

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications Strategy



July 2010



When we think of the City of Darebin, we think of diversity.

More specifically, we think about the number of different languages spoken, the wide range of cultural backgrounds and the ever increasing speed of changes to our ethnic makeup.

As the place of choice for many emerging communities, the City of Darebin has a cultural richness that is the envy of communities across Victoria. But this diversity is not without challenge. One of the greatest challenges we face is how to communicate with the nearly 10,000 Darebin residents with little or no English¹.

In a Council where seven of nine Councillors come from a non-English speaking background, we know first hand the importance of rising to this challenge. It's a challenge that is at the heart of our service delivery, our policy development, our community consultation and engagement and our leadership and advocacy.

As the Mayor of Darebin, I'm pleased to lead a Council committed to serving the needs of all our residents, no matter what language they speak. This Strategy is part of that commitment.



Vince Fontana
Mayor of Darebin

“One of the greatest challenges we face is how to communicate with the nearly 10,000 Darebin residents with little or no English”

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Usual Residence)

Executive Summary

Diversity – and particularly multicultural diversity - permeates all aspects of Darebin’s work and is reflected in our approach to community celebration, our service delivery culture and our policies.

In 2009 the Darebin City Council called for a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communications Strategy to be developed, as another step in the continuous improvement of Darebin’s practices. This Strategy would recognise, encourage and support Darebin’s culturally and linguistically diverse community’s right to be consulted with and communicated to.

Darebin Council has a strong focus on social inclusion, which it sees as a key role for local government, and which requires new thinking about how Council engages with the community.

Work is occurring on a number of projects to develop a new social inclusion agenda, including a broad community engagement strategy to help Council engage the whole community - and include culturally and linguistically audiences - in decision making at the appropriate level. A natural component of this work is a CALD specific communications strategy.

With the guidance of a Steering Group, which included Councillors Chiang, Greco and McCarthy and four senior council officers, this Strategy has been developed to identify opportunities for improving our existing policies and practices, as well as to identify a number of practical pilot projects to put our policies into practice.

The vision for the CALD Communications Strategy is:

“Support of democratic and effective local governance through engagement, communication and dialogue with the Darebin community.”

The Guiding Principles and Values for the Strategy are:

- Whole-of-Council approach
- Accountability
- Inform, Involve and Empower
- Valuing Diversity
- Permeability
- Continuous Improvement.

New tools that have been created to improve Darebin's engagement with CALD communities:

- Community Ambassadors
- Engagement and information dissemination in languages other than English using new technology, including Web 2.0, multimedia kiosks and mobile technologies.
- Dialogues in Action project
- Diversity Training, Community Engagement Training and training in the use of Multilingual Communications Service tools
- Comprehensive CALD Communications Toolbox
- 'Communities of Practice' for staff and a broader group of agencies and service providers.

Improvements to existing tools and services are:

- Explicit and implicit inclusion of CALD communities in communications
- More strategic advice for staff on how to engage with CALD communities
- Improvements to the Multilingual Communications Service tools, including translations, website and the Multilingual Telephone Line
- Review corporate standards for communicating with CALD audiences
- Translated 'Messages from the Mayor' in local papers
- Increased translated content in the *Darebin News*
- Review and reprint Frequently Asked Questions booklets in community languages
- Support access for CALD communities to the Internet
- Ongoing monitoring and measurement.

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The Darebin Community

Darebin has a lengthy history of being at the forefront of communication and engagement practice with CALD communities. Effective communication practices support Council's goals to involve all sectors of the community in the services, projects and decisions of Council. With the high level of diversity in Darebin's community, CALD communication is particularly important.

- One in four Darebin residents was born in a non-English speaking country
- Over one third of Darebin's residents speak a language other than English at home
- Of those born in non-English speaking countries, one in four doesn't speak English well, or at all.

Given this level of community need around language, Darebin Council is committed to ensuring services and programs meet the needs of Darebin's CALD community and to providing culturally appropriate services.

