

**Darebin Gender Equity Annual Action Plan**  
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# Darebin Gender Equity Annual Action Plan

## 1. Introduction

The Darebin Women's Gender Equity Annual Action Plan is one of two plans (the other being the *Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan*) that Darebin Council has developed as part of the four year Darebin Women's Equity Strategy.

Evidence shows that in many areas of life, women do not always have the opportunity and ability to access and enforce their rights on the same basis as men. Due to certain social structures, traditions, stereotypes and attitudes about women and their role in society, their ability and capacity to enjoy the same privileges and rights as everyone in our community continues to be affected.<sup>1</sup>

Gender equity between men and women is a principle that lies at the heart of a fair and productive society. As a local government Council plays a critical role in creating and supporting environments that enable everyone in our community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. As the closest level of government to the community, we have capacity to influence many of the determinants of gender inequity through our social and strategic planning, environmental management, economic development, urban design and community service provision.<sup>2</sup>

This role is legislated under the *Victorian Health Act Section (6)* and the *Local Government Act 1999*, which mandates councils to 'act as representative, informed and responsible decision makers in the interests of their communities'.<sup>1</sup> This means responding to the interests and needs of both women and men across all aspects of council activity. Councils are also bound by legislation such as the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which aim to eliminate discrimination and sexual harassment and promote greater equity in our community. Finally, compliance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires councils to uphold human rights, including the rights of women, as an essential component of a democratic, equitable and inclusive society.

Darebin City Council is committed to supporting and valuing women's full and equal participation in community life as a priority in achieving an equitable, just society. The implementation of an annual action plan to support this work will help us achieve this goal.

## 2. Related policy frameworks and strategies

### 2.1 Darebin Council

#### Darebin Equity and Inclusion Strategy

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex\\_discrimination/publication/CEDAW](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/publication/CEDAW)

<sup>2</sup> Women's Health in the North Building a Respectful Community Preventing Violence Against Women – A strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011-2016

The Darebin Equity and Inclusion Strategy provides a longer term framework for delivery of Councils policies and actions aimed at improving gender equity, including prevention of violence, for women within the Darebin workforce, within our community and within Council services and programs. It is one of a suite of actions Council has identified through the Darebin Equity and Inclusion Policy – in which women are clearly identified as at risk of exclusion within our community.

The Darebin Gender Equity Action Plan evolves around three strategic goals contained within the Darebin equity and Inclusion Policy.<sup>3</sup>

The Equity and Inclusion goals are:

1. To build an **organisation within Council** that is inclusive and reflective of Darebin's diverse communities
2. To build **services and programs** that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable
3. To contribute to building inclusive and empowered Darebin **communities**

### **Darebin Council Plan 2009-2013**

The Council Plan includes a dedicated strategy to support work in this area.

“We will work to support the right of women to fully and equally engage and participate in the life of the community”.

### **Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013**

Gender, as a determinant of health, is included in the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan.

## **2.3 State**

### **• The Victorian Local Government Women's Charter**

Darebin Council is one of 55 of Victoria 79 local governments have endorsed the Charter. The principles are:

**Gender equity:** That women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions.

**Diversity:** The inclusion of different experiences and perspectives in local government and community decision-making strengthens local democratic governance and helps build cohesive communities. Councils and communities welcome and encourage the participation of all women.

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<sup>3</sup> To view the policy go to: [www. Xxx](#)

**Active citizenship:** Local governments will work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life, so that decision-making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of communities.

The Charter was created in 1996 by the Women's Participation in Local Government (WPILG) Coalition.

- The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Women's Health Matters: A 10 Point Plan for Victorian Women's Health 2010-2014
- Safe, Well and Connected: Victorian Local Government Action Plan for Women's Health 2008-2012

#### **2.4 Federal**

- *Gender Equality Blueprint*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010
- *CEDAW Action Plan for Women in Australia*, Women's Legal Service/YMCA Australia. 2011

#### **2.5 International**

- *The Full Picture, Guidelines for Gender Analysis*. Ministry of Women's Health Affairs. 1996 Government of New Zealand: Wellington.
- *Exploring Concepts of Gender and Health*, Health Women's Health Bureau, 2003, Ontario, Canada,
- The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

### **3. Evaluation and Monitoring**

Council will monitor and evaluate the Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan on an annual basis to measure short and longer term outcomes and impacts. Monitoring will be supported through Council annual reporting cycles across each department and annual reports required back to Council and community. Annual plans will be updated every twelve months with opportunity to review progress. The Darebin Equity and Inclusion Policy will also see reporting requirements which will include the Women's Equity Strategy and associated plans.



