

DAREBIN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes

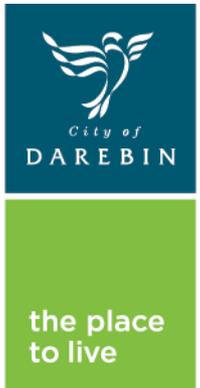
Monday 1 September 2014

4.00pm-5.45pm

Darebin City Council

Function Room, First Floor

350 High Street Preston VIC 3072



Chairs: Cr Gaetano Greco

Attendees:	
Cr Gaetano Greco	Mayor, DCC
Shanthi Antony	Head of Teaching & Learning, East Preston Islamic College
Allan Waterson	Principal, William Ruthven Primary
Ross Dudgeon	Principal, Newlands Primary
Frank Merlino	Principal, Victorian School Of Languages
Kate Morris	Principal, Northcote High
Nancy Sidoti	Executive Officer, Baltara Specialist School
David Kilmartin	Senior Advisor, DEECD
Meri Ivanovska	Community Transition Support, Inner Northern LLEN
Andrew Horgan	Inner Northern LLEN
Catherine Hall	Our Children, Our Schools
Nicholas Abbey	Victorian Council of School Organisations, VICCSO
Wendy Dinning	Coordinator, Business and Development Unit, DCC
Stuart McFarlane,	Aboriginal Affairs Officer, DCC
Sally Jones	Manager, Darebin Libraries, DCC
Cheryl Hermence	Manager, Children and Families' Services, DCC
Rachael O'grady	Student placement, Community Wellbeing, DCC
Jacqui Mithen	Student placement, Community Wellbeing, DCC
Mohammad Shahabdehkordi	Student placement, Community Wellbeing, DCC
Jackie Mansourian	Community Renewal Officer, DCC
Apologies:	
Cr Vince Fontana	DCC
Cr Angela Villella	DCC
Jess Fraser	Community Wellbeing, Team Leader, Darebin City Council
Bev Fegan	Principal, Croxton School
Debbie Showers	Assistant Principal, Thornbury Primary
Bronwyn Stubbs	Principal, Distance Education Victoria

Welcome Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

I would like to acknowledge that today we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes had been electronically distributed to the DEC members previously and available at the meeting.

Jackie Mansourian distributed and spoke to the report of follow-up actions arising from the previous DEC meeting, July 21, 2014.

See attached Report Appendix 1.

Discussion:

Council can take an advocacy role regarding emerging issues in Darebin schools, for example, funding changes that have affected fund and programs for Aboriginal students in Darebin schools. Last meeting there was presentation at DEC about the consequences of cuts to Koorie tutoring and outreach program at Thornbury High. The meeting recommended that other Darebin schools who also have a significant group of Koorie students need to be contacted eg Reservoir High. This has not yet been possible.

However, the question was raised about what should be the position of Council in the context of different schools taking up different positions regarding the same issue/matter?

Each Darebin school operates individually but is also part of a network. There can be a network position.

Different schools are more receptive to support and collaboration than others. – this needs to be considered.

If matters arise that trigger Council's own policy and program areas, Council can independently take up advocacy.

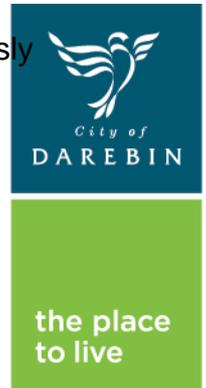
Advocacy matters need to be considered on a case-by-case matter. For example if Thornbury High School has requested direct advocacy from Council, then Council can and should consider providing this, when it is in line with its own priorities and with due consideration to the policy context.

2. Presentation and discussion : Victoria's Vulnerable Children Strategy 2013 – 2022

Refer to Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 for presentations by David Kilmartin, DEECD with a special focus on a coordinated approach to supporting children who live in out-of-home care and summary of DEECD Vulnerable Children Action Plan

Discussion:

- The Vulnerable Children Action Plan recognises the key role of MCH services in identifying and supporting vulnerable families – and yet it also recognises that such families do not use universal early years services.
- Local, coordinated action in early childhood services is key. Even though Council does not deliver direct early years services such as kinder and childcare it does have strong relationships with these services both individually and through networks. One of Council's current focus is in supporting the transition from kinder to primary schools for children.
- Importance of schools understanding and being able to engage with vulnerable families and support with care their students who are living



out-of-home care. There will be school support teams established to support children.

- Darebin youth services are supporting young people who are disengaged – and are often needing to refer young people to more specialist counselling services.



