

# Darebin Human Rights Action Plan 2012 – 2015

*Freedom – Respect – Equality – Dignity*

*Standing up for our human rights in our everyday lives and relationships*

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## **1. Foreword**

Darebin City Council is proud to present the Darebin Human Rights Action Plan 2012 – 2015.

The City of Darebin is a large municipality in Melbourne's inner north with an estimated residential population of 143,057 people. Darebin is recognised as an important area of Indigenous history and the original inhabitants of Darebin are the Wurundjeri people.

This new initiative articulates Council's strategic commitment and sets out actions which further embed human rights within Council's culture and practice at all levels, and ensures Council's legal responsibilities with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. The Plan also includes actions which commit Council to working with citizens and communities to strengthen relationships with, between and within communities based on the key values of human rights - Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity.

The Darebin Human Rights Action Plan is one of a number of plans developed under the Equity and Inclusion Policy 2012 – 2015, all of which are underpinned by a strong human rights-based approach. This is the first Human Rights Action Plan for Darebin Council and as such, some of the actions are developmental allowing for new partnerships and initiatives to be formed over the three-year period.

Darebin Council would like to sincerely thank the members of the Human Rights Action Plan Working Group, who contributed their expertise, time and effort towards developing and refining the Plan. The seventeen member Working Group represented diverse voices from across Council, partner organisations and community members from Council's Community Advisory Committees and Reference groups.

Human rights matters in the lives of Darebin citizens and communities. The Darebin Human Rights Action Plan is Council's commitment to the actions we will take to protect, fulfil and promote the human rights of all citizens in the City of Darebin.

On behalf of Council, I would like to thank all individuals and groups who have contributed to shaping the Darebin Human Rights Action Plan, which ushers in a renewed partnership approach between Darebin City Council and the community it serves.

**Tim Laurence**  
**Mayor**  
**City of Darebin**

## 2. Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity – the voices of Darebin

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Victorian Charter) contains twenty basic rights that promote and protect the values of Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity.

The Victorian Government, local councils and other public authorities must not knowingly be in breach of these rights, and must always consider them when they create laws, develop policies and deliver their services.

During 2012, as part of Council's many public and community events, people were asked to consider and comment on the four values and to write what these values meant in their day-to-day lives.

The following statements, from some of the 300 plus contributions made by people in Darebin, have been selected to show that these values are important to community and based on lived experiences. Human rights can be sometimes critiqued for operating on rhetorical and generalised levels, with little practical meaning in people's lives. The voices of Darebin people on the meaning and significance of '*Freedom, Respect, Equality, Dignity*' show otherwise and it is this contribution that has helped frame the Human Rights Action Plan.

Freedom	Respect	Equality	Dignity
To be who you are. (Female, 48, International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) event)	My parents looking after me with love and care (Male, 9 years, IDAHO)	A drawing of two girls with a heart drawn between them and the following words: No-one is better than others. You're not better than me (a big cross). Everyone is equal (a big tick). (Female, 7 and a half, Darebin Kite Festival)	Being heard and having a voice (Female, 47 Darebin Kite Festival)
To be alive, to speak, to breathe, to love (Female, 18, Darebin Intercultural Cup )	Respect is something we all appreciate for ourselves and for others. It involves being listened to and being free to make our own decisions for our own lives, while recognising the affect it has on others (Male, 73, Darebin	Round, Square, Black, White, Yellow, Brown, Blonde, Brunette, Ginger Male, Intersex, Female, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, Straight, Fat, Thin, Tall Short and large equal sign at the end (Female, Darebin Kite Festival)	To be viewed as a person, NOT an age group, a disability, or an ethnic group (Male, Standing up for our human rights – Interfaith, Intercultural forum)

	Koorie Pride Festival)		
At times the freedom of some must be regulated in order for others to enjoy their freedom, (Male, 52, Darebin Kite Festival)	Respect is trying to understand another person, their ideas, feelings and values - without judgement (Female, 38 Standing up for our human rights – Interfaith, Intercultural forum)	The word equality is a fundamental outcome for Aboriginal people (Male, Standing up for our human rights – Interfaith, Intercultural forum)	Dignity equals right to make choices, right to information to make these choices and these choices to be supported and valued (Female, 30, Human Rights Action Plan Working Group)
Peace of mind, spirit and heart. Safety at home and everywhere we go (Female, 31, Darebin Koorie Pride Festival)	Respect is giving others the right to live peacefully and without judgement – and living your life without hurting others ( Female, 16, Darebin Kite Festival)	Fundamental to fulfilling life. All aspects of life and opportunities to access health, education, justice, freedom from harm. Everyone deserves equal rights regardless of gender, ethnicity, whether living with a disability (Female, 28, Human Rights Action Plan Working Group)	To feel a sense of self-worth and to be treated by all as a person who has great self-worth and potential ( Female, Standing up for our human rights – Interfaith, Intercultural forum)

### 3. Policy context

There are many intersecting policies and legislation at both the Federal and State government levels which impact on the Human Rights Action Plan (HRAP). These have been presented and discussed in the Equity and Inclusion Policy as well as in other corresponding action plans.

#### ***National context***

##### ***Australian Human Rights Framework 2010***

In 2010, the Federal Government launched Australia's Human Rights Framework. This occurred following Australia's most comprehensive community consultation process on human rights in 2009. Eighty-seven per cent of the submissions received during this consultation supported the introduction of a Federal Human Rights Act. Despite such overwhelming support for a more legally binding model, the Federal Government implemented an alternative model – the Australian Human Rights Framework.