**Equity and Inclusion Goal 1:** To build an **organisation within Council** that is inclusive and reflective of Darebin's diverse communities

**Objective:** To achieve an organisational culture that is welcoming, inclusive and respectful of women, that strives for equal opportunity and builds the skill and confidence of Darebin women to advance women's leadership opportunities at all levels across the organisation.

**Organisational action area: Leadership and training opportunities for women**

No	Actions	Timeline	Responsible council area	Partnership opportunities	Key Performance Indicator
1.1	Promote leadership and training opportunities for women employees across the organisation	Ongoing	People & Development (P&D) Executive Management (EMT)	LGPro MAV VLGA Northern region LGAs	50% of participants per annum in leadership/management training and professional development are women.
1.2	Seek a gender balance across internal Council committees and working groups	Ongoing	Corporate Governance	CP3	Gender balance on all committees
1.3	Support participation on the Darebin Staff Women's Network that engages with staff, increases awareness of issues surrounding gender equity in the workplace and to help foster an organisational culture of	2012/2013	CP3 P & D	Across council	80% staff awareness.

	empowerment and leadership for women				
1.4	Ensure organisational planning and development takes into account gender diversity and equity	Ongoing	P & D	Local Government Gender Equity Working Group	Findings from staff census and other internal profiling used to inform organisational planning and development in relation to gender diversity and women's equity
<b>Organisational action area: Pay equity</b>					
1.5	Organisation supports wage equity for women across banding levels and at SEO levels	Ongoing	P&D		Darebin compares positively across LGA sector in the area of wage equity. (See Kat)
<b>Organisational action area: Employment and recruitment</b>					
1.6	Recruitment policies include diversity and equity principles and are compliant with legislative frameworks around EEO (Katrina to check)	Ongoing	P&D		Workforce diversity including gender diversity across banding levels and job type
1.7	Selection panels are gender balanced and comply with diversity requirements	Ongoing	P&D		90% of interview panels are gender balanced
<b>Organisational action area: Work conditions</b>					
1.8	Organisational policy reflects best practice in relation to parental/carers leave/family friendly conditions such as 48/52 leave options.	Ongoing	P&D		Refer to People and Development
1.9	Adequate space allocated for a women's prayer	2012/2013	P&D		Prayer room set up and promoted to staff.

	room				
1.10	Adequate space allocated for breast feeding room	2012/2013	P&D	Breast Feeding Associations of Victoria	Council recognised with Family Friendly Breast Feeding accreditation.

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

**Objective:** To ensure Darebin Council services, programs and policies are gender equitable, inclusive of strategies around prevention of violence against women and actively encourage women's full and equal participation.

No.	Action	Timeline	Responsible council area	Partnership opportunities	Key Performance Indicator
<b>Service and program action area: Embedding of gender equity into departmental plans and activities of Council</b>					
2.1	Seek to include gender equity as a commitment in the next Council Plan 2013-2016	2012	C3P; Executive Management	Council	Council plan 2013-2016 contains PVAW commitment
2.2	Coordinate provision of Gender Analyse training for Council staff in consultation with P&D	Bi-annual	P&D CP3	Women's Health in the North Across council	Key areas of council trained on how to apply the Gender Audit tool to their planning. Gender Audits conducted across program areas and key policies. 80% participation rate
2.3	Embed Gender Equity Audit Tools as part of implementation of the Equity and Inclusion Planning and Audit Tool (EIPAT) which incorporates women's equity into Council policies and strategies.		P & D		All areas of council trained on how to apply EIPAT in their planning. EIPAT Audits.