3. Learnings and key themes from review of Baltara School

Presentation and discussion : Nancy Sidoti (Principal) and Nicholas Abbey(School Council President)

Key themes

3.1 Consistency of approach, common purpose and pedagogy

- Importance of academic support for individuals to be able to re-enter mainstream schools
- Better use of MOUs between schools and agencies supporting children/young people

3.2 Student learning, engagement and achievement

- Balance between educational and developmental support
- Importance of measuring success after school.

3.3 Data and evidence based practice

- Schools have so much data - how to collate, analyse, plan. Data is collected everyday on students – why, if not used appropriately?

3.4 Partnerships and joined-up services

- Baltara's therapeutic model is effective and can be shared with mainstream schools
- Schools refer children/young people to our services but we do not know what intervention has been used before
- Council's role as a broker in the relationships between schools for a more integrated approach to these children and young people

3.5 Technology

- Online learning. DEECD has a strong focus on digital learning.

3.6 Personalisation

- Supporting students in transition from primary to secondary
- Council could consider coordinating a forum on personalised learning?

3.7 Prevention and early intervention

Discussion

EPIC identified its own need for psychosocial and developmental support for some of the school's more vulnerable children eg Currently the school is paying for speech therapist via OzChild. What local alternatives are there? Can Council broker assistance for such needs?

Doveton Secondary School provides a good example of the importance of identifying key services, linking them to the school and to students with tangible outcomes for the students

Mapping the work that Council is doing with schools is essential and must be a priority. The sooner this is developed the better for schools to be able to understand how to access Council initiatives.



4. Presentation Exploring Darebin Schools and launch of Darebin Education Inquiry Report - the process

See Attached Report: Appendix 3.

As a post-meeting addition the evaluation of the event has also been included

Jacqui Mithen and Rachael O'Grady who have been coordinating the event and outreaching to schools presented key aspects of the process. Some of the key aspects of the presentation:

As a post-meeting addition the evaluation of the event has also been included Appendix 4.

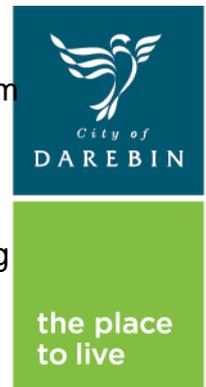
5. How can Darebin Council (meaningfully and effectively) communicate with Darebin schools?

Discussion:

- Council to nominate a pivotal person that schools can liaise with (eg EPIC and DIVERS communication via one key person in each organisation)?
- Darebin Community News could highlight Darebin schools in each ward.
Follow-up
- Darebin Council portal where schools can go to with key services and key contacts (although it was noted that this is not always successful e.g. schools do not readily use DEECD portal.0
- Mapping of what is happening between Council and schools will help clarify how communication can better take place. This is essential. It will clarify the breadth of what is already happening and will surprise many. This may be a significant presentation for a joint DEC/Principals' Network meeting. This is currently taking place.
- November Principal's Network meeting could consider being a joint meeting with Darebin Education Committee? For follow-up
- Direct, ongoing relationship with schools is essential and each school will have a preferred point of contact for communication and coordination

- It is important to recognise that each school has a different view about its relationships with community and other organisations – it is on a continuum and for each school it is different.
- Linking our new Darebin Council website with highlights from schools.

ACTION : Follow-up on the practical suggestions of Communication, including possibility of a joint Darebin Education Committee and Principals' Network meeting.



6. Other Business

Sharing news around the table:

- Newlands Primary school: In 2015 will introduce a Spanish/bilingual program which aligns with Coburg High Language program
- Victorian Schools of languages: Introduction of Burmese as a VCE language
- Northcote High: Working with Darebin Leisure Services regarding upgrades of School's oval and other sporting amenities.
- Baltara school website: has developed a listing or resources / teaching for social support that can be used extensively
- INLLEN: Youth Employment Task Force. Young people unemployed (15%) and underemployed (1 in 6). The Task Force is launching its Jobs for Youth Campaign in October and November.
- East Preston Islamic College: Partnering with Ozchild and funding psychosocial support for students
- Observation by Principal of William Ruthven Primary: It is important that Council coordinate and inform itself about its own actions with schools - for example important to clarify the relationship between the Darebin Early Years Network and the work coming out of that and the Darebin Education Committee. For example, there is a survey being developed about the work that kindergartens do in preparing children in their transition from kinder to Primary school. Is that work also known to the DEC?

Future Meetings for 2014

Monday 17 November, 4pm - 5.45pm, Darebin City Council
Conference Room, 350 High Street Preston.