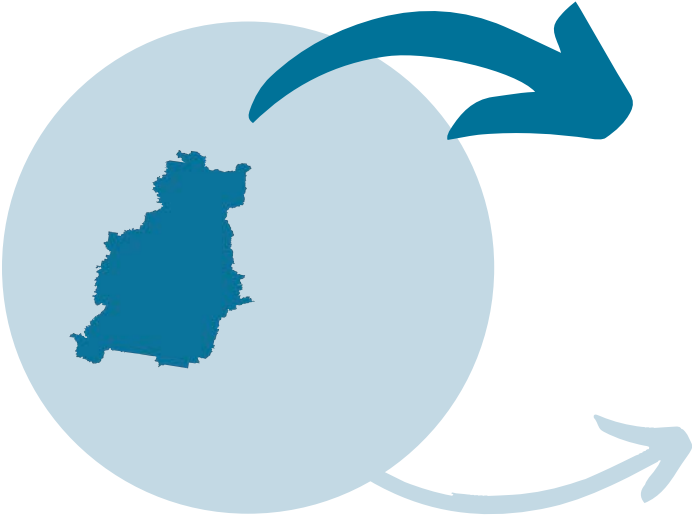
Eight of the 13 LGAs in Western Sydney have a non-English speaking country as one of their top 3 countries of ancestry, further emphasising the multicultural identity of the region.

Despite the diversity of ancestries, the region has a higher percentage of Australian citizens than the Rest of Sydney.



Citizens in Western Sydney: 80.6%
Citizens in the Rest of Sydney: 79.7%

WESTERN SYDNEY IS LINGUISTICALLY GIFTED



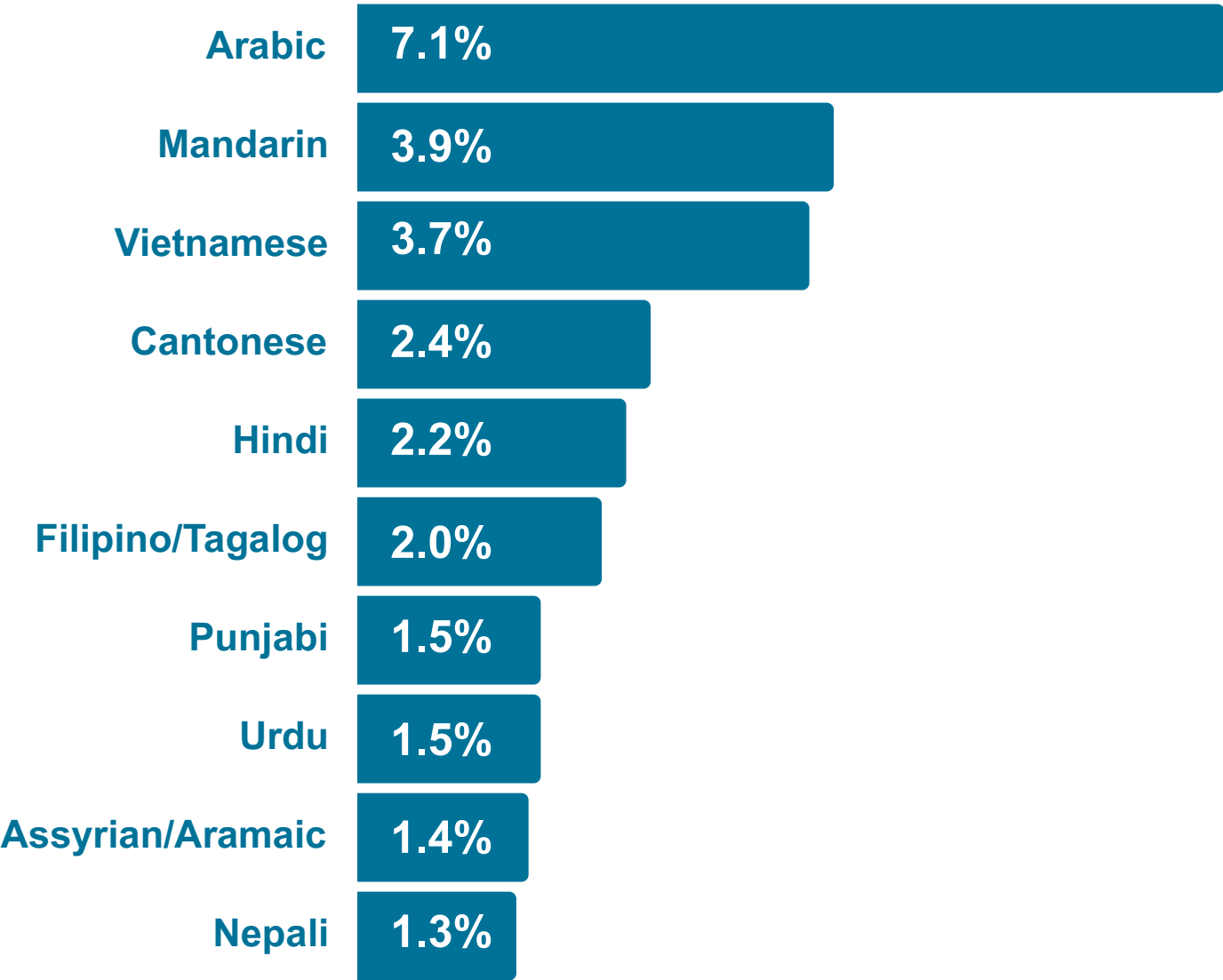
Percentage who speak a language other than English at home
Western Sydney: 45.7%
Rest of Sydney: 32.5%



