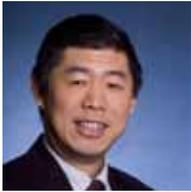


Council Plan 2009-2013



The Darebin City Council



Cr Stanley Chiang
La Trobe Ward



Cr Gaetano Greco
La Trobe Ward



Cr Tim Laurence
La Trobe Ward



Cr Vince Fontana
Cazaly Ward



Cr Nick Katsis
Cazaly Ward



Cr Ben Morgan
Cazaly Ward



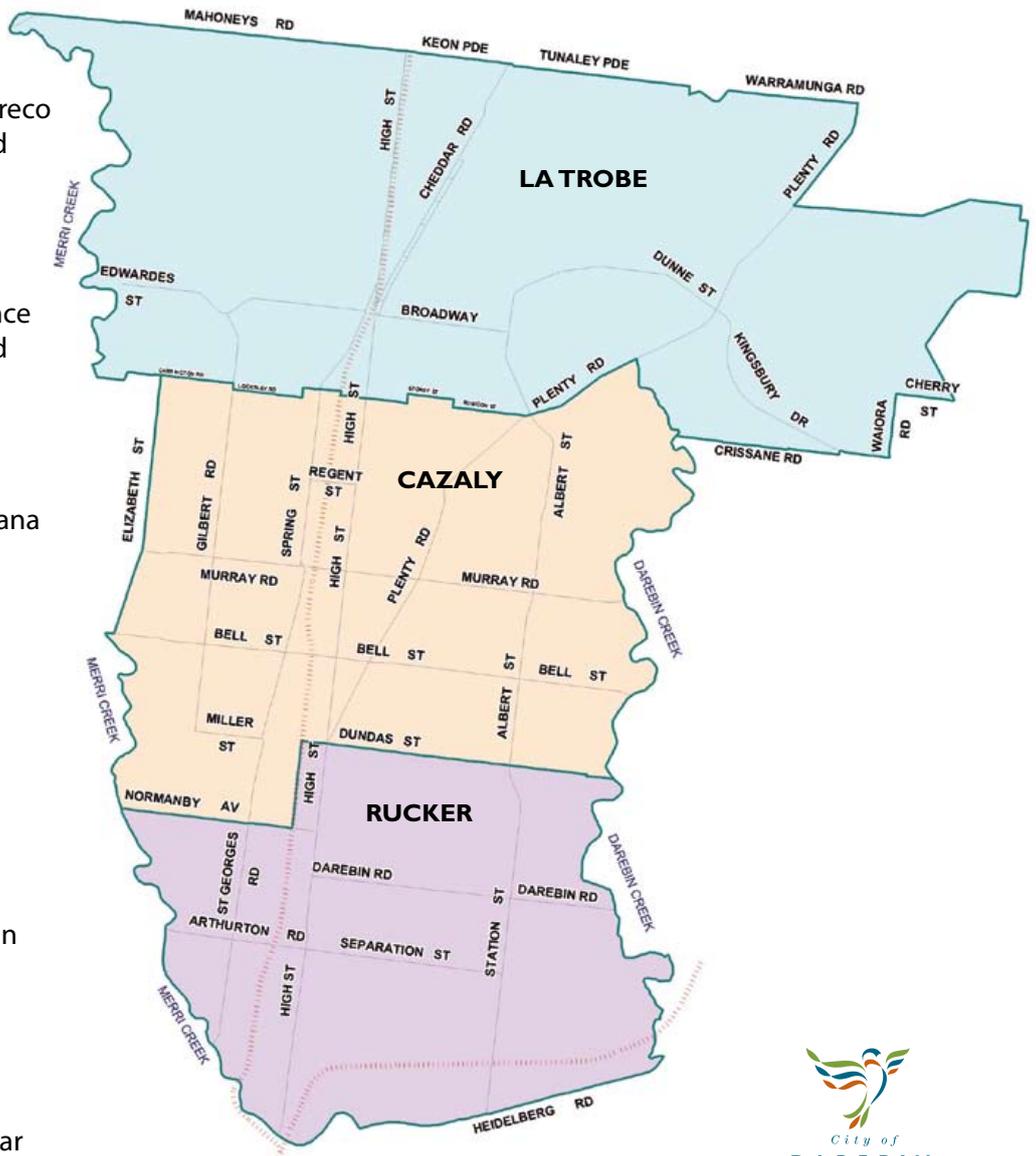
Cr Diana Asmar
Rucker Ward



Cr Trent McCarthy
Rucker Ward



Cr Steven Tsitas
Rucker Ward



The City of Darebin

Over 135,000 people call Darebin home

The population declined steadily from the late 1970s through to the mid-1990s, but has grown since, and has exceeded the population projections.

