

Darebin City Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package

Community and Economic Development Program

Aim and objective

In light of the immediate and ongoing impact that the Covid-19 pandemic will have on the wellbeing of the Darebin community, the following Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package (Package) is proposed. The Package seeks to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the wellbeing of Darebin residents, in particular vulnerable community members and those already experiencing disadvantage, and to provide immediate and ongoing support to our local businesses who are currently experiencing devastating levels of disruption and uncertainty.

Reflecting the Victoria State Government's State Relief Plan and the various Commonwealth and State measures for Covid-19, the proposal seeks to build on existing social and health networks to strengthen the ongoing reliance and capacity within the community. Council will work closely with and where possible seek to enhance the capacity of organisations already working with vulnerable community members.

In developing a program to support businesses, we have designed our proposals to complement existing services, policies and agencies such as Business Victoria and Federal and State Government economic stimulus packages, rather than duplicate their efforts. Wherever possible, we have sought to enable businesses to articulate and define their own needs and ideas for support and recovery and act as the lead for delivery.

Council's investment will seek to address gaps which will not be met by the current State and Federal support packages. Council will need to monitor the flow of this support and adapt as required, as further measures are announced. Uncertainty around Council levels of resourcing will also require an agility in planning and delivery of services over the next 6-18 months.

Any direct Council investments into the service system (which are not Council's core responsibility e.g. emergency relief, family violence, homelessness) are temporary measures only to support community recovery and are not designed to be an ongoing model.

People / groups with vulnerabilities

Reflecting the Victoria State Government's State Relief Plan for Covid-19 and *Council's Towards Equality Framework* (in no particular order and recognising that individuals and families may experience disadvantage that intersects across more than one of these categories and that there will be new cohorts of people experiencing this vulnerability for the first time):

- Older people, living alone without support
- Young families, especially single parent families
- Aboriginal community members
- International students
- Culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse people, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees
- People experiencing poverty, especially families or individuals on little or no income
- People with a disability or mental illness
- People experiencing or at risk of homelessness, especially women and children experiencing family violence

Focus areas for community

- Community Wellbeing and Resilience – initiatives to support the immediate social and physical wellbeing of vulnerable community members and build more connected, resilient and resourceful communities
- Creative Culture - strategies to ensure that the creative culture and arts sector is reactivated
- Advocacy – advocacy for change at the State and Federal level that support the immediate recovery and long-term wellbeing of our community

Focus areas for business

- Darebin registered businesses
- Micro, small and medium sized businesses
- Social enterprises
- Activities that enable businesses to keep trading, and to retain staff.

Budget Proposal

*indicates where employee temporary redeployment (alternative duties) opportunities exist.

Short Term					
Community Short Term: targeted action to respond to immediate need and crisis until end of June 2020					
Focus area	Initiative	Target community	Description	Estimated Budget required 19/20	Estimated Budget required 20/21
Community Wellbeing & Resilience	Emergency Relief Boost	<p>People experiencing poverty, especially families or individuals on little or no income</p> <p>Older people, living alone without support</p> <p>Young families, especially single parent families</p> <p>Asylum seekers and refugees</p> <p>Aboriginal community members</p>	Council to be the backbone and seek to increase and stabilise the food supply to existing critical emergency relief services and increase their capacity to respond to a growing client base. This includes the purchase and distribution of vouchers, dry goods, essential items and pre-made meals from local businesses to local emergency relief agencies and council services such as Aged and Disability and Family, Youth and Children Services.	\$150,000	\$150,000