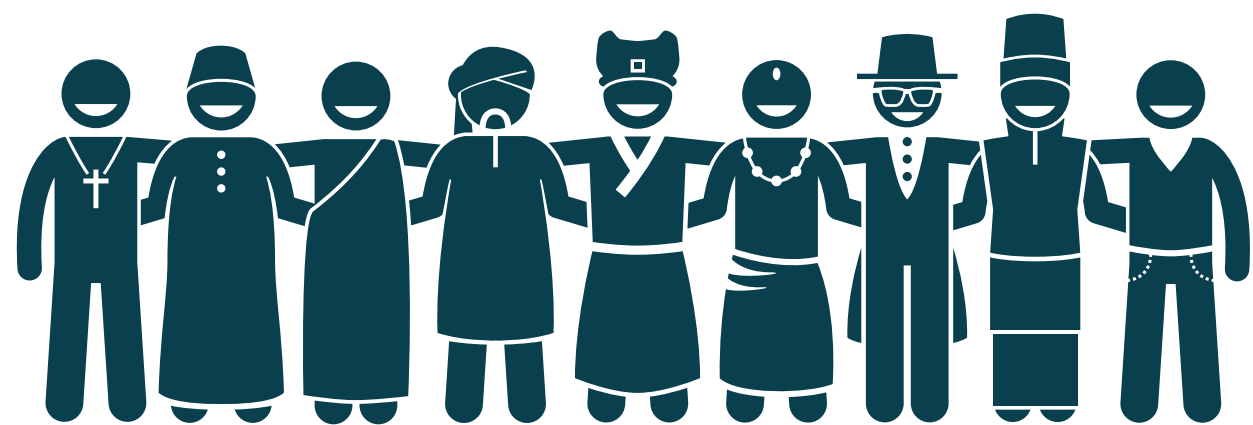
Linguistic diversity is highest in Fairfield (**69.7% speak a language other than English at home**), Cumberland (**65.2%**) and Canterbury-Bankstown (**59.1%**).

Linguistic diversity is lowest in Blue Mountains, Wollondilly and Hawkesbury, where over **90%** speak English only.