Objectives

This CALD Communications Strategy is intended to assist Darebin Council achieve the promise included in their 2009-2013 Council Plan: "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."

The project aim was:

To understand the communication needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse members of Darebin's community and continuously improve our communications tools, processes and messages.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Support continuous improvement in CALD communications
- Focus and support staff to include CALD communication in their way of working with the Darebin community
- Integrate CALD communications into the Darebin Communication Strategy
- Define and create communication processes, tools and messages to meet the needs of CALD groups
- Develop innovation and drive commitment to CALD communication.

Creating the Strategy – Process and Methods

Project governance

To oversee the development of the Strategy, a Reference Group was established, and tasked with the responsibility of considering key research results (focus groups and thinktank results) and helping to shape how they could be used in the Strategy. The Reference Group has also provided feedback on drafts of the Strategy as it has been developed.

The Reference Group comprised:

- Councillor Stanley Chiang, La Trobe Ward
- Councillor Gaetano Greco, La Trobe Ward
- Councillor Trent McCarthy, Rucker Ward
- Jan Black, Director Communities and Culture
- Bruce Dobson, Director Corporate Services
- Trisha Love, Manager Communications and Customer Service
- John Smith, Manager Social Inclusion and Diversity

Project leadership

A Project Plan was developed and designed to bring together the then Communications and Public Affairs Branch and the Social Inclusion and Diversity Branch on this shared project.

Lead by the Manager of Communications and Public Affairs, the project had a number of stakeholder groups who contributed to research and development and guided the creation of the Strategy:

- An internal project team comprising the Directors of Communities and Culture and Corporate Services, the Managers of Communications and Public Affairs and Social Inclusion and Diversity and the Cultural Diversity Coordinator
- A Strategy synthesis team of broader staff participants who worked to understand the research results and translate them into actions Council could take to improve CALD communications
- A Reference Group of three Councillors who considered the key research results and provided input to the draft Strategy
- Darebin Council, who consider the final Report and Strategy.

Project steps

A Project Plan to guide how the Strategy would be developed was created and approved by Council in early 2009. It included a detailed outline of the research steps proposed, the expected timeline and a budget allocation to cover research and project officer assistance.

From there, the development of the Strategy was in three phases.

Phase 1: Research

Conducted from July to November 2009, research steps included:

- Two sets of focus groups with local communities: one with emerging groups and a second with established communities
- A ‘think-tank’ of CALD communication experts, service providers and researchers who came together to share learning and ideas. This facilitated workshop harnessed new thinking on CALD communications and discussed the impact of technology and other factors. This was considered to be an innovative, effective and collaborative method of supporting shared learning and bringing in new ideas. It included an analysis of what the current drivers are for improved CALD communications and a visioning exercise for ‘what would good CALD communications look like in 25 years?’
- A demographic review of Darebin’s population to understand the community makeup and language needs and target communications effectively
- A review of Council’s existing general communications tools and existing tools specifically designed to reach CALD audiences, to evaluate their effectiveness
- Discussions with all Council departments to understand what they currently do to communicate with CALD audiences, evaluate their effectiveness and consider what further assistance they need.

Phase 2: Strategy Development

The Strategy was created over two months in early 2010, with a draft presented to the Reference Group for input and guidance.

Key steps in the strategy development phase:

- Analysis and synthesis of the research results.
- Develop the Communications and Community Engagement Framework to guide the structure and content of the CALD Communications Strategy.
- Write the draft CALD Communications Strategy.
- Make recommendations for change to existing tools, messages or process and recommendations on any new tools messages or processes required.
- Reference Group input on the Strategy and recommendations.
- Developing budget bids for 2010-11 for funding.
- Develop a separate implementation plan.

Phase 3: Implementation

Implementation will occur once the Strategy is agreed to by Council and will include:

- Making changes to our tools, messages and processes.
- Developing new messages and processes.
- Setting up a Steering Group.
- Marketing the CALD Communications Strategy inside the organisation to ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities in communicating with CALD audiences and what tools are available to assist them.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of tools (ongoing process).
- Reviewing the Strategy after two years.