Community Wellbeing & Resilience	Community Navigation Service	Community members who need information, support and referral	Utilising the Aged and Disability model, Council to establish a navigation service to support community members impacted by Covid-19 to ensure they are quickly and effectively referred and linked to relevant community services, support and information.	No additional cost*	No additional cost*
Community Wellbeing & Resilience	Library fines / late fees	Broad range of community groups / library users	Council to suspend fines / late fees for the Library services, with a more detailed position statement / policy to be developed.		
Community Wellbeing & Resilience	Social support programs	Broad range of community groups	Council will support the coordination and establishment of telephone outreach program in partnership with local organisations, which can then transition to an organisation / volunteer led service. This role would also focus on other initiatives which respond to social isolation, delivered through existing resources over the next 6-12 months. This will include linking local children with isolated older people – to read books (or have broader conversations) over the phone or via facetime – aim is to address social isolation and building generation connections.	No additional cost*	No additional cost*
Community Wellbeing & Resilience	Family Violence Service system support	Women and children Older people	Council will support the local family violence service system to respond to the expected increase in family violence and elder abuse within the community through the direct funding of local specialist services to employee additional case workers.	\$46,500- \$56,000*	\$186,000 - \$224,000*
Community Wellbeing & Resilience	Homelessness Assertive Outreach Increase	People experiencing homelessness, especially women and children experiencing family violence	Council will expand its contact with Merri Outreach Support Services (MOSS) to provide more support for community members at risk of or experiencing homelessness through outreach and case management.	\$46,500 - \$56,000*	\$186,000 - \$224,000*

		People with a disability or mental illness			
Community Wellbeing & Resilience	Inner North Foundation	Broad range of vulnerable community groups	Council will make a donation to the Inner North Community Covid-19 Fund. The fund will support Emergency relief vouchers for families to buy essentials from local traders, Rapid Response grants for charities, Pathways to Employment projects that support people in our community impacted by Covid-19.	\$50,000* + 28,000 in kind support	
Creative Culture	Creative Isolation	Broad range of vulnerable community groups, families with young children	Fast track and launch a suite of creative initiatives which families and children can participate in while at home in isolation, such as the Mayor's writing awards for kids and online festival of works.	\$25,000	
Supporting local health care providers			Council to fund and act as a distribution point for the sourcing and distribution of 40,000 masks for local Medical and Health Care staff and services in Darebin.	\$5,000	
Community short term total required				\$230,000 - \$323,000	\$150,000 – \$522,000

Local Business Short Term: targeted action to respond to immediate need and crisis until end of June 2020

Focus area	Initiative	Target community	Description	Estimated Budget required 19/20	Estimated Budget required 20/21
Business Strengthening Program	Local Business Taskforce	All Darebin businesses	To enable and empower Darebin business leaders to collaborate to define a recovery program for local businesses, support each other and jointly design and deliver campaigns over the coming months. Clear governance arrangements, roles and relationships would need to be established.	\$500,000	\$500,000

One on one support	Dedicated Business Support line for affected businesses	All businesses	Dedicated response for all queries and support. Proposed to provide a service for advice on business continuity planning, innovation and pivoting to redesign products and services to respond to changes in the operating environment and providing a compassionate ear Referral point for info on other support – provide information about grants - assist to find if businesses are eligible and understand requirements. To be reviewed in June	\$40,000*	\$40,000*
One on one support	Counselling sessions	All businesses	Expanding the reach of the EAP so that Darebin SME business owners can access it. Undertaken by professionals, this would be until suitable alternative arrangements or providers can be found. Reviewed in May.	\$20,000	\$10,000
Business Strengthening Program	Regular Webinar Series	All businesses	Regular sessions with experts - Darebin Panel of Industry Experts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving to remote working • Reimagining business services/innovation • Resilience and positive mental health • Employee issues • How to access Centrelink and other support mechanisms 	\$20,000	\$10,000
Business Strengthening Program	Resilience Grants Program	Microbusinesses (up to five employees and sole traders)	Small business grants program to enable home working, deliveries, online payments, modem/routers, training etc., whatever businesses need to strengthen their business in the current climate	\$50,000	
		Events/arts sector creative industries	Funding small projects to enable artists and event organisers to spread joy and hope within the community, either online or on the streets	\$10,000	
		Social Enterprises	Run as previous program to strengthen social enterprises or enable businesses to become social enterprises	\$10,000	\$40,000
Fees, Charges and Local Laws Waivers	Adapting local laws and parking requirements	Retail Centres	To allow for pickup and delivery of take away, esp for elderly and disabled.		
Total required				\$650,000	\$600,000