Top 10 languages other than English spoken at home

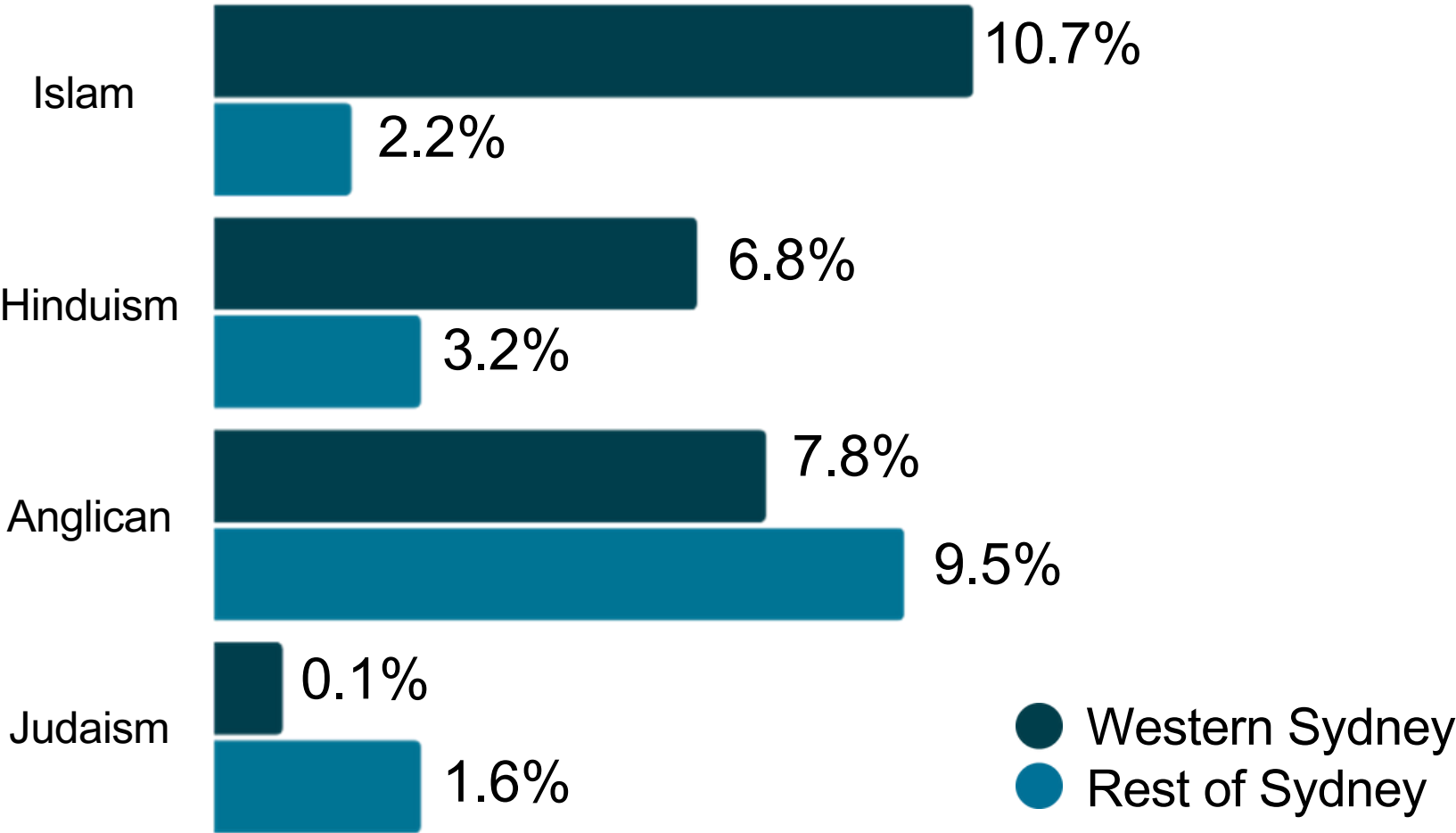
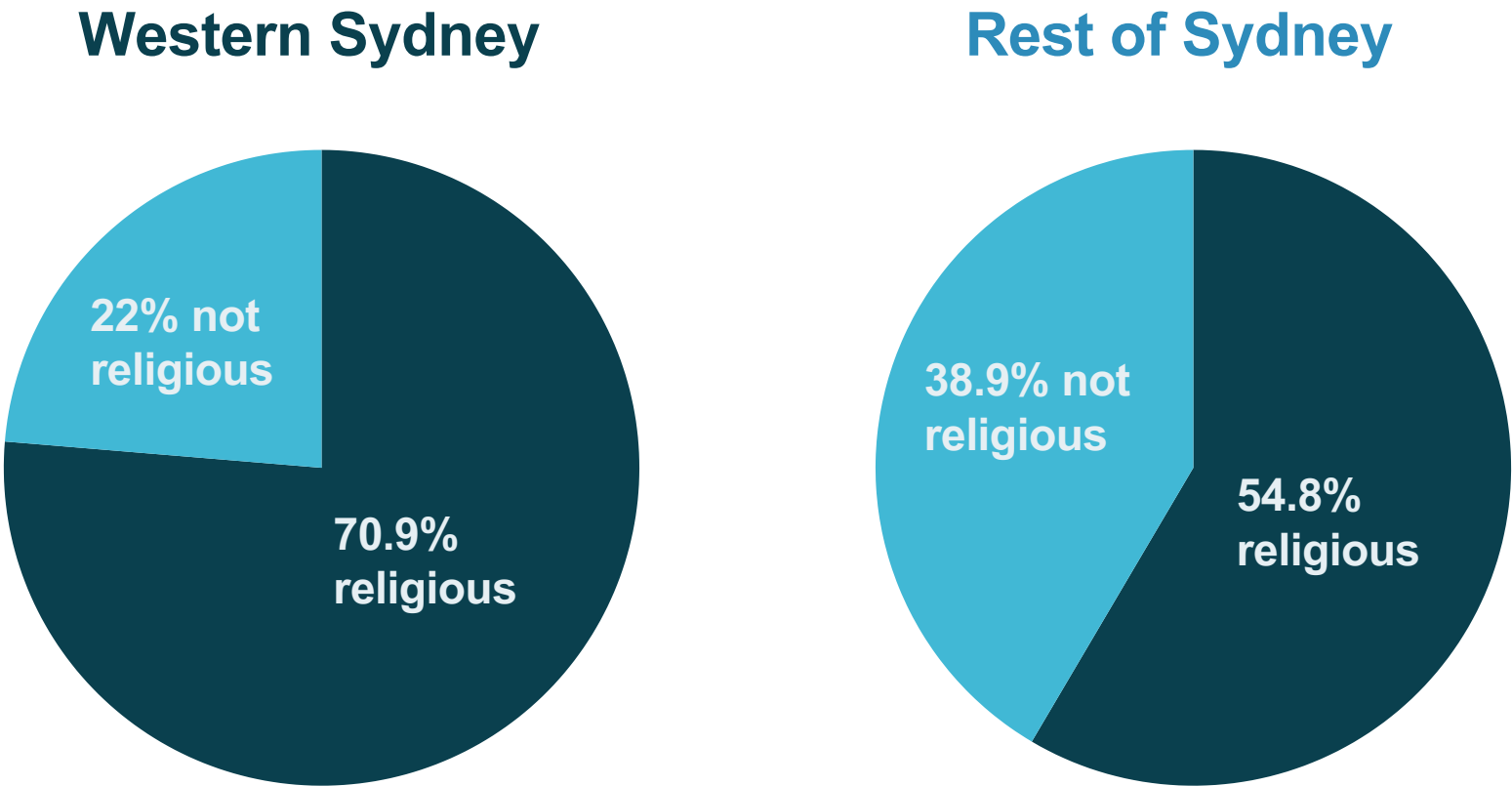