Research Results

Emerging communities focus groups

- Focus groups with three cultural groups: Congolese, Kurdish and Sudanese.
- Strong preference by all communities for face to face communications in their own language through community forums and service providers. Information is shared informally through group discussion and gatherings.
- Libraries and recreation services are well known. Maternal and child health, youth services and community grants have low awareness and use. Relatively low use of Neighbourhood Houses
- Technology as a means of communication varied dramatically. Kurdish have high levels of literacy and access. Sudanese and Congolese low. Low interest across all groups in finding information via internet and email
- Wide readership of local Leader newspaper. Greater use of Preston Leader recommended. Very low awareness of Darebin News.

Established communities focus groups

- Focus groups with five cultural groups: Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Macedonian and Vietnamese.
- Strong preference by all communities for communications in own language face to face through community forums and via distributed translated printed information to social groups.
- Strong use of Council's multilingual telephone line by all groups.
- High level of use of internet and email in younger communities, which signals greater web-based communications in the future.
- Training in computer and internet for older people in targeted communities recommended.
- More translated content needed with greater visibility (eg: front page) in Darebin News.

- Desire for greater connection with wider community and for communications to facilitate this via increased multilingual content.

Staff focus groups

- Focus groups with 13 Council departments
- Staff showed a strong understanding of, and commitment to, 'living and breathing CALD communications'
- See their relationships with community through groups, organisations and leaders as the primary tool for communicating with CALD communities. Community engagement, relationship building and facilitating access to groups and communities is key to CALD communications
- Concern that translations as a tool can sometimes be token
- Emphasised there is a greater resource cost for greater engagement
- A diversity of tools needed, including cultural competency and engagement skills, practical guides, strategic advice and assistance.

Think-tank

- Implications of the Think-tank were far reaching and went beyond the CALD Communications Strategy to how Council works, its function in society and how it plays a part in community life
- It developed a spotlight on new way forward for the shared work of community engagement, social inclusion and communication
- Thinking moves away from 'CALD communications' to seeing diversity and multilingual communications embedded in Council core planning and practice
- Communications model moved from 'Inform' to 'Inform, Involve and Empower'
- Strong future role of new and mobile technologies (eg: mobile phones, wireless technologies)
- Proposed pilot projects: Community Ambassadors, Dialogues in Action and new technologies.

Demographic review

- 11,000 people don't speak English well (2% of Darebin's population).
- Italian and Greek are the largest communities represented in low proficiency. Other key groups with low proficiency include communities with high proportion of aged (eg: the Chinese community) and women, who sometimes have low literacy and education.
- Significant changes occurring in Darebin's cultural demographic profile. Asian communities are prominent in number. Emerging communities from across Asia, including India and Africa have small communities with a greater level of need.
- Significant increases in mobile migrant populations, including international students.

Overall – key findings

- Groups and communities with low English speaking proficiency sometimes have established ways of getting information. Focus groups with established and emerging communities show they get information through social clubs and groups, service organisations and informal social networks
- Some groups and communities with high English speaking proficiency (eg: international students) still have high needs in terms of settlement and cultural orientation
- Speaking proficiency doesn't necessarily correlate to reading proficiency
- Asian communities are prominent in number but have relatively little engagement and communication with Council
- Demographic changes bringing greater linguistic diversity that can't always be supported through translations and interpreting
- Council needs to keep track of changes in demography for staff and community to see shifts over time, and respond.

Vision and Guiding Principles and Values

Vision

“Support of democratic and effective local governance through engagement, communication and dialogue with the Darebin Community.”