One in four Darebin residents was born in a non-English speaking country

Almost one third of Darebin residents were born overseas. The major contributing countries are Italy, Greece, China, the United Kingdom, and India. Almost one quarter of Darebin's residents were born in non-English speaking countries.

Over one third of Darebin's residents speak a language other than English at home

Darebin's residents speak a wide range of languages, with 39% speaking a language other than English at home. The most common other languages are Italian, Greek, Arabic, Mandarin and Macedonian which combined are spoken by around one in four residents. Of those born in non-English speaking countries, one in four don't speak English well, or at all.

Over one in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Melbournians lives in Darebin

A total of 1,110 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in Darebin contributing 0.9% of the total population. The City of Darebin has the largest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of the 31 municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne, and Darebin's indigenous community is among the largest in Victoria.

One in five Darebin residents is over 60 years of age

One fifth of Darebin's population is aged 60 years and over. Australia's population is ageing and Darebin is no exception. This group of residents is expected to continue to grow over the next two decades to make up one quarter of the population by 2031.

One in four Darebin households earns less than \$500 per week

One in four Darebin households earn less than \$500 per week (\$26,000 per year) compared to less than one in five households across metropolitan Melbourne (18%). While the socio-economic profile of Darebin is changing, with more residents earning higher incomes, it is important to remember that a significant proportion of the population still experiences a level of relatively high socio-economic disadvantage. An important part of Council's role in the community is to provide support to these residents.

Almost one in five Darebin residents has a disability

Over 25,000 Darebin residents are affected by a disability of some kind, including physical disabilities and medical conditions, psychological and intellectual conditions or learning disabilities. These residents include children, adolescents, adults and senior citizens. Of the residents with a disability almost one third (29%) require assistance.

Darebin's non-Christian religious community has doubled in five years

The increasing proportion of residents born in China and India is contributing to growth in the local Buddhist and Hindu communities. The proportion of Islamic residents has also increased. These changes have resulted in the non-Christian religious community in Darebin doubling in size from 4.1% in 1991 to 8.6% in 2006. Perhaps the most dramatic change in the religious affiliations of Darebin residents can be found in the proportion of residents with no religious affiliation, a group which has grown from representing 12.3% of the community in 1991 to 19.2% in 2006.

The City of Darebin is over 53 square kilometres

The City of Darebin stretches from Melbourne's inner northern suburbs of Northcote and Fairfield out to the traditional middle ring suburbs of Reservoir and Bundoora. The municipality has over 63,000 properties, including over 57,000 homes.

The median residential property price in Darebin is higher than the metropolitan Melbourne average while the median rental price is lower

Over the last decade, a wave of gentrification has radiated outward from Melbourne's inner city. In December 2007 the median house price in Darebin was \$522,000 compared to the metropolitan Melbourne average of \$485,000. The median rent in Darebin in December 2007 ranged from \$190 for a one bedroom flat to \$290 for a three bedroom house. Overall the median rent in Darebin was lower than the median rent for metropolitan Melbourne.

There are over 900 hectares of open space in Darebin

Bordered by the Darebin and Merri Creeks, the City of Darebin contains a diverse range of open spaces, ranging from small, local parks up to major regional parklands such as the All Nations Park in Northcote and Bundoora Park in Bundoora. Added to this are environmentally sensitive areas such as the Central Creek Grasslands, the wildlife reserve at La Trobe University and the Leamington Street Wetlands.

The City of Darebin has assets totalling over \$780 Million.

In addition to cash and investments, the City of Darebin owns, controls, manages or maintains an extensive range of physical assets. These include over 600km of roads, 2,000km of drains, 300 buildings, 450 hectares of parkland and over 45,000 street trees. In 2007/2008, depreciation alone ran to a total cost of over \$16 Million.

Darebin's employment profile is as diverse as its community

Approximately 56,000 Darebin residents are employed in a wide range of industries, with no one sector dominating. Employment is split roughly equally between four main industry sectors - retail, property and business services, health and community services, and manufacturing. Together, these four industries employ half of Darebin's working population.