WESTERN SYDNEY IS RELIGIOUSLY DIVERSE



Differences in religious affiliation between Western Sydney and the Rest of Sydney

Western Sydney is more religious than the Rest of Sydney



WESTERN SYDNEY IS YOUNG AND INCREASINGLY EDUCATED

The region is young, with more people aged 0-17 years and fewer people over 60 than the Rest of Sydney.

The median age



Percentage of school-aged students who speak a language other than English:

Western Sydney: 40.6%
Rest of Sydney: 25.9%



While the region is predominately young, the population of Western Sydney is ageing and there are significant numbers of older people. Reflecting and addressing the unique needs and aspirations of older populations is a key consideration.

At the 2021 Census, the proportion of highly qualified workers in Western Sydney exceeded the national average for the first time.

➤ 27.2% of Western Sydney residents hold a university degree, compared to 26.3% nationally.



➤ Yet, education attainment and opportunities are unevenly distributed across the region’s LGAs, and is yet to match attainment rates in the Rest of Sydney where 43.7% of residents hold a university degree.



WESTERN SYDNEY IS A HUB OF BELONGING

Western Sydney is home to many communities that speak diverse languages and are culturally distinct but whose identities are strongly tied to the region. These communities have made significant contributions to Western Sydney. For example:

Visit Lidcombe, and you'll be greeted by Korean eateries and specialty shops, each storefront adorned with a blend of Korean and English signage.

In Merrylands, you'll find an eclectic array of Afghanistan heritage community businesses, including food and clothing stores.

In a single block in Fairfield, you'll find an African hairdresser, a South American deli, a Chilean club, a Lebanese restaurant, and a Middle Eastern bakery.

Temples and places of worship for Lao, Cambodian, Assyrian, and Samoan communities, to name just a few, dot surrounding suburbs.

These and many other areas are important hubs of belonging for different diaspora and migrant communities,²⁸ and this context must be considered in local-level anti-racism frameworks or policies.

THEMES FOR DEVELOPING ANTI-RACISM FRAMEWORKS



In February 2024, WSCF’s WALU Anti-Racism Week was held in the suburb of Merrylands, in the heart of Western Sydney. It was attended by anti-racism practitioners from community organisations, government and academia, as well as individuals with an interest in anti-racism and anti-racist practice. The following 5 key themes were identified as essential to consider when developing anti-racism frameworks in Western Sydney.

- 1

Centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives

In Western Sydney, the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the region must be centred. The atrocities and traumas of colonisation and the structures it put in place continue to privilege certain groups of people over others based on their perceived racial differences²⁹. For anti-racism initiatives to be effective, this must be dealt with.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives should guide dealings with national and regional histories, and all policies impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must prioritise their perspectives and experiences. This approach has been ongoing in Western Sydney for some time, and existing leadership and work should be built upon for effective and respectful policymaking.
- 2

The role of global perspectives

The various global movements against colonialism, imperialism, and racism in recent years have drawn attention to the ongoing struggles against racism across the world. While there is much to learn from global movements and theories, such as Black Lives Matter, and Critical Race Theory,³⁰ research and activism in Australia have established that local anti-racism initiatives need to centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and reconcile with the local context.³¹
- 3

Understanding history

History highlights the root causes of racism, as well as the need for continued dialogue and action. In Australia, there is a growing call for ‘truth-telling’³² – recognising the deep history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the truth of colonisation, and its ongoing impacts since 1788.³³ Only by reckoning with the past and understanding local contexts can society heal and progress towards a more just and equitable future.



4

Acknowledging racism

Recognising that racism is not a thing of the past, and that it continues to exist in interpersonal, structural and systemic ways is essential. This includes acknowledging experiences of racism across diverse groups and the ways it intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as on the basis of language, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, etc. An anti-racism framework needs to recognise the complexity of racism and make it visible. It needs to acknowledge that race discrimination is a significant issue and that it is consistently underreported.

5

Research and data collection

Data on racism in the region (and nationally) is inadequate. There are no centralised, streamlined, well-known and well-trusted avenues for reporting cases of racism, meaning the issue does not get the attention it deserves.³⁴ Recent research has found existing reporting infrastructure and other data collection methods are constrained, and there is a growing call for greater attention on quality data collection and reporting of racism in Australia, particularly for structural and systemic racism where current data is lagging behind data on interpersonal experiences of racism.³⁵

Participants at WALU Anti-Racism Week suggested data collection could be improved by:

1. Using data from external agencies and advising employees to report instances of racism and discrimination
2. Facilitating ongoing conversations with diverse community leaders
3. Developing best-practice metrics around what is collected and how.