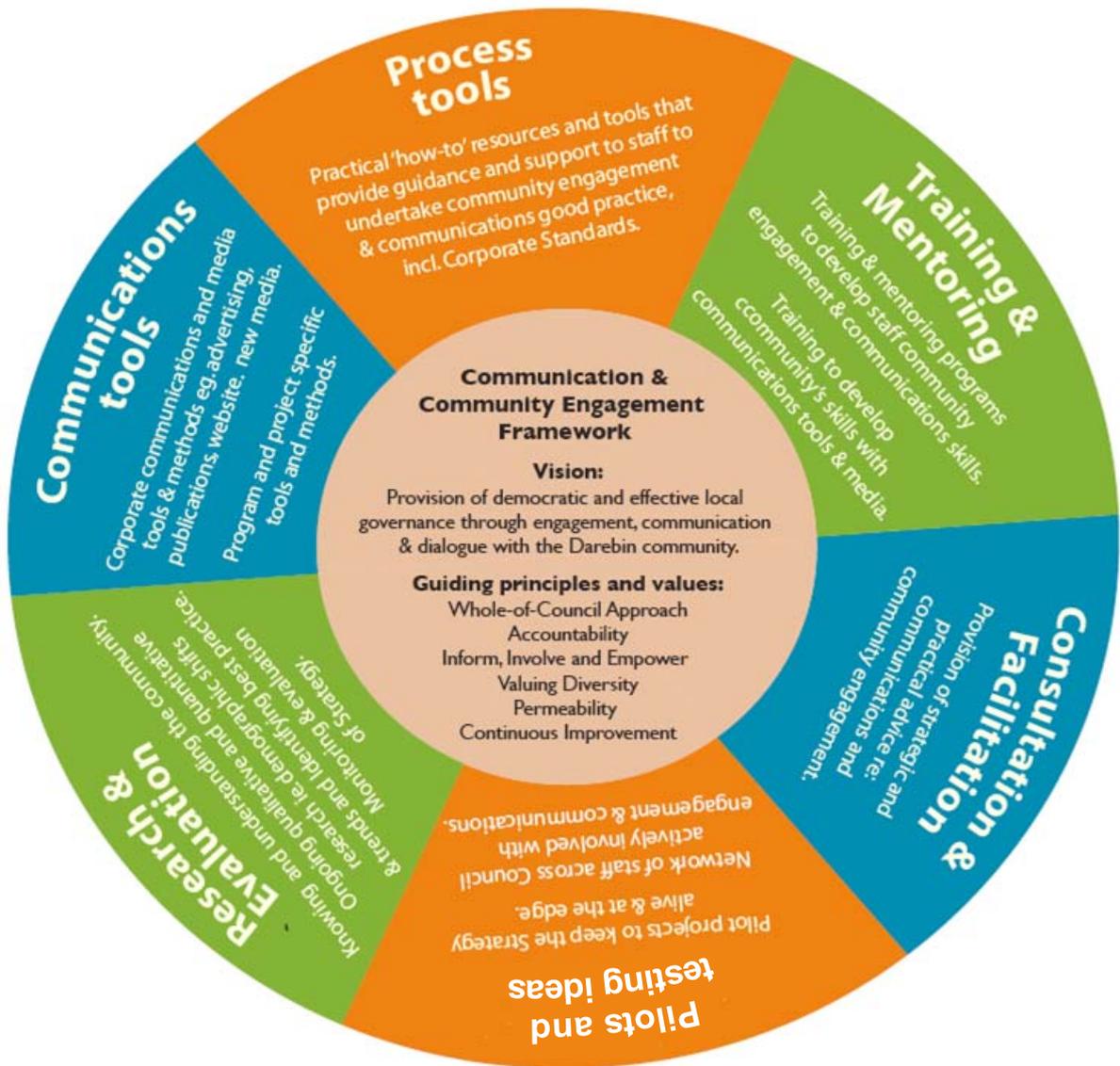
Guiding Principles and Values

- Whole-of-Council approach
- Accountability
- Inform, Involve and Empower
- Valuing Diversity
- Permeability
- Continuous Improvement.

Communications and Community Engagement Framework

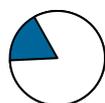
The Communications and Community Engagement Framework was developed from the research findings. The six 'Strategies' provide a structure for the CALD Communications Strategy and an understanding of how each of the elements is interconnected, and assists Council to achieve its vision.

The Communications and Community Engagement Framework



Strategies and Actions

The Strategies and Action listed here are grouped according the structure of the Communications and Community Engagement Framework.