Home to over 40,000 jobs, Darebin's business sector is dominated by manufacturing, retail, education and training, and health care and social assistance.

Darebin's unemployment picture is changing

In the past, Darebin's traditional manufacturing base has made the employment market vulnerable to changes in economic conditions. This has been seen in unemployment rates, which have always been higher than the Melbourne average.

However, with an increasing proportion of residents working in white collar jobs, more residents holding university degrees and fewer residents with no post high school qualifications, Darebin's labour force is more resilient than ever before.

The City of Darebin is among the largest employers in the municipality

The City of Darebin itself directly employs over 800 permanent staff on a full or part time basis and many more in casual positions. This makes the City of Darebin one of the municipality's largest employers, and a big part of the local labour market. Many Council employees are also residents of the city, and bring an important local knowledge and understanding to their jobs.

Our Promise



Our Promise.

“As a democratic and accountable local government, we will strive in all that we do to achieve fairness, through innovative and progressive leadership that respects and reflects our diverse community.”

Darebin City Council, June 2009

Understanding our promise.

The City of Darebin made this promise to the Darebin community in June 2009. The promise was carefully constructed to illustrate with just a few words our aspirations for the Darebin community.

But in order to understand what we mean, further explanation is needed.

“... democratic and accountable local government ...”

The Darebin community values democracy very highly, and Council is committed to a governance process that is fair, open and transparent. For residents to be proud of their democracy, then Council must be doing a good job of focussing on transparency, inclusiveness and leadership. We must also be seen to be making sound decisions and balancing needs appropriately.

Whether it is through Public Question Time at Council meetings, participation in consultation processes or through representation in a formal committee, Darebin’s citizens have the opportunity to actively participate in decision making processes. As a community, we rely on active citizenship to empower ourselves to help shape the decisions which affect us, and to influence the ongoing development of our neighbourhoods.

In making this promise, the Darebin City Council commits to actively and genuinely engaging the community in governance, policy formulation and decision making.

“... strive in all that we do to achieve fairness ...”

As a concept, ‘fairness’ means more to Council than the removal of bias or discrimination. Achieving fairness across all Council programs and services requires careful consideration of the underlying nature of the Darebin community, and addressing and responding to disadvantage in all its manifestations. In a financial sense, ‘equity’ means distributing rates and charges in a way that reflects capacity to pay, and expenditure focussed in areas of greatest need.

Planning and delivery of many of Council’s services considers the challenges faced by Darebin’s most disadvantaged. Whether this disadvantage is manifested in a low disposable income, aboriginality, a high level of disability, poor literacy, or another complicating factor, we make a clear commitment to total inclusiveness in service provision.

In making this promise, the Darebin City Council commits to consider the social impacts of all its decisions, and to use the delivery of programs and services to address the potential imbalance between members of our community.

“... innovative and progressive leadership ...”

As a Council, we plan to move forward. Our community faces many challenges, and needs a response from Council that goes beyond simply continuing to deliver services and managing a series of small, incremental changes. We need new thinking, and new ideas.

Leadership is about ensuring all voices are heard, no matter how loud, and all evidence is considered. There are times when unpopular decisions need to be taken. Change can be difficult, and it can be controversial. Trying new ideas can be challenging, and nothing comes with a guarantee of success. We don't shy from this.

So whether it is through a comprehensive review of our rating system to ensure an equitable distribution of costs, the exploration of large scale environmental projects or a strong focus on social inclusion, we commit to new ways of thinking and to lead by example.

In making this promise, the Darebin City Council commits to explore all options in coming to decisions which are in the interests of the entire Darebin community, not just the most vocal.

“... respects and reflects our diverse community”

Darebin is not a homogeneous community, where everyone has the same requirements of Council programs and services. Darebin is a diverse city, well known for its cultural and linguistic diversity, but we are also diverse in socio-economic background, aboriginality, employment status and occupation, housing needs and preferences, levels of ability and perhaps most importantly, Darebin's community has a diverse range of opinions, aspirations and expectations.

This diversity presents immense opportunities for Council, as well as challenges. We can act to harness this diversity, and use it to build a stronger, more resilient community. At the same time, our programs and services need to respond to the community's varied needs and balance sometime competing demands.

In making this promise, the Darebin City Council commits to ensure that our diversity response is at the core of our governance and decision making practices and that mechanisms are in place to ensure all voices are heard.

Delivering our promise.