Images (L-R), supplied by WSCF:

1. Jason Li MP, on behalf of the Minister for Multiculturalism, Hon. Stephen Kamper MP.
2. Matilda Harry, ZEST Ambassador, WSU Researcher, and proud Wiradjuri woman.
3. Maia Ihemeje, Race Discrimination (AHRC).
4. Billie Sankovic, CEO, Western Sydney Community Forum.



INITIATIVES, STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN WESTERN SYDNEY

At the conclusion of WALU Anti-Racism Week in Western Sydney, the CfWS engaged with approximately 40 anti-racism practitioners and individuals to identify preliminary priorities for an anti-racism framework in Western Sydney.

The findings of the workshop provided insight into the complexities of dealing with racism in a highly multicultural region. They identified key considerations for producing anti-racism frameworks and delivering anti-racism initiatives in Western Sydney and beyond.

The workshop identified the following existing initiatives, strengths and challenges in Western Sydney.

1

Existing anti-racism initiatives in Western Sydney

Participants identified the following as anti-racism work they were aware of in the region:

- Challenging Racism Project at Western Sydney University
- Community organisations, such as Reconciliation for Western Sydney, Arab Council Australia, Sydney Alliance, People Just Like Us, Blacktown Elders meetings and WSCF
- Race-specific or cultural awareness training conducted at their organisations.

Image: Artist Trevor Eastwood 2023, 'Big Fish', Acrylic on canvas.



2

Unique characteristics of Western Sydney to consider when setting an anti-racism agenda

Participants identified the following strengths and challenges as important to consider when setting an anti-racism agenda in the region:

Strengths

- Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who can lead and guide anti-racism work. Participants emphasised how **a balance must be struck between centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and avoiding an unfair burden of labour.**
- Strong acceptance and **celebration of diversity** in the region.
- **Increasing political awareness** among young people.
- Increasing pride in the region coupled with **a fading deficit narrative.**
- Good existing council programs and a strong university with a **commitment to the region.**

Challenges

- Participants commented on **unrepresentative leadership, the need for greater government commitment to the region, and misinformation spread by those in power.** There was also a comment on the fear of authorities for those not on permanent visas.
- Balancing intersecting and competing priorities. People have **different lived experiences of racism**, and many have other immediate concerns to deal with.
- **Spatial divides between Western Sydney and the Rest of Sydney** result in a comparative lack of power, which was exacerbated during COVID-19.
- Linguistic barriers that can add an extra layer of difficulty in building awareness of local racial issues.
- The impact of international conflicts, with some noting that **international conflicts can affect domestic relationships between certain groups.**
- **Generational differences**, including different presentations of intergenerational trauma and differing views between first and later-generation Australians.

Image: Cross-cultural learning/yarning circle with Aunty Carol Cooper OAM. Supplied by WSCF.



PRELIMINARY PRIORITIES FOR ANTI-RACISM IN WESTERN SYDNEY

The workshop participants identified the following as priorities for the workplace, the community and at the regional and government level.



Workplace level

- Cultural safety at work, and the need to create culturally safe spaces for undertaking policy and action reviews.
- Knowledge-based needs, including:
 - The need to acknowledge and identify racism-related issues affecting staff.
 - The need to understand the root causes of racism.
 - The need for more data to inform policy.



Community level

Community involvement at all levels of anti-racism work, including:

- The need to seek input from communities and peak bodies on new projects regarding key issues to track, measure, challenge and evaluate.
- Enabling community action at every level of politics.
- More funding to understand the impacts of racism on the community and particularly on community champions.



Regional and government level

Calls for:

- More adequate funding allocated to anti-racism efforts.
- Government playing a more central role.
- Understanding the barriers for multicultural communities in gaining access to parliamentary processes.
- Introducing media standards and regulations to address online hate and racist reporting.
- Removing religion from political processes.



Cross-cutting levels

The following 3 actions were identified as needed to deepen anti-racism work in Western Sydney at every level:

- Connections and networking.
- Good data.
- Coordination in network development to bring separate actions together.

These insights shed light on the multifaceted nature of racism in Western Sydney and the complexities of addressing it effectively. Based on this data, 9 key actions are recommended to advance anti-racism work in Western Sydney and beyond.

Image: Attendees at WALU Anti-Racism Week. Supplied by WSCF.