Communications tools

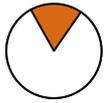
STRATEGY: Corporate communications and tools and media tools and methods eg advertising, publications, website, new media

Program	Action
Corporate Communication Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use corporate communication tools to both explicitly deliver messages to culturally and linguistically diverse audiences, but also to implicitly make it clear that diverse audiences are part of the greater Darebin community, that they are recognised and acknowledged.
Media Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the Annual Media Strategy includes culturally and linguistically diverse specific media engagement methods.
Media Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All media releases to be sent to appropriate culturally and linguistically diverse media relevant to local audiences and Leader newspapers weekly.
Mayor's Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop six translated Mayor's Message columns per year, one in each of the top six languages on a key issue for that community.
Darebin News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include multilingual 'tag line' on front cover of each edition. Develop contact details line (For more information call Darebin Council on MTL number) in six languages and include in standard layout as a tag line. Reformat page three translated stories for translation to be at the top of the page and English at the bottom of the page. Adjust the writing and layout style of <i>Darebin News</i> to be more scannable – use pull quotes, more photos and less text Reformat the page 16 translations and move them to instead be on the page with the story they relate to.
Multilingual Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the multilingual website, including a review of the number of languages, content, reporting and use of information formats such as audio files.

Program	Action
Multilingual Communication Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to expand the pool of Language Aides to include Greek and emerging community languages. • Review the existing language policy and expanded it to include provisions for staff who offer language assistance to residents as part of their duties. • Set up a working group with the participation of community representatives to identify technical improvements to Council’s language services. • Review and improve the content and format of the MultiRegister Database and service reports through a working group, particularly considering the possible future use of CAMS.

STRATEGY: Program and project specific tools and methods

Program	Action
FAQ booklet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the FAQ booklet and translate into multiple languages, using content to update the multilingual content on the Darebin website (see also Multilingual Communication Service).
Signage policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council signage policy for CALD accessibility.
Telephone system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate if the corporate phone system is able to direct people, from first point of call, with “Press 1 for English, 2 for all other languages’ and have 2 direct them to the Multilingual Telephone Line. Assess this concept against best practice customer service methodologies



Process tools

STRATEGY: Practical ‘how-to’ resources and tools that provide guidance and support to staff to undertake community engagement and communications good practice incl. Corporate Standards.

Program	Action
Corporate Communication Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relaunch the Darebin Writing Style Guide and enforce ‘plain English’ as the corporate standard.• Add culturally and linguistically diverse and access symbols to the Darebin photo gallery and ensure photography of the community reflects community diversity.
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link to an online demographic database to profile culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Darebin (see Research and Evaluation)• Contact list of culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations and groups in Darebin, with information about and how to best engage with these groups.• Contact list of Council staff who work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. (See Communities of Practice).• Profile of the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council, their services offered in culturally and linguistically diverse engagement and contact details.

Program	Action
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications Toolbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklist and Template: Planning for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Engagement. • Develop resources to provide advice on what targeted and specific communications media and tools are best for engaging culturally and linguistically diverse audiences. • Matrix of communications tools and culturally and linguistically diverse audiences. List the communications methods effective with particular communities ie. Established groups, newly arrived, women, young people. • Information on accessing the media (mainstream and ethno-specific) to reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Includes listing of media contacts and how to engage them. • Information on Council Corporate Standards for engaging and communicating with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. • Information on the Multilingual Communication Service, how to use its elements (translations, multilingual telephone line, website, language aides) and who to contact for assistance. • Information and communications tips for writing for audiences with low literacy and/or English proficiency (Darebin Writing Style guide and support for a 'plain English' policy). • A translation guide. • Information on using culturally appropriate images, colours, symbols and photographs.



Training and mentoring

STRATEGY: Training and mentoring programs to develop staff community engagement and communications skills.

