



DAREBIN EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Minutes
Monday 19 May 2014

4.00pm-5.45pm
Darebin City Council Conference Room
350 High Street Preston VIC 3072

Chair: Cr Gaetano Greco
Minute Taker: Jackie Mansourian

Present: Gaetano Greco, Mayor; Debbie Showers, Thornbury Primary School; Ekrem Ozyurek, East Preston Islamic College; Suzi Haynes and Harry Clarke, Maharishi School; Meri Ivanovska, Community Transition Support, Inner Northern LLEN; Andrew Horgan, Inner Northern LLEN; Dalal Smiley, Manager Community Planning and Customer Service, DCC; Cheryl Hermence, Manager, Children and Family Services.

Apologies: Councillor Vince Fontana; Councillor Angela Villella; Raffaella Galati-Brown, Northern College of the Arts & Technology; Anna Rigoni, Northern School for Autism; Allan Waterson, William Ruthven Primary School; Karen Money, William Ruthven Secondary School; Barb Hinsley, Kingston Primary School; Leon Leonidas, Preston South Primary

1. Welcome

The Mayor welcomed the meeting and especially new participants. The invitation and agenda was distributed to all Darebin schools. Jackie Mansourian Council's new Community Renewal (CR) Officer has the responsibility for following up on the recommendations arising from the Darebin Education Inquiry and resourcing the Committee.

2. Terms of Reference of the Darebin Education Committee

The TOR of the Committee was presented again to the Committee. It had been discussed and further developed during the March meeting. It is important that the Committee finalise the TOR in order that it be taken to Council for endorsement.

Discussion:

It is important to have a representative that can contribute and report on Aboriginal educational needs and priorities.

Conclusion and Action:

Invite and include the Darebin Aboriginal Affairs Officer as a member of the Education Committee.

3. Summary Report on Education Inquiry and Launch

The Darebin Education Summary Report was distributed. The Full Report will be on Council's website with final revisions taking place.

Council has endorsed the Report which means that there is a commitment to implementing the recommendations that have been made. The role of the Committee is partly to oversee its implementation.

Discussion:

It is important to recognise that it will be difficult to have a launch with many of the Principals in attendance. They are busy with their own school priorities. The Community Renewal (CR) Officer has been invited to present at the Principal's network on June 5. This is a network of public primary and secondary school principals. The idea was to do a presentation and to clarify the new phase of Darebin Council's work in the area of Education as well as discussion about the promotion resource for Darebin schools. It is important that Council make itself available to be part of processes of how principals are already organising. It was also suggested that it may be more productive to launch the Report as part of a future Principal's Network meeting. This would be their decision but it could offered as an option. The Mayor suggested he could accompany the CR Officer to the Principal's network to affirm the importance that Council places on relationships with the schools.

The INLLEN have been working closely with schools and there are critical intersections between the potential work arising from the recommendations form the Education Inquiry and the Youth Commitment .

A lot of the work and research carried out from the Inquiry occurred in the broader community (for example, through the Household surveys) and other community-based meetings. It is appropriate and important that residents, parents and young people be able to participate in the launch of the report.

The 2014 Principal's Network Conference is being held on September 1.

Conclusion and Action:

- To use the opportunity at the Principal's network on June 5 to present the Darebin Education Report Findings and Recommendations to the principals. To recommend that a representative from the Principal's network be officially designated to the Darebin Education Committee. To invite their school participation and representation in the public launch of the Report.
- To carry out a public launch of the Darebin Education Report where all Darebin schools and school communities can participate. A celebration of education services in Darebin.

4. Development of promotion document on Darebin schools

The development of a document has been recommended which includes information and promotion of all Darebin schools. However the CR Officer has found it difficult to clarify and establish the questions that may be useful for the schools themselves and the parents in the development of the document. The key feedback is that it is important such a resource does not further add to the competitive marketplace dynamics that has been created between schools.