Short Term: Advocacy to respond to immediate need and crisis until end of June 2020

Advocacy	Jobseeker Allowance Increase	Existing and new recipients	Council will advocate for a permanent increase to Jobseeker Allowance (formerly Newstart) payments as a vital measure to prevent more people from falling into poverty including advocacy for a universal basic income.	Within existing resources
Advocacy	Status Resolution Support Service reinstatement	Asylum Seekers Existing and new recipients	Council will continue to advocate against recent federal government changes to the eligibility criteria for the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) for people seeking asylum to prevent them from falling into poverty.	
Advocacy	Housing and homelessness Advocacy	People experiencing or at risk of homelessness, especially women and children experiencing family violence	Council will advocate to the State and Federal government to significantly increase investment in affordable and social housing, and the homelessness sector.	
Advocacy	Rental relief	Landlords and utility companies	Council will write to Darebin commercial landlords requesting rent/bill relief.	

Intermediate

Community Intermediate: actions to build recovery and to help stabilise communities July – December

Focus Area	Initiative	Target community	Description		Estimated Budget required 2020/21
Community Wellbeing / community resilience	Covid-19 Quick Response small grants	Community groups and clubs	Council will provide an additional small grants stream to support community groups to develop and deliver neighbourhood-based initiatives which promote and facilitate good will, support medium- and long-term community connection and resilience at a local level.		\$75,000 \$25,000 in-kind venue support.
Community Wellbeing / community resilience	Covid-19 Quick Response Community Organisation Grants	Community organisations who work with vulnerable client groups Aboriginal Community Organisations CALD community organisations	Council will provide an additional medium grants stream to support community organisations to develop and deliver initiatives which support the social wellbeing of community of community members and groups impacted by Covid-19.		\$175,000
Community Wellbeing / community resilience	Getting sports clubs back on track: small grants	Sports Clubs	Council to provide one-off grants to the 24 winter sports clubs and the 11 that operate all year, to enable them to restart activities after the shutdown period ends.		\$100,000

			Sports Clubs Licence and Lease Renewals: Updating the Performance Subsidies Program which enables reduction in licence and lease agreements based on social benefit outcomes		
Community Wellbeing / community resilience	Covid-19 Ice HQ recovery package	Local business provider (x1) and facility users	Rent relief (currently set at \$150K per annum) for Ice HQ operator to ensure that operator can resume activities after the shut-down.		
Creative Culture	Culture On-line	Arts and Culture organisations	Create a Darebin Culture Online Portal which allows virtual art projects such as Facebook live/webinar session (e.g. for FUSE Fund information sessions), artist marketplace - posting video artist statements from artists, workshops and performances.		\$60,000
Creative Culture	Cultural Infrastructure Support Grants	Arts and Culture organisations	There are a range of arts and culture businesses that provide essential infrastructure framework to cultural life of Darebin, as well as employment to independent artists. This support could be in the form of additional funding for artists to create virtual content in different art mediums that can be viewed and distributed online and will support our local artists but also our community who are isolated.		\$115,000
Total required July – December 2020					\$525,000

Business Intermediate: actions to build resilience and stabilise the local economy July – December

Focus area	Initiative	Target community	Description	Budget required 20/21
Fees, Charges and Local Laws Waivers	Hardship Rates Policy	Commercial properties	Provision of policy and understanding its application through this period of uncertainty.	