Program	Action
General staff training and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity Training. • How to work with interpreters training (run and increase from one to two per year). • Community Engagement training. • How to prepare a document for translation training (run and increase from one to two per year).
Language Aide training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Aides training for new and existing Language Aides (run and increase from one to two per year)

STRATEGY: Training to develop community's skills with communications tools and media.

Program	Action
Training for CALD communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Neighbourhood Houses and local training providers to develop and promote Internet and computer use training for older people from CALD communities.



Consultation and facilitation

STRATEGY: Provision of strategic and practical advice re: communications and community engagement.

Program	Action
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications Toolbox implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications Toolbox via a clear and easily accessible intranet page and printed guides where appropriate. • Training in use of the Guide (see Training and Mentoring). • Ongoing updates and regular promotion of the Toolbox.



Pilots and testing ideas

STRATEGY: Pilot projects to keep the Strategy alive and at the edge.

Program	Action
Community Ambassadors Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop local ambassadors from different CALD groups to provide a conduit between Council and the community for information flow, service accessibility and capacity building.
Dialogues in Action Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring together community groups experiencing intra and inter community conflict for collaborative projects to build respect and tolerance.
Use of Emerging Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a pilot project to explore opportunities for engagement and information dissemination in languages other than English using new technology, including Web 2.0, multimedia kiosks and mobile technologies.
Language based communication pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the feasibility of producing direct mail in community languages for specifically targeted recipients and conduct a small trail and subsequent evaluation.

STRATEGY: Network of staff across Council actively involved with engagement and communications.

Program	Action
Community Engagement - Community of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate a network of staff across Council who are actively involved with Community engagement and communications (and CALD engagement) to share learning and develop best practice.



STRATEGY: Knowing and understanding the community.

Program	Action
Broader community of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the development of a broader community of practice of leaders in CALD engagement and communication, setting up an online tool to share learning and assist each other. Base on Think-tank participants, and look to expand membership.

STRATEGY: Ongoing quantitative and qualitative research ie demographic shifts and trends and identifying best practice.

Program	Action
Demographic Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an online demographic database to profile culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Darebin, with demographic and other qualitative and quantitative data and information. Include demographic shifts over last 10 to 15 years and emerging trends with reference to age, gender and disability. Include languages spoken and language proficiency. Ensure this is always up-to-date.

STRATEGY: Monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy

Program	Action
Multilingual Communication Service evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the Multilingual Communication Service and review annually. Include a survey staff and resident satisfaction and identify opportunities for improvement.
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications Strategy evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop processes for sourcing community feedback and monitoring the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications Strategy.

Implementation

An Implementation Plan

An implementation plan that specifies timeline, resources required and priorities has been developed separately to this Strategy.

An ongoing Steering Committee will be developed to guide implementation and ensure the actions in the CALD Communications Strategy are delivered.

Progress on Strategy implementation will be reported every six months, and a review the Strategy will be completed after two years.

Evaluation and Measurement

The CALD Communications Strategy will be evaluated by both outputs (the actions being done and completed) and outcomes – the effect of the work on the Darebin community.

The vision for the CALD Communications Strategy is ‘provision of democratic and effective local governance through engagement, communication and dialogue with the Darebin community’. Therefore measures are intended to evaluate how well Council is communicating and advocating and support for staff work in this area, as well as how the Darebin community is responding to diversity.

Performance Indicators

Objective	Performance Indicator Description
Implementation of the CALD Communications Strategy	Completion of the actions in the CALD Communications Strategy Implementation Plan
A Council that serves its diverse community	The difference in satisfaction with Council between households that speak ‘English only’ and those that speak a language other than English.
A Council that speaks the community’s language	The level of satisfaction among community members who have contacted Council for assistance with Council’s understanding of their language needs.
Communication that meets the needs of a CALD community	The difference in satisfaction with Council’s communication between households that speak ‘English only’ and those that speak a language other than English.

Objective	Performance Indicator Description
An organisation that supports its staff to engage with CALD communities	The level of satisfaction Council staff have in the support and tools available to them to engage with CALD communities.
A community that embraces multiculturalism	The level to which the Darebin community embraces cultural diversity.

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