The Framework outlines a range of key measures to protect and promote human rights in Australia and is based on five key principles:

- Reaffirming a commitment to our human rights obligations
- The importance of human rights education
- Enhancing our domestic and international engagement of human rights issues
- Improving human rights protections including greater parliamentary scrutiny
- Achieving greater respect for human rights principles within the community

##### ***Australia's Human Rights Action Plan (2012)***

A 2011 baseline study on key human rights issues in Australia informed the development of the Exposure Draft National Human Rights Action Plan. The study found that particular human rights issues persist for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, children, older people, gay lesbian bisexual and sex or gender-diverse people, people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, people with a disability, carers, people in prison, refugees asylum seekers, migrants and people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds. These groups correspond (except for people in prison) with the priority groups experiencing exclusion identified in Darebin's Equity and Inclusion policy.

The Action Plan reflects what governments are already doing to address human rights concerns, including the areas of counter terrorism, access to justice, worker's rights, poverty and climate change. The Action Plan also reinforces the commitment of Government to the human rights of disadvantaged groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, older people and people with a disability.

## ***Victorian context***

### ***The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006***

In 2006, Victoria became the first Australian state to enact a Charter of Human Rights following extensive public consultation. The consultation demonstrated very strong support for the legal protection of human rights with over 94% of submissions supporting the enactment of the Charter.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 entered into full force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 and enshrines 20 civil and political rights which are mostly derived from the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights.

The Victorian Charter requires public authorities, such as Victorian state and local governments, and people delivering services on behalf of government, to act consistently with the human rights in the Charter. Under section 38 of the Charter, it is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with human rights, or to fail to give proper consideration to relevant human rights when making decisions.

This is the main legislative context specific to the Darebin Human Rights Action Plan.

In 2011, a review of the Victorian Charter was held by the Victorian Parliament's Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations committee. More than 3800 public submission were made to the review, including one by Darebin City Council. Ninety-five per cent of submissions supported retaining and or strengthening the Charter.

Key state-wide human rights advocacy organisations<sup>1</sup> have collated case studies which have shown the positive and effective changes the Victorian Charter has enabled, including a crucial preventative role in deterring human rights breaches (and the associated social and economic costs).

## ***Darebin Council Policy Context***

### **Darebin Equity and Inclusion Policy 2012-2015**

The Darebin Equity and Inclusion Policy 2012-2015 provides an overarching framework for the Darebin Human Rights Action Plan (DHRAP) with the three goals of the Equity and Inclusion Policy corresponding with human rights objectives and strategic action areas in the plan.

#### **1. Equity and inclusion goal: To build an organisation that is inclusive and reflective of Darebin's diverse communities**

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Law Resource Centre and Public Interest Law Clearing House

***Human rights objective: To ensure that Darebin City Council acts in ways that are compatible with human rights in all decisions which affect Darebin communities***

*Human rights organisational action areas:*

- Integrate the Darebin Human Rights Check in decision-making processes across all levels of Council
- Build and strengthen capacities across all levels of Darebin Council to plan, develop, provide services and advocate for the human rights of Darebin citizens and communities
- Develop and strengthen partnerships to advocate for human rights priorities with and for communities experiencing poverty and discrimination
- Leadership and coordination across Council for human rights compliance and advocacy

**2. Equity and inclusion Goal: To build services and programs that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable( and which respond to the diversity of needs, rights and priorities of Darebin’s communities)**

***Human rights objective: To integrate human rights practice within Council’s service and program developments and delivery***

*Human rights service and program action areas:*

- Community Engagement – Citizen’s and community’s rights to be involved in decisions that affect them
- Freedom from discrimination
- Children’s and family rights – supporting inter-generational relations
- Advocacy

**3. Equity and inclusion goal: To contribute to building inclusive and empowered communities**

***Human rights objectives:***

***To strengthen citizen and community capacity to use human rights values and laws, especially the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities as an effective tool for communicating and advocating with public authorities for improved and equal access and dignified treatment and service.***

***To strengthen and reinforce citizen and community relationships based on human rights values of freedom, respect, equality and dignity.***

*Human rights community action areas:*

- Acknowledge and respect First Australians
- Communicate and affirm human rights for all people - Darebin's Voices for Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity
- Affirm and build on community commitment and capacity on human rights

Some of the actions included in the plan, especially those under the first goal which focuses on building an inclusive organisation are actions, that are necessary to ensure Council's legal responsibilities with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. But compliance is only one of the reasons for DHRAP. Council is committed to strengthening its own internal organisational culture and ways of working that further respect and embed human rights values.

### **Darebin Anti-Racism Strategy 2012-2015**

A key document informing the Darebin Human Rights Action Plan is the Darebin Anti-Racism Strategy 2012-2015. This local strategy sets the vision for a racism-free Darebin, where our community's diversity is valued, celebrated, respected, embraced and leveraged.

Informing the directions set out in the Anti-Racism Strategy was the Darebin Racism Inquiry which found, in keeping with previous studies at the national or state levels, that **those most likely to experience race-based discrimination** are:

- **Indigenous Australians** and;
- those from **culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities**.

This is particularly true for:

- Aboriginal members of the community in Darebin;
- refugees or migrants from newly-arrived communities (notably from Africa).

For both these groups, the experience of race-based discrimination is constant and relentless racism: racism is part of everyday life.