In order to honour our promise to the community, the City of Darebin must ensure that all of its programs, services and new initiatives are designed to advance this promise and make a genuine difference in the community.

With this in mind, the City of Darebin has determined six goals - commitments to the community about how it works to ensure that the promise is honoured. Our progress against these goals is reported each year in our Annual Report.

Each of these goals can be seen as a work in progress, and the following pages explain each goal and list the strategies that Council will undertake to honour these commitments into the future.

These goals are backed up by a series of Activities and Initiatives (published in Council's Annual Budget) which give a detailed account of the planned and budgeted projects for the coming year.

Our shared goals

(referred to in the Local Government Act as 'Strategic Objectives')

- Leadership and Engagement
- Community Wellbeing
- Liveability and Regeneration
- Celebration and Participation
- Environmental Sustainability
- Prudence and Prosperity

Our Shared Goals



Leadership and Engagement.

Our goal is to actively engage all members of Darebin's diverse community - listening, inviting participation and responding to issues of concern. We will provide informed and unambiguous leadership on matters of strategic importance. We will foster a culture of open and accountable governance.

STRATEGIES

- We will be innovative in our leadership, and ensure through formal structures, policies and practices that our promise to the community is honoured, and our goals can be achieved.
- We will involve the community in our decision making, through consultation, public participation, community engagement and representation.
- We will advocate about issues affecting the Darebin community, backed up by informed and clearly articulated policy positions.
- We will ensure our governance practices and structures reflect our diverse community and will provide a whole of organisation response to diversity, evident in the way we make decisions, develop policy and deliver programs and services.
- We will undertake frequent and effective communication with the Darebin community using both language and methods that are accessible and relevant to their needs.
- We will provide strong and unambiguous leadership on issues of strategic importance to the Darebin community and will endeavour to foster community understanding and support for our position.
- We will govern the municipality in a transparent and accountable manner, and provide regular and accurate reporting to the community.
- We will build on our close partnerships with community organisations, community agencies, other levels of government and the private sector to improve outcomes for the Darebin community.

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's advocacy and lobbying.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's community engagement.
- Councillors will maintain a high level of attendance and participation at Council meetings.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's communication.

Community Wellbeing.

Our goal is to develop a strong physical, social and economic environment that supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of Darebin residents. We will strive for a just and inclusive community that feels connected, understood and valued.

STRATEGIES

- We will continue to provide a broad range of high quality community services, including universal services and specific services targeted to those most in need.
- We will strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the community we serve and work together to identify and respond to wellbeing needs.
- We will work with the community to identify their health, wellbeing and safety needs and develop and implement a coordinated response.
- We will research and better understand all the different dimensions of disadvantage in our community, and work to remove or minimise the barriers to community participation and access.
- We will ensure all parts of the municipality are connected to the wider Darebin community and structure our services to address issues of locational disadvantage and inequality.
- We will place particular emphasis on Darebin's diversity, including Darebin's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, our culturally and linguistically diverse residents, and our residents with a disability.
- We will work to support the right of women to fully and equally engage and participate in the life of the community.
- We will support local employment and education opportunities through training, employment and economic development programs, supported by effective advocacy efforts.

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's health and human services.
- Darebin residents will be satisfied with their quality of life.
- There will be similar levels of satisfaction with the City of Darebin's overall performance between Darebin residents, no matter what language they speak.
- There will be similar levels of satisfaction with the City of Darebin's overall performance between Darebin residents, no matter where they live.

Liveability and Regeneration

Our goal is to ensure our built and natural environment continues to meet the changing needs and expectations of Darebin's community. We will continue to oversee the development of Darebin's neighbourhoods, guided by the principles of sustainability, liveability, accessibility, inclusiveness and efficiency. We will hand the municipality to subsequent Councils and future generations in better condition than it is today.

STRATEGIES

- We will undertake considered and proactive land use planning that is responsive to the community's changing needs and reflects the ongoing development of our city and our place within wider Melbourne.
- We will influence the amenity and development of our neighbourhoods using a decision making process and regulatory tools, guided by the principles of equity, fairness and inclusion.
- We will advocate for a municipality that is well served by effective transport systems that are efficient, safe, sustainable and accessible.
- We will continue to manage our existing asset base, ensuring that the city's public spaces, facilities and infrastructure are maintained to a high standard.
- We will provide for the future needs of the municipality through investment in major projects of strategic importance and their supporting infrastructure.
- We will continue the process of asset renewal and rejuvenation to ensure that our large and varied asset base is improved so it can continue to meet the community's needs.
- We will progress the development of an accessible and inclusive city that engages local neighbourhoods and communities in promoting Darebin as a culturally vibrant place to live, work, study and visit.