2.4	Participate in the Gender Equity in Local Government Project to develop sector capacity to deliver gender inclusive services.	Ongoing bi-monthly	Women's Policy CP3		4 meetings a year
2.5	Promote and support use of Local Government Gender Equity Fact Sheets across Council departments	Ongoing	CP3	LGGEWG	Factsheets promoted to key areas of Council and available via Equity and Inclusion Tool.
2.6	Collate Gender Audit Tool for Council policies and strategies. Advocate and advise on the embedding of gender equity into departmental plans and activities of Council	Ongoing	CP3	WHIN MAV	80% staff aware of Gender Audit Tools and resources available via Equity and Inclusion Tool.
<b>Service and program action area: Community settings including sports and recreation facilities, parks, community facilities, customer services and libraries</b>					
2.7	Sports and Recreation Implement Darebin Leisure Strategy, direction 5: "Continue to support the role of women in sport and leisure through the development of policy, facility design and programs"	Ongoing	Leisure, Public Realm & Venues	Sports & leisure clubs; facility managers, etc CP3 DWAC WN	Leisure Strategy reporting requirements
2.8	Implement a gender and PVAW facility audit of all existing Council buildings	2012-2013	Leisure, Public Realm & Venues	(Maribyrnong Council has developed and used a PVAW Facility Audit Tool) DWAC PVAW WN CP3	Council buildings are made accessible, safe and women friendly.

2.9	Consider gender equity and PVAW in any redevelopments or new council buildings & work area layouts	In line with EIPAT roll out	City Development	DWAC PVAW WN CP3	All new development take into account gender equity principles in planning and design
2.10	Investigate the creation of a women's space in any new developments of community spaces (e.g. Preston Market, Reservoir Village, Lancaster Gate)	June 2012	City Development	DWAC CP3 WELG	Scoping of options undertaken with recommendations back to Darebin Women's Advisory Committee
<b>Service and program action area: Communications and marketing</b>					
2.11	Regularly promote key messages to the Darebin community through Council communications outlets such as the Mayors message, media releases, website and social marketing in relation to Council commitments and actions regarding gender equity and prevention of violence against women.	Ongoing	Communications and Marketing	CP3	Darebin Community News contains 4 x features per annum with ongoing branding  Council website contains current information and links  Mayors message 2 per annum
<b>Service and program action area: Groups at risk of disadvantage - work with local service providers, community advisory committees and peak bodies to support women identified as being particularly at risk of disadvantage and exclusion through the Equity and Inclusion Planning and Audit Tool.</b>					
2.12	<b>Aboriginal women</b> Work with community to foster leadership opportunities, participation and economic development for Aboriginal women in the community through activities for the Darebin	Ongoing	CP3	DAAC DWAC Intercultural Centre Aboriginal controlled agencies WHIN	Annual Report

	Intercultural Centre, Darebin Community Grants Program, WHIN Financial Literacy Program for Aboriginal Women and activities of the Darebin Women's Advisory Committee and Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee.			Koorie Women Mean Business VLGA	
2.13	<b>Women from migrant and refugee backgrounds</b> Participate in the Women Building Bridges Project Support further engagement through the Darebin Intercultural Centre, Darebin Community Grants Program and local area settlement programs as they relate to the needs of women and their families. Support increased collaboration between DEEC and DWAC.	2012/2013	CP3	Intercultural Centre DECC SMRC WHIN DIC. Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition	Annual Report
2.14	<b>Women with disabilities</b> Engage with Disability officers in promoting gender equity and inclusion for women across their programs and activities.	2012/2013	MetroAccess/ Disability Officer (Social Policy)	DDAC IDAGS	Annual Report
2.15	<b>Women at risk of homelessness</b> Work with Housing Officer around strategies for addressing disadvantage for women wishing to access affordable, secure and safe housing. Continue participation in the annual Women's Car Sleep Out activity.	2012/2013	Darebin Affordable Housing Officer Family Services	WISHIN DERN	Annual Report
2.16	<b>Same Sex Attracted and Gender Diverse</b> Identify priorities and platforms for advocacy for same sex attracted and gender diverse community as they relate to gender equity/inclusion including linkage with HACC Diversity Plan (internal)	Ongoing	CP3	SSAGD Committee ALSO Foundation WHIN	Annual Report