The following principles, informed by Darebin citizens' views in the Racism Inquiry and reflecting their expectations, support the Anti-Racism Strategy and are applicable to the relevant actions set out in the Aboriginal Action Plan:

- Take a stand against racism and as a Council, promote zero tolerance towards racism
- Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land and respects and recognises Aboriginal communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and their right to self-determination
- Celebrate all of Darebin's diverse cultures; value diversity at all levels of the community and institutions and promote dialogue between different cultures through interculturalism
- Work from a human rights perspective

- Work in partnership with the community to address racism:
  - o Council should be accountable to the community and committed to tackling racism;
  - o anti-racism initiatives should be developed ideally within a collaborative approach (as defined in Council's Community Engagement Framework).
- Base all activities and initiatives on evidence and best practice, which implies keeping up-to-date with research and the growing evidence-base and reviewing our actions in that light
- Empower the community and build its capacity to respond to racism
- Recognise that “integration is a two-way street” and work with established communities to be more welcoming of new arrivals
- Build a Council reflective of its community diversity

As such, an integrated approach has been adopted across the Aboriginal Action Plan, Multicultural Action Plan and Human Rights Action plan to ensure coordinated responses of actions identified in the Anti-Racism Strategy.

#### **4. Recognising the First Peoples of Australia**

An important starting point to DHRAP is a clear recognition of Aboriginal people as the First Peoples of Australia. This recognition includes acknowledgement of the historical dispossession of Aboriginal people of their land, culture and identity which has led to their entrenched exclusion and disadvantage.

Darebin’s Racism Inquiry 2012 found that for Aboriginal members of the community in Darebin (and for newly-arrived people, notably from Africa), racism is a constant and relentless part of everyday life.

In the Community Guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, produced by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2010)<sup>2</sup> Mick Dodson, one of the key Aboriginal advocates who has worked at the international level for the past 20 years towards the development of the UN Declaration, states:

*“The existence of human rights standards is not the source of Indigenous disadvantage. Human rights do not dispossess Indigenous peoples, they do not marginalise them, they do not cause their poverty, and they do not cause gaps in life expectancy and life outcomes. It is the denial of rights that is a large contributor to these things. The value of human rights is not in their existence; it is in their implementation...”*

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010, Community Reference Guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

This is a challenge for all of Council's work in addressing the racism and human rights breaches experienced by Aboriginal people.

Council understands and is committed to working in collaboration with Aboriginal people, both individually and with their organisations in ways that affirm and reinforce self-determination and community-control principles.

All actions in the DHRAP which pertain to learning and development on human rights, (whether professional development within Council, or with communities), integrates acknowledgement and respect of the First People of Australia and the continuing strengths and contributions of Aboriginal culture and innovation. The Darebin Human Rights Action Plan also acknowledges the ongoing embedded racism that Aboriginal people experience. Finally, the process of engagement for the DHRAP identified areas of work with young Aboriginal men and women have now been integrated into the Darebin Aboriginal Action Plan.

## **5. The process of developing the Human Rights Action Plan**

A diverse range of community engagement and learning activities were carried out during 2012 to inform the Plan. The included:

### ***Freedom, Respect, Equality, Dignity – What do they mean in your day-to-day lives in Darebin?***

In early 2012, through an educational and consultative process, people attending various community and public events in Darebin were invited to reflect and contribute to the meanings of the four values underpinning the Victorian Charter. Some of these comments have been presented earlier. Over 300 people across Darebin contributed their voices at the following events:

- Darebin Kite Festival, February 2012
- Darebin Council Leadership group, March 2012
- Sundays in April Program, including the Koorie Pride Festival, April 2012
- Standing up for your human rights in our everyday lives and relationships – Darebin Council, Northern Interfaith and Intercultural Network, Islamic Society of Victoria forum, April 2012
- International Day Against Homophobia - Darebin Council community engagement and celebration, May 2012
- Darebin Intercultural Cup (part of the Reaching Out - Salaam Alaykum Project), June 2012
- Darebin Human Rights Action Plan Working Group, September 2012

### ***Human Rights Films and Community Conversations***

During 2012, five human rights films were shown and community conversations facilitated. The sessions were themed around groups and communities who experience exclusion, discrimination and poverty overing the experience of the following groups:

- Women (especially women's experience of war and peace-building)
- Aboriginal people, with a focus on the Northern Territory Intervention
- Asylum seekers (the personal story of one of the SIEV-Ex survivors in 2001. This person was also involved in other Darebin community events)
- Young people (including young people with disabilities and young people whose parents/carers are gay, lesbian and transgender)
- Older people (including stories of elder abuse)

The program, attended by over 70 people, provided a deliberative platform for reflection and discussion between participants and development of recommendations to inform the Plan.

### ***Darebin Human Rights Action Plan (DHRAP) Working Group***

The DHRAP Working Group was established to provide critical reflection and contribution to the final development of the HRAP.

The role of the Working Group was to:

- provide critical reflection on the themes and ideas which have been discussed through community learning and engagement processes
- contribute to ongoing decisions which need to be made as part of the final drafting of DHRAP
- learn/be informed of the strengths and the limitations of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (2006) as a frame of reference for the HRAP
- provide a diverse platform of people with different experiences of Council and communities as a process for good collaborative planning

The Working Group consisted of 17 people; five Council Staff across different programs and areas, including the Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance, Communications and Marketing, Aged and Disability Services, Public Realm, Family and Children's Services and City Development/Planning; five representatives from diverse organisations who work in partnership with Darebin Council, including Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, Salvation Army, Leadership Plus, Darebin Community Health and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. Membership also included seven community members from Council Community Advisory Committees and Reference Groups including representatives from the Darebin Women's Advisory Committee, Darebin Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diverse Committee, Darebin Ethnic Communities' Council, Darebin Interfaith Council and Darebin Healthy and Active Ageing Board. A separate process of engagement was undertaken with the Darebin Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC) as they were unable to participate on the working group.

This Working Group reflected on the key human rights priorities captured through the engagement process, prioritised key areas for inclusion and provided critical feedback to the draft Plan.

