



Welcoming Cities Reference Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2018

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1. Introduction

The Darebin Welcoming Cities Reference Group (Reference Group) seeks to ensure that Darebin City Council (Council) meets its commitment to be a Welcoming City.

The Darebin Welcoming Cities Reference Group is a forum comprising representatives from

- government bodies
- community agencies and organisations
- existing Council advisory committees and
- the Darebin community

Collectively these representatives will share a commitment to a welcoming, inclusive and cohesive community where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life.

The Reference Group will facilitate and monitor Council's progress towards achieving the principles and criteria in the Welcoming Cities Standard.

The Standard allows member Councils across Australia to:

- Benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation;
- Identify where and how further efforts could be directed;
- Assess their progress over time.

Membership of the Welcoming Cities network builds on Darebin City Council's long-standing commitment to equity, inclusion, social justice and human rights. It particularly encapsulates Council's support of cultural diversity and strong anti-racism stance and work. This work acknowledges the continued exclusion and racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with membership on the Reference Group reflecting this intersection.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Reference Group is to facilitate and monitor Council's progress towards achieving the principles and criteria across the six categories of the Welcoming Cities Standard.

The Reference Group provides a 'whole-of-community' partnership response to Council's Welcoming Cities commitments so as to create a welcoming and cohesive city where everyone can belong and participate in all aspects of community life.

The Reference Group will inform and support the development and monitoring of the actions and strategies implemented by Darebin Council to meet the Welcoming Cities Standard. The Reference Group will provide strategic and practical advice, a basis for partnerships, as well as input from community members.

Members of the Cities Reference Group will also represent and advise on issues that impact upon residents' and community's sense of welcome and belonging in Darebin and beyond.

2.1. Policy context

The Darebin Welcoming Cities Reference Group supports Darebin City Council's goals articulated in the Council Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 2: Opportunities to live well.
- Goal 3: A liveable city.
- Goal 5: An equitable and diverse community.

Welcoming Cities commitments are captured in Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework (draft) and reflected in a range of additional frameworks and action plans:

- Darebin Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021
- Darebin Aboriginal Action Plan (draft)
- Darebin Council Community Engagement Framework 2012-2017
- Darebin Gender Equity and Preventing Violence against women Action Plan (draft)
- Darebin Human Rights Action Plan (draft)
- Darebin Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Action Plan (draft)

2.2. Guiding principles

The Darebin City Council's Welcoming Cities Reference Group aligns to the principles set out in the Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities, affirming that:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as the First People of this nation and the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. As such Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be engaged as leaders in welcoming activities.
- Cultural diversity and inclusion are paramount and should be advanced through collaboration within Council and cooperation and partnerships between Council, the local community and other government and community agencies and organisations.
- Relationships between newly arrived/migrant and receiving/established communities should be facilitated to address racism and promote social cohesion - noting diversity of experience, identity, resources and status.
- All residents should have equitable access to Council services and assets, as well as opportunities for employment, business development and entrepreneurship, removing systemic barriers as needed. All residents should be equally supported to participate in the community and encouraged to participate in civic life. All residents should be engaged in design process for urban planning so that public spaces and facilities enhance liveability, social cohesion and inclusion.
- It is essential to engage the receiving/established communities in ways that build greater understanding of why welcoming work is important. Both receiving and migrant communities should be supported to develop the skills and opportunities required to foster social cohesion.
- People of all backgrounds have unique talents and experiences that they contribute to our community. These should be valued to make our communities vibrant, and welcoming.
- The voice and experiences of both new arrivals and the broader community are critical to defining a welcoming agenda.

2.3. Objectives

The objectives of Darebin's Welcoming Cities Reference Group are to:

- Support Council to achieve the principles and criteria in the Welcoming Cities Standard, including providing advice on the development for a Welcoming City Plan that further embeds Council's anti-racism stance and commitment.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership development to support newly arrived/migrant communities.
- Share information around work and projects that contribute to a sense of inclusion and improve a sense of belonging and inclusion in the Darebin community.
- Facilitate a whole-of-community approach to building social and cultural inclusion, economic engagement and civic participation.
- Provide a platform for individuals or community groups to raise issues of inclusion, social cohesion or experiences of race-based discrimination issues.
- Support broader projects that promote best practice in creating a welcoming city and seek to pilot innovative projects as appropriate.
- Identify and provide recommendations back to Council as appropriate.

3. Membership

Membership of Darebin Welcoming Cities Reference Group will include representatives with:

- Expertise in matters relating to the experience of migration/migrants, and/or racism/race-based discrimination
- Interest in developing partnership responses with the local community to enhance a sense of welcome, inclusion and belonging,
- Commitment to integrated collaborative planning and community participation in strategies and projects that improve levels of community welcome, inclusion and belonging in Darebin.