2.17	<b>Economic participation</b> Explore how Council can support increased economic participation of women in partnership with community, local networks and regional organisations. Provide workforce gender equity information to local businesses via Women in Business Network.	2012/13	Business Development	Darebin business networks	On the agenda for one meeting
<b>Service and program action area: Research and development</b>					
2.18	Council data collection is disaggregated by gender.	Ongoing	CP3		ID data disaggregated Council website updated
2.19	Participate in the Gender Equity in Local Government Project to support development and dissemination of the Gender Equity Fact Sheets. Link to Equity and Inclusion toolkit internally.	Bi-monthly meetings  Resource finalised August 2012	CP3	MAVPVAW Northern Region LGs	4 meetings per annum attended with active participation in development of local government resources
2.20	Women's Health In the North Data Book and other resources linked to EIPAT information resources	July 2012	CP3	WHIN	70% policy/program staff made aware of resource



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

**Objective:** To actively support sector and community partnerships and projects that foster a Darebin community culture that is inclusive, promotes women’s leadership and respects women’s full and equal participation in community life.

No	Action	Timelines	Responsible council area	Partnership opportunities	Key Performance Indicator
<b>Community action area: Women’s leadership and participation</b>					
3.1	Provide Council support to the Darebin Women’s Advisory Committee (DWAC) and identify and support joint DWAC/Council advocacy on issues relating to gender equity such as joint-submissions.	Ongoing	CP3	WN Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition	Increased participation and engagement with 4 meetings a year/evidence of impact around Council decision making and policy development
3.2	Support Darebin Women’s E-List	Quarterly	CP3	DWAC WN	E-list circulated quarterly with increased members by 50% over 2012
3.3	Endorse Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter	Endorsed 2010	Council	CP3 Councillors, VLGA	Annual monitoring against 3 actions
3.4	Diversity inclusion – undertake targeted engagement with women in the community including Aboriginal, newly arrived, refugee communities, lesbian, socially isolated and	July 2012	CP3	Key program and service areas Council	Diversity inclusion mapped

	CALD to identify priorities and issues that can be fed back to responsible portfolio/policy areas.			committees Service providers	
3.5	Develop and promote annual calendar of women specific events and activities across Darebin in consultation with Council departments, Darebin Women's Advisory Committee, International Women's Day Committee that links into existing and identifies new opportunities internally/externally.	Annual	CP3/Communications & Marketing	DWAC WN WHIN IWDC Councillors Across Council	Calendar produced annually and promoted through Council media/networks
<b>Community action area: Strategic advocacy and sector development</b>					
3.6	Strengthen strategic networks, partnerships and collaborative opportunities with affiliated bodies to foster stronger connection between Council and women in the community	Ongoing	CP3 Staff Women's Network DWAC	WHIN Women's specific services/agencies Community MAVPVAW	Partnerships with northern regions networks and agencies active and robust
3.7	Support strategic advocacy at the local, state and federal level that supports women to fully and equally participate in community life, including Council life.	Ongoing	CP3 WN	WHIN DWAC MAVPVAW	Increased collaboration between Council, peak bodies and Women's Advisory Committee, including advocacy

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## Definitions

### Understanding Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and attributes that society considers appropriate for men and women. Unlike the biological characteristics and differences between men and women known as sex, gender roles, as socially learnt behaviours, differ among cultures and can change over time. While it would appear that progress has been made and that men and women have all the same formal opportunities, either sex can be placed at an advantage or disadvantage over access to resources as a result of dominant gender roles.

### Gender Equity

Gender equity is an important social justice goal. The concept recognises that within all communities, women and men have different benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities.<sup>1</sup> Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men by recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all. A gender equity approach therefore acknowledges that different strategies are often necessary for women and men.

### Social Inclusion

Council has a clearly articulated social inclusion policy framework that informs the development and implementation of programs, services and policy taking into account the different ways in which people, including women from diverse sub-cultures, create community and relate to the broader community - such as women in metropolitan, regional and rural communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, immigrants and refugee women, women with disabilities and same-sex attracted women.

### Human Rights

Human rights are universal rights to be enjoyed and upheld by all members of our community including women. The policy aligns with a human rights approaches and identifies and prioritises the rights of women at higher risk of discrimination and exclusion, including those with multiple needs and multiple indicators of disadvantage. As a public authority Council is legislated to comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

**Officer Contact:** Feedback/comments on this draft document can be made to Mandy Bathgate, Equity and Diversity Coordinator, Darebin City Council phone: 84708365 or email: [mandy.bathgate@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:mandy.bathgate@darebin.vic.gov.au).