## 6. Darebin Charter Check

The Darebin Charter Check is an internal guideline for staff and management across Council to address when developing policies, laws, procedures, services and all decisions which have an impact on citizens and communities. Active since 2011, implementing the Charter Check ensures that the human rights of people affected have been respectfully considered as well as compliance of Council's role in regards to the Victorian Charter is upheld.<sup>3</sup>

The Darebin Charter Check ensures that the three key elements in Council's obligations under the Charter are followed. These three elements are:

1. Council must give 'proper consideration' to human rights when making decisions – that is no blanket or inflexible rules; but real, genuine and proportionate consideration
2. Council must act compatibly with human rights – this means treating people as individuals and according to their needs and rights
3. Council must interpret and apply laws compatibly with human rights – this requires active consideration and a sincere attempt to comply with human rights

The Darebin Charter Check integrates all these considerations in a coherent and clear process and has been integrated into Council's Equity and Inclusion Planning and Audit Tool (EIPAT) as one of the key pillars for consideration in development of Council policies, programs and services (See part 8 for further explanation of EIPAT).

Further details about the Darebin Charter Check are in Appendix 1.

## 7. Darebin Community Engagement Framework 2012 - 2016

One of the key human rights priorities identified during the engagement and planning processes for the development of the Human Rights Action Plan was the importance of communities having a voice and being able to influence decisions made by Council.

The Darebin Community Engagement Framework affirms that one of the key objectives of effective community engagement is to uphold the democratic rights of citizens and communities to be part of decision-making in matters that affect them.

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<sup>3</sup> The Darebin Charter Check has been developed from the good practice model developed by the Victorian Local Government Association, Department of Justice, RMIT University and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

It outlines three approaches - Consultation, Deliberation and Collaboration - each signifying different levels of influence and decision-making capacity between communities, other stakeholders and Council. Seven standards informed each of the three approaches.

The framework encourages and strengthens the contribution and role of citizens and communities in the ongoing decisions with regard to often complex social, political, economic, cultural and environmental matters impacting on people's circumstances and lays out clear guidelines and standards across all levels of operation.

The meaning of these three engagement approaches and the seven standards and commitments which Council makes to these standards are included in Appendix 2.

## **8. Freedom from discrimination – recognising integrated approaches and existing plans**

Council has a wide range of existing plans and legislative requirements that reflect and reinforce the interdependence and mutuality of human rights. Many of these plans, listed below, recognised and address discrimination, a strong theme of the Darebin Human Rights Action Plan.

This includes freedom from racism, freedom from age discrimination, freedom from sex discrimination and freedom from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This theme emerged as a priority issue during the engagement process in the development of the DHRAP.

In terms of Council's own programs and services, freedom from discrimination means ensuring equality and equity of access and participation. Access to Council services and programs and anti-discrimination measures have not been specifically defined as an action area in the DHRAP as they are covered elsewhere in other plans and through legislative requirements such as:

- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2009 – 2013
- Darebin Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009 - 2013
- Darebin Food Security Policy 2010 – 2014
- Darebin Responding to Housing Stress: A local Action plan 2010 - 2013
- Darebin Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy 2011 – 2021
- Darebin Community Safety Strategy 2012 – 2016

### *Plans cascading from the Equity and Inclusion Policy 2012 – 2015*

- Darebin Women's Equity Strategy 2012 – 2015
- Darebin Gender Equity Plan 2012 - 2015

- Preventing Violence Against Women Annual Action Plan 2012- 2013
- Darebin Anti-Racism Strategy 2012 – 2015
- Darebin Aboriginal Action Plan 2012 – 2015
- Darebin Multicultural Plan 2012 – 2015
- Darebin Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Plan 2012 – 2015

*Related actions in the Darebin Aboriginal Action Plan and Darebin Multicultural Plan*

- National Campaign 'Racism – it stops with me' Campaign
- Intercultural dialogue and relationship building between Aboriginal people and Culturally diverse communities
- Commemoration and celebration of significant annual events with a focus on Cultural Diversity Week and National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee Week
- Engaging with Darebin Council Community Advisory Committees to integrate actions on prevention of violence against women.
- Strengthening strategic networks and relationships to foster stronger connection and engagement between Council and women in the community

There are also specific priorities which arose from the research and community engagement undertaken in development of the DHRAP:

- Freedom from racism - the experience of young Aboriginal people leaving the justice system
- Freedom from racism – the experience of young Aboriginal peoples in groups, including in public areas
- Freedom from racism – the experience of young Muslim women and men

These three areas have been included in the Darebin Aboriginal Action Plan and the Darebin Multicultural Action Plan respectively.

## **9. Reflective and participatory monitoring and evaluation**

This is Darebin first Human Rights Action Plan. There are some key actions that are developmental. Some of the measures included in the plan are specific outputs – things that Council will do. Some of the measures leave the opportunities open for ongoing development and change, especially in new initiatives which require ongoing partnerships with communities.

As stated in the Equity and Inclusion Policy, Council is committed to reflective practice as integral to its ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The key questions that are useful for ongoing reflective evaluation are:

- Are we going in the direction we thought we would be?

- Do we need to do something different?
- Have circumstances changed?
- Have relationships changed?
- What have we learnt?
- What do we need to do to strengthen/change how and what we are implementing?

The Human Rights Action Plan will use these questions as an ongoing reference for monitoring and evaluation internally, with organisational partners and with citizens and communities. Annual reporting requirements will also ensure accountability back to Council and community.

## **10. Spotlight on three areas for action**

The following provide detail for three areas of action included in the DHRAP, which are professional development for Council staff, Darebin's advocacy priorities and freedom from discrimination.