KEY ACTIONS

PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS ANTI-RACISM IN WESTERN SYDNEY

- 1 Advance reconciliation:** Foster deeper connections between multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the region.
- 2 Value lived experience and co-design:** Ensure lived experiences are effectively utilised in anti-racism efforts and emphasise co-design over consultation.
- 3 Foster diverse leadership:** Strive for greater diversity and representation in leadership positions across the region's numerous sectors and in its government representatives.
- 4 Educate appropriately:** Tailor materials on anti-racism to consider age, linguistic proficiencies, access requirements, and culturally appropriate messaging.
- 5 Develop anti-racism policies within organisations:** Have these reviewed by appropriate community representatives and require all managers to do training on anti-racism.
- 6 Put in place safeguards for those who come forward:** Create policies and procedures that protect people who come forward with experiences of racism.
- 7 Improve data collection, data use and data sharing:** Adopt a systematic approach to streamline data collection across the region and make sure it is used to progress anti-racism.
- 8 Build norms and values in leadership:** Those in power need to actively build anti-racism into their policies, programs and practices, so anti-racism becomes the norm and is valued in Western Sydney.
- 9 Fund comprehensive anti-racism frameworks:** Adequate funding and support are essential for developing and sustaining a Western Sydney framework to effectively combat racism.

ENDNOTES

1. Forrest et al. (2021).
2. Kamp et al. (2023b), p.16.
3. Australian Human Rights Commission (2024a).
4. Dunn et al. (2018).
5. Booth et al. (2012).
6. MacDonald et al. (2016).
7. Paradies et al. (2014).
8. Mansouri et al. (2009).
9. Itaoui (2016).
10. Andersen et al. (2018).
11. Challenging Racism Project (2017a);
Challenging Racism Project (2017b).
12. Itaoui (2016).
13. Dunn et al. (2007); Itaoui (2016).
14. Australian Human Rights Commission (2021b).
15. Braveman et al. (2022).
16. Australian Human Rights Commission (2021b);
Kamp et al. (2022).
17. Essed (1991); Hawkes (2018).
18. Australian Human Rights Commission (2014).
19. Judd and Butcher (2016).
20. Fernando (2023).
21. Kendi (2023).
22. Australian Human Rights Commission (2021b).
23. Australian Human Rights Commission (2024b).
24. Kelaher et al. (2018).
25. All statistics from ABS 2021 Census (ABS 2022) unless otherwise stated.
26. The Rest of Sydney refers to the areas of Greater Sydney outside of Western Sydney.
27. This excludes the ancestries of Australian, English, Irish, and Scottish.
28. Halilovich (2012).
29. Forrest et al. (2021), p.79.
30. Andersen et al. (2018), p.637.
31. Bond et al. (2020); Moodie (2017).
32. See <https://towardstruth.org.au/> for an example.
33. Paradies (2020); Barolsky (2023).
34. Kamp et al. (2023b).
35. Kamp et al. (2023b), p.3; Bargallie et al. (2023).

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About the Centre for Western Sydney

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY is the only university in NSW with a legislated commitment to conduct research that meets the needs of Western Sydney communities. Fulfilling this unique mandate for research, the University established the Centre for Western Sydney in 2014.

The Centre combines world-class research expertise with frank and fearless advocacy on issues of importance to Western Sydney.

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About the Western Sydney Community Forum

WESTERN SYDNEY COMMUNITY FORUM has led and shaped social policy and service delivery across Western Sydney for almost 40 years.

As the regional peak social development council, WSCF champions solutions that sustain community resilience, health and wellbeing, and represents and supports communities and community groups and agencies in the region. Western Sydney Community Forum has an active and broad member and subscriber base (2,500+) that includes a mix of agencies that connect with and provide services to people across greater Western Sydney.



WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

About the Challenging Racism Project

THE CHALLENGING RACISM PROJECT is the leading national research program on racism and anti-racism in Australia. It is a highly successful research collective based in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at Western Sydney University.

The Challenging Racism Project has a commitment to principles of social justice and quality empirical research. It has global esteem for its research impact in countering racism and improving community relations.