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- The City of Darebin's planning decisions will be made in accordance with sound planning policy.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's traffic management.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's maintenance of its parks and open space.
- There will be an increase in the capital expenditure devoted to necessary asset renewal.

Celebration and Participation.

Our goal is a city that respects and celebrates its diversity and where everyone is proud of their community and has a strong sense of belonging. We will support our residents to actively participate in community life in a way that reflects Darebin's unique characteristics.

STRATEGIES

- We will foster Darebin's cultural and artistic vitality through services, programs and events that reflect our community's diversity and foster emerging opportunities.
- We will provide and maintain a network of spaces and places designed for both active and passive recreation opportunities.
- We will deliver recreation and leisure facilities that provide a range of different experiences and opportunities to residents and respond to their diverse needs.
- We will support Darebin's wide network of community groups and agencies in recognition of their important contribution to community identity, health and wellbeing.
- We will harness Darebin's diversity, and continue to celebrate the vibrancy and vitality that it bring to our neighbourhoods.
- We will foster a safe environment that encourages residents to participate in community activities and events and endeavour to strengthen a sense of place and improved neighbourhood connections throughout the municipality.

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- Darebin residents will be satisfied with their connection to the local community.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's recreational facilities.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's festivals and events.
- Darebin residents will believe it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures.

Environmental Sustainability.

Our goal is to demonstrate leadership in climate change action and environmental sustainability, beyond both the local environment and the short term. We will demonstrate, through action, that sustainable behaviour is practical, affordable and necessary. We will develop policy and programs that foster the ongoing development of a sustainable community.

STRATEGIES

- We will place the protection and improvement of the environment at the heart of our decision making in policy, service delivery and regulatory design.
- We will reduce the environmental impact of our own operations through a reduction in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption and waste generation.
- We will engage the residential and business communities in improving environmental behaviour through the encouragement, promotion and education of sustainable practices and through waste collection services that support sustainable conduct.
- We will develop and implement land use and transport policies that achieve good environmental outcomes while responding to the municipality's ongoing development.
- We will undertake long term planning to ensure our municipality continues to function effectively in the face of the impacts of climate change and peak oil.
- We will protect and improve the city's biodiversity, natural assets and wildlife corridors, as well as promote and develop pride in the municipality's natural heritage areas and waterways.
- We will undertake effective and informed advocacy and engagement in wider environment debates.

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's environmental performance.
- Greenhouse emissions from the City of Darebin's operations will reduce.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with the City of Darebin's support for reducing community greenhouse emissions.
- The proportion of residential waste being sent to landfill will reduce.
- The proportion of trips by Darebin residents made by sustainable transport will increase.

Prudence and Prosperity.

Our goal is to underpin our decisions with robust and responsible financial planning and modelling, and to balance spending with a considered understanding of its long term implications. We will ensure the community's capacity to pay is a factor in our budget determinations and will work hard to get the greatest value from our existing resources.

STRATEGIES

- We will fund the delivery of our programs and services through an equitable and transparent distribution of municipal rates and charges.
- We will undertake robust long term financial planning to ensure our investment and budget decisions are responsible and position Council to continue the provision of quality programs and services.
- We will undertake comprehensive emergency planning and risk management processes to minimise the impact of risks on the community and Council operations.
- We will focus the organisation on the overall importance of customer service and provide timely and meaningful responses to community requests and demands.
- We will strive for ongoing and demonstrable efficiency improvements through performance measurement, process re-design and innovative business practices.
- We will assist Council staff to achieve their potential with a challenging and rewarding work environment and provide them with ongoing training and support.
- We will provide and maintain the necessary tools, equipment, information and technology to underpin our service delivery.
- We will assist Darebin's business sector through support to industry groups and employer organisations to encourage local employment and economic activity.
- We will work closely with Darebin's small business sector, and provide meaningful and practical support to Darebin's vibrant local strip shopping centres .

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- The City of Darebin will be in good financial health.
- The City of Darebin will adopt budgets with an underlying operating surplus.
- A high proportion of Darebin residents will be satisfied with Council's customer service.
- The City of Darebin will maintain a staff turnover within a healthy range.