### **1. Organisational development**

Council's professional development on human rights will include the following aspects (refer to Action 1.2.3):

- Darebin Council obligations under the Victorian Charter Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006;
- Applying human rights to decisions and practice across Council;
- Freedom from discrimination and racism as a key human rights theme, with a focus on Aboriginal people and the experiences of African and Muslim communities
- Using human rights to balance between different priorities and interests within and between communities;
- Using human rights as a tool to support communities to be strong advocates for themselves in relation to public authorities, including Darebin Council

### **2. Advocacy**

The following human rights priorities were identified during community engagement in the development of the Human Rights Action Plan. Some of these priorities are actions in other strategies and plans. They are listed here to ensure transparency, coordination and follow-up (See Actions 1.4.2 and 2.4).

- *Human rights and Freedom of Expression*
- *Human Rights, Equality and Racism – Australia's first people*

- *Human Rights and standing up for others - witnessing racism*
- *Human rights of children and parents – strengthening intergenerational relations*
- *The human rights of asylum seekers – local actions for national change*
  
- *Accessible, affordable housing*  
Affordable, accessible and secure housing for women and men in housing stress and homeless  
Accessible and affordable housing with a focus on new private housing developments  
Affordable and accessible housing alternatives for older women and men
  
- *Work opportunities and workplace rights*  
Employment opportunities for young Aboriginal men and women  
Employment opportunities and work place rights for newly arrived migrant and refugee women and men
  
- *Inclusion of young people with disabilities*  
Supporting young women and men with disabilities in their transition from education to employment  
Fair inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools

### **3. Freedom from discrimination - making the connections**

Council programs which address 'Freedom from discrimination' will make connections between people's different experiences of discrimination and affirm diversity as essential to human experience.

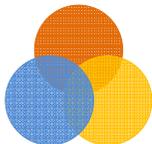
Freedom from discrimination in Darebin begins with:

- Recognition and Respect for all human diversity and preciousness of all people; and
- Acknowledgement and respect of the First People of Australia and continuing strengths of Aboriginal culture and innovation;

Freedom from discrimination then continues to affirm diversity as an important feature of humanity, including recognition and affirmation of:

- Cultural Diversity;
- Sexual, Sex and Gender Diversity
- Diversity in abilities

## 11. Darebin Human Rights Action Plan

	<b>Equity and Inclusion Goal 1:</b> To build an <b>organisation within Council</b> that is inclusive and reflective of Darebin's diverse communities				
	<b>Objective:</b> To ensure that Darebin City Council acts in ways that are compatible with human rights in all decisions which affect Darebin communities				
No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
<b>1.1 Organisational action area: Integrating Darebin Human Rights Check in decision-making processes across all levels of Council</b>					
1.1.1	Ensure that human rights principles and commitments are considered in Council policies, strategies and plans, including the Darebin Council Plan 2014 – 2017	2013 (Council Plan)  Ongoing as other policies and plans develop	Executive Management Team; All Departments		Darebin Human Rights Charter Check are completed for all significant policies, strategies and plans
1.1.2	Integrate and apply the Darebin Charter Check in the templates of Darebin Council Briefings and Reports	2013 and ongoing	Corporate Governance		All reports and matters presented to Council have given due consideration to human rights
1.1.3	Integrate and utilise the Darebin Human Rights Charter Check as part of the legislative review cycle of Darebin local laws	2013 and ongoing	Economic Development and Civic Compliance		Human Rights impacts are considered in review of Darebin's local laws

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
1.1.4	Develop and implement an internal communication strategy of the Darebin Human Rights Charter Check		Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Communications and Marketing	Darebin Human Rights Charter Check is visible and understood by all levels of Council
1.1.5	Monitor and provide ongoing support across Council to application of Darebin Human Rights Charter Check in development of policies, laws and service decisions		Equity and Inclusion Management Group; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Collaboration between Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance and all areas of Council	Darebin Human Rights Charter Check is consistently applied by all levels of Council
1.1.6	Ensure that all specifications, contracts, and projects briefs for goods and services provided by external providers on behalf of Council include their responsibilities under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights	Ongoing	Corporate Governance ; Risk Management	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	All external providers are cognisant and act in ways that are compatible with human rights
<b>1.2 Organisational action area: Build and strengthen capacities across all levels of Darebin Council to plan, develop, provide services and advocate for the human rights of Darebin citizens and communities</b>					
1.2.1	Provide information to Darebin Councillors on human rights, including obligations under the Victorian Charter Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006	June 2013	Corporate Governance	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Darebin City Councillors are informed and understand their accountability under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
1.2.2	Integrate human rights within the development and implementation of Diversity Capabilities Framework and as part of Darebin Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Competency Training		Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance		Human rights are an integral element of whole-of- Council staff capabilities
1.2.3	Integrate and provide professional development on human rights across all of Council ( See p17)	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission ; Public Interest Law Clearing House; Human Rights Law Resource Centre; Other local and State-wide organisations	Quarterly professional development training provided (in coordination with EIPAT and Community Engagement training)
1.2.4	Provide tailored human rights training and support to specific Council programs and services to enhance their human rights practice and advocacy	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Aged and Disability Services; Children and Family Services	Collaboration between CP3 and two service areas of Council annually : Ageing and Disability 2012 – 2014 and Children and Family Services 2012 - 2014
1.2.5	Review and refine on-line Human Rights compulsory training for all new staff	2013	People and Development; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance		Online human rights training reflective and applicable to context of Darebin Council and human rights priorities of City of Darebin