Fees, Charges and Local Laws Waivers	Goods on Footpath permits	Cafes and Restaurants	Waiver of Goods on Footpath Fees (chairs and tables, a-frames) in 20/21.		
Fees, Charges and Local Laws Waivers	Health permits	Health businesses	Businesses will still need to register for Health permits however waiver of administration fee (\$286) for new health businesses		
Fees, Charges and Local Laws Waivers	Health registrations	Health businesses	Reduced health registration to reflect mandatory closures		
We Love Our Mainstreets	Comms campaigns	All businesses – retail centres	Council driven campaign to increase shopping local, buying goods made in Darebin. Bringing people back to the street.		\$100,000
One on one support	Support through permit process	New and existing businesses	Provide a streamlined business permit process which will assist remove red-tape for businesses.		\$50,000*
We Love Our Mainstreets	Back to our Mainstreets	Activity Centres	Undertake a 'Back to Our Mainstreets' program which might mean focusing in on current services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cleaning of rubbish bins tops - weeding - street sweeping - window washing - graffiti removal 		No additional costs*.
Total required July – December 2020					\$750,000

Intermediate: Advocacy to respond to July – December 2020

Advocacy	Kickstart community sport	Sports Clubs and broad range of community	Council to advocate to state government to support investment and enabling strategies to ensure community sport is reactivated ASAP. Strategies to include supporting sports associations (such as AFL,		
----------	---------------------------	---	---	--	--

			NFNL, FV and tennis Victoria) to waive annual affiliation feed and remove barriers for sports club to re-establish activities. This initiative provides the opportunity to set participation targets for clubs.	
Advocacy	Neighbourhood House Coordination funding	Broad range of community	Council will advocate that all Darebin/ Victorian based funded houses receive the full allocation of coordination hours funding to focus their services to continue to support vulnerable community members.	
Advocacy	Arts Sector kickstart	Arts and Culture sector, including venues, staff, artist etc.	Council to advocate to state government to support investment and enabling strategies to ensure that the creative culture and arts sector is reactivated asap.	
Advocacy	Refine VicSmart to accommodate short term permits	New and existing businesses	Advocate to State Government to draft a VicSmart permit process that allows for greater flexibility in terms of use, and automatically waives some standard requirements such as parking and third party appeal rights before new short term permits (3 months up to 2 years).	

Long Term

Community Long Term: actions to create long term sustainable change for the benefit of community wellbeing and resilience January – June 2021

Initiative	Focus area	Target community	Description	Budget required 19/20	Estimated Budget required 20/21
Creative Culture	Arts Partner Protection	Arts and Culture organisations	Financial support and capacity building for NFP Arts Organisations that have had a forced closure or cessation of operation. The Arts Partnership arrangements that Council has entered into may be a clear way of delineating which organisations are to be support sufficiently to ensure they can pick up operation when social distancing measures have been lifted.		Estimated \$200,000 across partners.
Total required January - June 2021					Estimated \$200,000

Business Long term: actions to create long term sustainable change for the benefit of community wellbeing and resilience January – June 2021

Initiative	Focus area	Target community	Description	Budget required 19/20	Estimated Budget required 20/21
We Love Our Mainstreets	Active Spaces in Darebin	All retail and creative businesses	Activation of vacant shops focusing on activity centres. Provide assistance and support to help businesses re-activate shops in precincts. Funds may assist businesses with connections to utilities and permit requirements.		\$150,000
Total required January - July 2021					\$150,000

Budget Summary

Total cash budget proposed	2019/2020	2020/2021 July – December	2020/2021 January – June	Total
Community	\$230,000 - \$323,000	\$675,000 – \$1,047,000	\$200,000	\$1,105,000 – \$1,570,000
Business - Discretionary	\$650,000	\$750,000	\$150,000	\$1,550,000
Business - Salaries	\$220,000	\$440,000	\$440,000	\$1,100,000
Community – salaries staff redeployed	\$112,000 in staff redeployed	\$112,000 in staff redeployed	\$112,000 in staff redeployed	\$336,000
				\$4,091,000 - \$4,556,000

Estimate in-kind proposed	2019/2020	2020/2021	Total
Community	Up to \$140,000 in staff seconded to other organisations	\$473,000 (Up to \$448,000 in staff seconded to other organisations, \$25,000 venue hire support)	\$613,000

Total cash and in-kind depend on support model, ie secondment of staff to other organisations v cash payment to organisations