Membership will comprise of 11 voting members:

- A nominated Darebin Councillor.
- **Four community members** to be recruited via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process.
- **Three members from existing committees**, representative from each of:
 - Darebin Ethnic Communities Council;
 - Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee
 - Darebin Interfaith Council

- **Three representatives from a community and migrant support agencies** in the City of Darebin, includes:
 - AMES
 - Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
 - Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)

Other agencies and groups might be invited to contribute or to a specific meeting as deemed necessary by Council and the reference group.

- Membership will be by invitation from Council for agencies and organisations. Nominations will be sought from DECC, DAAC and DIC.
- A recruitment round will be undertaken for the community members.
- Membership is for two years but will be reviewed annually to determine any gaps.

The reference group will be supported by at a Council Officer who will not be a member. The Manager, Culture and Transformation and Manager, Equity and Wellbeing will also participate as non-voting members.

Additional Council Officers will attend as required. Officers are non-voting participants.

Other agencies will be invited to participate as required when relevant, as non-voting participants

3.1. Membership diversity

The Reference Group should seek to reflect the full diversity of the Darebin community and the different lived experiences of racism and multiculturalism. This will be a key consideration in the selection and recruitment of members. The Reference Group will seek to build and reflect diversity within membership and be inclusive in practice.

4. Terms and method of invitation

4.1. Method of invitation

Membership to Welcoming Cities Reference Group will be through invitation from the Darebin City Council.

4.2. Terms of membership

Appointments to the Reference Group will be for a period of two years. Each year the supporting officer will review appointments and invitations will be made to the relevant agencies.

5. Meetings and procedures

The Reference Group will meet at Council's offices four (4) times a year, with the possibility to organise additional meetings as required. Dates and times of the meetings will be determined by Council, taking into consideration members' constraints. Meetings may be hosted by member agencies and may focus on a particular topic or theme.

Where the group wishes to make recommendations to Council, a consensus of all members present will be sought.

In the absence of such consensus, and provided there is a quorum of at least half of the members (apart from Councillor(s)/Chair and officer(s)) present at the meeting, the recommendation will be put to a vote with the majority recommendation being endorsed as the group's. Officers can never take part in the vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

5.1. Chairperson

The appointed Councillor shall undertake the duty of Chair.

The responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available,
- Facilitating fruitful discussions,
- Assisting members to abide by the Code of conduct (see 5.4. below), including by taking action in case of breaches,
- Reviewing and approving minutes before distribution as needed,
- Where appropriate, updating Council on the progress and discussions of the reference group.

5.2. Officer support

Darebin City Council's Multicultural Relations Officer will take responsibility for providing executive support to the Reference Group including provision of meeting agendas and minutes. Reference Group agendas will be forwarded to the reference group members by email no later than one week (five working days) before a scheduled meeting.

Minutes will be provided to Reference Group members no later than two weeks (ten working days) after a scheduled meeting, including details of proceedings and clearly expressed resolutions (where applicable), and including relevant documentation as attachments where necessary.

The Multicultural Relations Officer will coordinate the implementation of Reference Group meeting outcomes, monitoring and evaluation. The implementation may involve Reference Group members or staff from their agencies. Agencies and organisations not directly represented on the Reference Group may be involved.

Records of agendas and minutes will be maintained in accordance with *Public Records Act* requirements.

5.3. Recommendations to Council

The role of the Reference Group is to provide advice to Council. As such it does not have any decision-making powers.

The Reference Group does not have an operational role and may not direct Council staff in the performance of their duties.

5.4. Conduct of Reference Group members

Members will:

- Act honestly and treat others with respect. Failure to do so will be dealt with by the Chair as appropriate
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence

- Not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired because of their position.
- Ensure their behaviours reflect Council's commitments to equity, diversity and wellbeing, in particular those outlined in Goal 5 of the 2017-2021 Council Plan.
- Ensure that their behaviour reflect Council's values of Respect, Accountability, Transparency and Collaboration.

Where there is a requirement for confidentiality, whether it arises during a meeting or is made clear to members in communications conducted outside of a meeting (e.g. provision of a draft policy ahead of a meeting, for discussion and feedback at the meeting), this is to be noted in the minutes and addressed accordingly.

Members must disclose a conflict of interest in relation to any matter the Reference Group is concerned with or that the Reference Group will, or is likely to, consider or discuss. The conflict of interest, including the nature of the relevant interest, must be disclosed before the matter is considered and must be recorded in the minutes.

Members of the Reference Group are not authorised to speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of the Reference Group, nor of Council. In that case, any engagement with the media will be in accordance with Council's standard media and communications policy.

Members are authorised to disclose general information such as objectives of the Reference Group, membership procedures, list of activities and information in regard to any issues that have already been previously dealt with and approved in the Reference Group's discussions.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

The Darebin Welcoming Cities Reference Group will be reviewed 18 months into the first two year term via a number of methods (including reflective self-evaluation of the Reference Group) to ensure that the Reference Group is achieving its objectives and is relevant to council's aspirations relating to the Welcoming Cities Standard.

6.1. Reporting to Council

The Reference Group will report to Council on actions and outcomes achieved on an annual basis.