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
1.2.6	Develop a Council wide learning circle for human rights based practice	2013	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance		Staff have an ongoing space to bring their reflections, challenges and experience for discussion and support
1.2.7	Explore and collaborate in integrating human rights in the development of a whole-of-Council satisfaction and complaints mechanism	2013	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance; Corporate Governance; Risk Management		Any new feedback mechanism established includes human rights values and Charter rights explicitly
<b>1.3 Organisational action area: Develop and strengthen partnerships to advocate for human rights priorities with and for communities experiencing poverty and discrimination</b>					
1.3.1	Work with partners to establish Darebin Human Rights Network	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Representation from across Council  National, state and local partners including government and community-based service and advocacy organisations	Quarterly meetings of the Darebin Human Rights Network take place with a clear agenda for addressing human rights priorities
<b>1.4 Organisational action area: Leadership and coordination across Council for human rights compliance and advocacy</b>					
<b>1.5</b>					

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
1.4.1	Carry out all mandatory reporting of Council's responsibilities and initiatives on human rights in a timely and coordinated manner	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission	Annual reports to VHREOC about Council's responsibilities under the Victorian Charter are submitted
1.4.2	Ensure that key human advocacy rights priorities identified during engagement process for Human Rights Action Plan are integrated and monitored in appropriate areas across Council services and programs (Refer to advocacy priorities p 17 - 18)	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Collaboration with relevant areas of Council	Human rights priorities identified during engagement process of this plan are integrated and followed - up within appropriate areas, policies and services of Council
1.4.3	Include human rights as part of Council's Community Grants program		Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Community organisations and groups	Community groups are encouraged to make explicit links between their initiatives and human rights in community grant applications



**Equity and Inclusion Goal 2:** To build **services and programs** that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable

**Objective:** To integrate human rights practice within Councils' service and program developments and delivery

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
<b>2.1 Service and program action area: Community Engagement – Citizen's and community's rights to be involved in decisions that affect them</b>					
2.1.1	Build internal capacity for the ongoing application of the Darebin Community Engagement Framework (2012 – 2016) across Council.	Ongoing	Equity and Inclusion Management Group; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	All Council Departments	Increasing consistent application of the Darebin Community Engagement Framework across Council
2.1.2	Disseminate information to communities about Darebin Council's Community Engagement Framework (2012 – 2016)	2013 and ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Communications; Darebin Advisory Committees; Local organisations, services and networks	Accessible information in different formats is developed and disseminated regarding Darebin Councils' community engagement commitment and standards People have clear expectations about their voice and influence in engagement with Council

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
<b>2.2 Service and program action area: Freedom from discrimination</b>					
2.2.1	<b>Human Rights - Freedom from discrimination</b> Promote good practice of human rights education and programs in Darebin’s primary and secondary schools	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Darebin Public Education Committee; Youth Services; Schools across Darebin; Department of Education	Public event to showcase and recognise the good practice across Darebin schools in human rights education  Schools invited to present at a range of Council forums/events
2.2.2	<b>Human Rights - Freedom from Discrimination</b> Explore and integrate <i>Freedom from discrimination</i> across Council’s diverse Arts, Culture and Venues Events Season, using cultural and arts based forms and installations. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darebin Kite Festival</li> <li>• Darebin Music Festival – Songwriters’ Competition</li> <li>• East Reservoir Community Festival</li> <li>• Inscribe</li> <li>• Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre</li> <li>• Darebin Intercultural Centre</li> <li>• Darebin’s Program of Community Events in October</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance; Arts Culture and Venues		Two new ‘Human rights – freedom from discrimination’ initiatives are included across Councils’ community and public events and spaces annually

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
2.2.3	<b>Human rights – Freedom from Discrimination</b> Collaborate with Darebin Council Advisory Committees and encourage joint initiatives which address 'freedom from discrimination' ( See p 18)	2014	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance; with other areas of Council which facilitate Advisory Committees	Darebin Healthy and Active Ageing Board; Aboriginal Advisory Committee; Darebin Ethnic Communities' Council; Darebin Women's Advisory Committee; Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee; Darebin Disability Advisory Committee and other appropriate working groups collaborating with Council	A forum amongst Darebin Advisory committees which highlights experiences and actions to affirm people's rights to freedom discrimination  Actions arising are supported
2.2.4	<b>Freedom from Age Discrimination</b> Integrate human rights within programs and services addressing elder abuse	2013 and ongoing	Aged and Disability Services; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	PILCH – Seniors Rights Legal Clinic; Aged Care service providers; community-based seniors groups	Freedom from elder abuse is understood and acted on in the context of older people's human rights
2.2.6	<b>Freedom from Age Discrimination</b> Design a program in the external space/footpath at Northcote Town Hall that affirms and celebrates intergenerational respect and equality	2013 - 2014	Public Realm; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Youth Services Arts and Leisure Ageing Communities Healthy and Active Ageing Board	An innovative program that explicitly affirms inter-generational respect and equality in public space is held at Northcote Town Hall New initiative project funding sought and funded

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
2.2.7	Human Rights – freedom from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity Develop a proposal to seek funding for the production of a film of the voices and experiences of children growing up in gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender families.	2013	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance Coordinated Family and Children's Services; Youth Services	Darebin Sexual, Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee; Rainbow Families Council; Midsumma; independent film-makers	Proposal for short-film production is developed and finalised with new partnerships  Funding submissions for the production of a short-film on the voices of young people are made
2.2.8	Provide ongoing support for a community education film which highlights the positive experiences of children growing up in gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender families. <i>This action depends on 2.2.7</i>	2014 - 2015	As above	As above	A quality education resource is produced which challenges stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes and practices from the point of view of children and young people
<b>2.3 Service and program area: Children's and family rights – supporting inter-generational relations</b>					
2.3.2	Collaborate to design a program that brings families, parents/carers and children in dialogue about each other's human rights <i>'Human rights in our family relationships – what does this mean for us?'</i>	Ongoing	Children and Family Services; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance		An innovative program that creates a safe space for children, their families/ parents/carers to affirm inter-generational respect and equality  Two participatory workshops with diverse and priority families
2.3.3	Follow-up on issue of inter-generational issues in newly-arriving communities	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance;	Northern Network for Intergenerational Conflict in CALD communities; Spectrum MRC;	Human Rights Day 2012 event provides a base for engagement (see 2.4.2)  Community ideas for ongoing