Discussion:

- There is a lot of information that parents can access which feature schools e.g. Melbourne Child and paid advertising material in local papers etc. However not all schools advertise.
- The schools already have a lot of information about their strengths on their website. E.g. Thornbury Primary have developed an App for parents. Preschools are important for connecting families to local and alternative schools.
- Perhaps focus on key questions :
 - If a parent is to walk into your school, what would they find? ('tone' and 'feel' of the school is important)
 - How do you support children with disabilities?
 - How do you support children who come to Prep with low English speaking skills?
 - How are parents engaged in school life?
- Brief overview of the school and its special, standout feature
- Online comparison tool between different schools and what they offer?
- It is important to clarify the objective of such a resource : the idea was to present an overview of the breadth and diversity of all schools based in Darebin and promote Darebin schools

Conclusion and Action:

- The development of a simple paper and online pamphlet and or postcard style that can be placed in new Resident's kits and distributed through preschools/MCH centres etc that lists all Darebin schools, with addresses, websites and motto.

5. North West Community Transition Support (CTS) - Presentation and discussion with Meri Ivanovska, INNLEN

The focus of the CTS initiative will be on special, specialist and special developmental schools, and the services supporting their students to transition to career and post school pathways.

Objective

The required outcome of this initiative is to improve education, employment and community participation outcomes for young people with disabilities aged 18-21, who are eligible for FFYA. This will be achieved through two key objectives:

- Improved career development practice in secondary schools, specifically the disability specific school settings in the region
- Increased opportunities for young people with a disability to participate in open employment, further education and their local communities.

Discussion:

- Recognition of how difficult it is for young people with disabilities to be able to make successful transitions from their special schools into other training and employment
- The importance of building relationships with employers – there are not as many connections as the schools would like
- How about the needs of children with disabilities and from non-English speaking backgrounds - how are the schools supporting and able to include children and young people and also their families in the process of transitions?
- It is clear that the special schools do want to have more regular contact and relationships with Council(s) and having a key point of contact will be useful for relationships to extend

Chair thanked Meri for her presentation and recognising it is an area of focus that will be continued through the Education Committee.

Please find attached presentation by Meri in Appendix 1.

6. Other business

6.1 Important for Council to be an active member in the Youth Employment Task Force which is being coordinated by INLLEN. The Task Force will working towards a Youth Employment Strategy. Council is being represented by Officers in Youth Service sand Business and Development Unit. There are significant issues arising from the Budget that will have serious impact on young unemployed people, including access to Newstart only after six months.

6.2 The Mayor reported he had attended an event at St Stevens Primary School in East Reservoir. It is a small school where the play-yard is mostly concrete. The school is wanting to change its environment for the children and Council is keen to be planting more tress across Darebin. The school was also concerned about street signage to the school. He saw a perfect synergy between local needs and Council strategy and services.

The same need for more tree planning exists in the East Preston Islamic Centre School. They are considering applying for funds from the City of Melbourne for schools wanting to strengthen community relations.

Conclusion and action:

- CR Officer to follow-up with City Design & Environment Director on tree planting with above schools.

6.3 One of the principals contacted by the CR Officer talked about not receiving any information from Council – as non-rate payers Council does not send regular information about its services and ongoing programs to schools. One simple recommendation is to add schools to Council’s ‘data base’.

Conclusion:

These are some of the basic yet essential ways in which relations between Council and Darebin schools can be improved. Responding to local school needs by connecting them to services that Council provides locally and by improving Council to school communication.

6.4 High school for Preston

The Mayor has been approached by a group of parents interested in establishing a campaign for the development of a high school for Preston.

This group has been inspired by the campaign for the success of the High school for Coburg campaign.

Conclusion and action:

To invite this local advocacy group to carry out a 15 minute presentation and discussion at the Committee’s next meeting in July.

7. Meetings for 2014

- Monday 21 July 2014, 4pm-5:45pm Darebin City Council Conference Room, 350 High Street Preston.

CR Officer to include a presentation of the analysis of education funding to schools arising from the 2014 Federal Budget at the next Darebin Education Meeting.

- Monday 1 September, 4pm-5.45pm Darebin City Council Conference Room, 350 High Street Preston.
- Monday 17 November 4pm -5.45pm, Darebin City Council Conference Room, 350 High Street Preston.