			Youth Services; Family and Children's Services	community organisations representing the experiences of newly-arriving communities	actions on intergenerational issues are supported by Council
<b>2.4 Service and program action area: Advocacy</b>					
2.4.1	Coordinate quarterly <i>Darebin Conversations for Human Rights</i> on key human rights priorities (See p17 -18 on Human rights advocacy priorities)		Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Darebin Human Rights Network (if appropriate) Darebin Library Services; Communications; Business and Development; City Development; Local and State-wide organisations with expertise and relevance to priority advocacy matter	At least 50 people with direct involvement in the matter attend and are engaged with each other in the human rights 'Conversation'  Participants are encouraged to take on an ongoing action: What will I do in my organisation / community/family that speaks to the human rights matter presented and discussed in this 'Conversation'?
2.4.2	Celebrate International Human Rights Day (December 10) annually	Annual	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Diverse community theatre and community arts organisations and initiatives	Annual human rights events are held which build on key advocacy priorities <i>2012: Performance Black Face, White Mask Interactive</i> attracts older and younger audience from targeted newly- arrived communities <i>2013 - 2015 : Themes based on advocacy work</i>



**Equity and Inclusion Goal 3: To contribute to building inclusive and empowered Darebin communities**

**Objectives:**

To strengthen citizen and community capacity to use human rights values and laws, especially the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, as an effective tool for communicating and advocating with public authorities for improved and equal access and dignified treatment and service

To strengthen and reinforce citizen and community relationships based on human rights values of freedom, respect, equality and dignity

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
<b>3.1 Community action area: Acknowledge and respect First Australians</b>					
3.1.1	Coordinate quarterly Aboriginal led walk through the Darebin Spiritual Healing Trail and document the stories and conversations shared	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee; Communications and Marketing; Aged and Disability October Committee Community Activities	50 – 100 participants reflecting Darebin’s diversity in each walk  A written recording of the process as story, reflection and conversation is produced and published - ‘ <i>Darebin learning with Aboriginal elders</i> ’  Participants acknowledge the Aboriginal contribution and legacy of the Darebin Spiritual Healing Trail

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
<b>3.2 Community action area: Communicate and affirm human rights for all people - Darebin's Voices for Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity</b>					
3.2.1	<p>Develop, a public education program :  <i>"Darebin's Voices for Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity(FRED)"</i></p> <p><i>These can include:</i>  <i>Public displays of people's contributions to the meaning of Freedom Respect, Equality, Dignity – tram/bus stops; walls; public spaces</i></p> <p><i>Street art/mural for human rights</i></p> <p><i>Flashmob at Northcote Plaza/Northland Shopping Centre/Preston market</i></p>	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance; Youth Services; Darebin Libraries; Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre; Communications and Marketing.	Diverse local and State-wide organisations including private and public transport service providers; community theatre and community arts organisations ; Northcote Plaza and Northland management ; Darebin Police	<p>Coordinated and integrated approach to public education which reflects back to communities their voices and insights on human rights</p> <p>Four new initiatives provide clear visible public messages for '<i>Freedom, Respect, Equality, Dignity</i>'</p>
<b>Community action areas: Affirm and build on community commitment and capacity on human rights</b>					
3.3.1	Develop an easy step-by-step guide to inform and enable community members to raise human rights issues with different public authorities.	2013	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Communications; Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission; Victorian Legal Aid, Darebin Community Legal Centre; local organisations and services	A Darebin specific guide ' <i>Human rights for citizens and communities—raising a human rights issue: tips and tools</i> ' is produced and disseminated

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
3.3.2	Develop a sustainable model for the Darebin <i>Human Rights Films and Community Conversations</i>	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance; Darebin Intercultural Centre	ACMI (Australian Centre for Moving Images); State Film Library	A sustainable model for Darebin Human Rights Films is developed and implemented which builds on the positive outcomes from 2012  Films reinforce ongoing human rights advocacy work ( See p 17 – 18)
3.3.3	Design and deliver ' <i>Human Rights, health and healthcare</i> ' program with community partners	Ongoing	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Darebin Community Health	Community learning and action programs developed and delivered jointly with diverse DCH community partners x 3 annually.  Participants able to use human rights language and sections of the Charter to advocate for access and treatment across health care services.  At least one direct community group action on human rights by DCH community partners
3.3.4	Integrate and celebrate human rights as the central theme of the Darebin Seniors' Festival 2012		Ageing Communities; HALO Officer working with Aboriginal elders; Darebin Healthy and Active Ageing	Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission; Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service	Promotion of human rights is communicated as a clear priority for Darebin communities, especially older citizens  Two participatory community workshops are held during the Seniors Festival in 2012

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
3.3.4	Cont'd	Ongoing	Board; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance		– one with a focus on older people from culturally diverse communities and one with Aboriginal elders
3.3.5	Develop and provide ongoing support for <i>'Standing up for human rights in our everyday lives – older citizens and communities' with Seniors Citizens' groups in Darebin.</i>	Ongoing	Ageing Communities; Aged and Disability Services; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Senior Citizens groups across City of Darebin; community organisations working with older people.	Community workshops are delivered with six Senior Citizens groups annually  Participants have an opportunity to share their experiences of human rights breaches and to learn to use the Victorian Charter of Human Rights for their own self-advocacy  At least one direct community action on human rights is developed by each senior citizen's groups who have participated
3.3.6	Build on the learnings from the first Darebin human rights community event with Aboriginal elders (Seniors' Festival 2012) and develop an ongoing program.	Ongoing	Ageing Communities; Aged and Disability Services; HALO Officer; Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Aboriginal Community Elder Service; Victorian Aboriginal Health Service	A responsive program is developed that reflects the experiences and contexts of Aboriginal elders  Three community events on human rights are integrated within existing programs where Aboriginal elders meet  Ideas for ongoing human rights actions by elders' groups are encouraged and supported by Council

No	Action	Timelines	Key responsibility	Partnership opportunities	Measure
3.3.7	Design and provide ongoing support for <i>'Standing up for human rights in our everyday lives in East Reservoir'</i> .	2013	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance	East Reservoir Tenant's Association; East Reservoir Neighbourhood House	<p>One community workshop is developed and delivered with 20 community members at each organisation in East Reservoir</p> <p>Participants have an opportunity to share their experiences of human rights breaches and to learn to use the Victorian Charter of Human Rights for their own self-advocacy</p>
3.3.8	Outreach, promote and respond to diverse community groups and community-based organisations on human rights learning and advocacy	2013 - 2014	Community Planning, Partnerships and Performance; Darebin Intercultural Centre	Community groups who receive funding via Darebin Community Grants; community groups using Darebin Intercultural Centre	<p>Community groups and organisations receiving community grants are engaged in human rights conversations</p> <p>One participatory community forum on <i>"Standing up for human rights in our everyday lives and relationships"</i> is facilitated with community groups receiving Community Grants</p> <p>Two participatory community forums <i>"Standing up for human rights in our everyday lives and relationships"</i> are facilitated with interested members from community groups using Darebin Intercultural Centre</p> <p>Ideas for ongoing human rights actions by groups are encouraged and supported by Council</p>

## Appendix 1: Darebin Charter Check

### *Other important aspects of the Darebin Charter Check*

Council (like all other public authorities) may limit rights in certain circumstances, but this must be reasonable, necessary, justified and proportionate (section 7(2) of the Act). This Darebin Charter Check ensures that:

- the nature and underlying values of the right have been considered; and
- the limitation has an important purpose and we have material evidence which supports this; and
- the restriction is proportionate to the objective we are trying to achieve (in other words, we're not using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut); and
- the limitation falls within the range of reasonable solutions to the problem (or are there less restrictive means that will achieve the purpose of the limitation?); and
- the balance between the right and its limitation accords with the values of a free and democratic society.

Financial considerations alone do not provide sufficient grounds for limitation of rights.

## **Appendix 2: Darebin Community Engagement Framework 2012-2015**

Darebin City Council's framework includes three distinct approaches to community engagement: Consultation – Deliberation – Collaboration

Each of these approaches offers Council, communities and other stakeholders different relationships, roles, levels of influence, and decision-making capacity in the engagement process.

Consultation is a communication process whereby Council gathers the views, opinions, and experiences of diverse citizens and community stakeholders. Council then deliberates over these views, along with other relevant material and evidence, before arriving at its own official view on an issue. Council then makes recommendations for actions and, when relevant, makes decisions for implementation of these actions. It commits to informing community and other stakeholders of how their feedback was used and how it influenced outcomes.

Deliberation is more than asking communities for their views. It is a two-way process of learning and exchange involving communities and Council, where considered views and joint outcomes can be developed. It involves providing communities with information and sufficient time to discuss an issue in depth and to engage with one another. Deliberation provides people with credible and alternative information, which enables them to understand the benefits and trade-offs between various options. Deliberation also provides structured dialogue, to help people clarify their values and priorities, reframe issues, discuss alternatives, express informed preferences, and arrive at solutions. Recommendations are made to Council for genuine integration into its decisions.

Collaboration means shared decision making between Council and communities, and mutually defined areas of responsibility and action.

In collaboration, Council and communities are equal partners in the on-going processes of decision making, including learning, reflection, discussion, weighing up competing priorities and goals, developing alternatives, deciding, identifying respective roles, achieving common goals, and carrying out actions according to decisions made together

In this new framework, consultation is Darebin Council's minimum approach to engagement. However, Council is committed to using more deliberative and collaborative approaches to working through complex matters and issues facing communities.

Council has developed seven standards which underpin the framework for community engagement. The standards are a point of reference and practice for all three approaches.

### **Seven standards for effective and equitable engagement:**

### *1. Equity, inclusion, and human rights*

We will proactively work with diverse communities and remove barriers to participation so that people can have an equal voice on matters of importance to them.

### *2. Clear purpose and appropriate processes*

Every time we engage we will ensure that the purpose of our engagement is clear, and we will make sure the approach we use is the right match for the issue and decision required.

### *3. Transparency and accountability*

We will be open with communities about the level of influence they can exercise on overall outcomes. We will clearly explain how their feedback will be used, how their feedback was considered, what decisions were made as a result, and by whom.

### *4. Accurate, accessible, and timely information*

When we engage with communities we will ensure that information about issues is readily available and accessible to all people. We will actively identify and remove barriers to information.

### *5. Commitment to learning from each other*

We will value all participants' knowledge and expertise and we will continuously improve our engagement processes. We will share the things we learn from our mutual engagement with the wider community and stakeholders.

### *6. Respectful, supportive, and empowering*

We will work towards empowering communities by providing engagement opportunities with a real mandate to effect change. We will ensure that all participants are treated with dignity and respect.

### *7. Adequate time and finances; committed and skilful people*

We will plan, resource, and report on our engagement processes properly. We will not rush or cut corners at the expense of valuable community contributions, and we will develop our staff to undertake best practice community engagement.