



**Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity
Advisory Committee**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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1. Introduction and background

Darebin's Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity (SSGD) Advisory Committee aims towards realising and developing equality for Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diverse communities in Darebin. The Committee supports Darebin City Council's commitment to achieving social inclusion; recognising sexual orientation and gender diversity as significant aspects of community diversity, and to enhancing the capacity of Council to addressing barriers to equality that face SSGD communities.

The formation of Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee is in response to discussions held at a community engagement forum facilitated by Council on Tuesday 17 May 2011 to celebrate International Day against Homophobia (IDAHO).

The key objectives of the community engagement forum to support IDAHO were to:

- Build Council's organisational competence in working with SSAGD communities through a better understanding of issues and facts
- Support Council's community engagement with local SSAGD groups and communities
- Build Council staff confidence in designing accessible and equitable services, policies and programs that engage SSAGD communities
- Engage Council in a discussion about its role in addressing and reducing homophobia and other forms of gender based discrimination in the community

A report about Council's community engagement forum in support of IDAHO was submitted to Council on 26 July 2011 including recommendations about how Council can more effectively engage SSAGD communities on a range of issues. Subsequently, at a Council meeting held on 15 August 2011, Council made the resolution to:

- (1) *Note the findings and recommendations from the International Day against Homophobia (IDAHO) forum held on 17 May 2011.*
- (2) *Endorse the development of a Sexual Orientation Inclusion Plan to coordinate Council's response to IDAHO forum recommendations.*
- (3) *Establish a Sexual Orientation Advisory Committee and advertise for community members to apply and that Council receive a further report with the proposed members and terms of reference.*
- (4) *Commence discussions with the Midsumma Festival organisers regarding the potential for Darebin to formally endorse or sponsor the program running at Northcote Town Hall in 2012.*

2. Purpose and objectives of SSAGD Committee

The purpose of Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee is to advise Council on issues and barriers to equality affecting people in the City of Darebin who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender or intersex. Members of Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee will also promote and advocate for equality and social inclusion of the

SSGD community within the wider context of the Darebin community, and raise awareness about sexual orientation and gender diversity as facets of social diversity.

2.1 Policy context

The establishment of Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee supports Darebin City Council's promise to the community as articulated in the Council Plan 2009-2013:

"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" (p.6).

Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee will also support Council's commitment to operating in accordance with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights Act 2006 and the Victorian Equal Opportunities Act 2010, and support implementation of Darebin's Equity and Inclusion Policy 2012-2015 and Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013, both of which reflect commitment to principles of equity, diversity and social justice.

2.2 Guiding principles

The guiding principles of Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee are grounded in a social inclusion and human rights based framework, affirming:

- That all SSGD residents who live, work or study in Darebin have the right to equal access to services, projects and programs initiated by Darebin City Council and to participate in all aspects of civic life
- The rights of all members of SSGD communities in Darebin to observe their own sexuality and cultural practices without fear of discrimination or any form of social disadvantage
- The need for continued awareness raising, advocacy and community based action to address barriers to equality facing members of SSGD communities

2.3 Objectives

The objectives of Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee are:

- To provide Council and other local community-based service providers with an effective channel of communication to reach SSGD communities
- To promote recognition and enhance understanding about sexual orientation and gender diversity as aspects of social diversity, and barriers to equality facing SSGD communities
- To represent the specific requirements and interests of members of SSGD communities to Council and advise Council on these
- To contribute to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Council policies, projects and services that impact or that may potentially impact SSGD communities
- To contribute to the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of a SSGD Inclusion Plan for Darebin

3. Membership

Membership of SSGD Advisory Committee will seek to be reflective as much as possible in terms of representation of the various groups that form the SSGD community.

Membership will comprise of:

- A nominated Darebin Councillor

- One Council officer, and others as required, that understand the specific challenges and barriers to equality facing SSGD communities, and can implement actions to address issues raised by the Committee
- A minimum of two representatives from community based organisations that have a primary purpose to support SSGD communities on a range of issues
- Up to eight community members representing the diversity of the SSGD community

3.1 Role of members

The SSGD Advisory Committee members will fulfil their role by:

- Advising Council on barriers to equality facing SSGD communities with a view to supporting Council in enhancing all aspects of its business including policies, projects, services, communications and workforce development
- Balancing the different perspectives and requirements of groups that form SSGD communities and reflecting these perspectives in all initiatives
- Responding to the recommendations raised at Council's community engagement forum in support of IDAHO, by contributing to the planning, implementation and evaluation of a range of projects
- Providing the opportunity for members of SSGD communities to plan and participate in the delivery of the partnership with Midsumma and community events including International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO)
- Contributing to Council's public involvement process
- Providing a report to Council on an annual basis detailing the activities and achievements of the Committee against its stated objectives

4. Terms and method of nomination

4.1 Method of nomination

Nomination for the appointment of members of the SSGD Advisory Committee will be called by a public notice in local newspapers, and by letters sent to SSGD community groups

- All appointments will be determined by Council
- A position will be deemed vacant if a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without prior notification being given
- If a vacancy occurs, it will be filled at the discretion of Council and made effective through a letter signed by Council's Chief Executive. Members nominated to fill a vacancy are appointed for the remainder of the three-year term of current members only.

4.2 Terms of appointment

Appointments to the Committee will be for a period of three years. At the end of this term, the appointment will be reviewed and a subsequent expression of interest may be invited. Members will have the option to reapply for a further three years and nominations will be subject to Council approval.

5. Meetings and procedures

- Meetings will be held quarterly or as required at a time and place to be determined by Committee members
- A nominated Councillor will act as Chair of the Committee unless the Committee determines, with the consent of the Councillor representative(s) to appoint another member other than the Councillor as Chairperson. If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, the Committee members will determine to appoint a Chairperson for the purposes of conducting the meeting.

- Darebin Council's Diversity Policy Officer will take responsibility for providing executive support to the Committee including provision of meeting agendas and minutes
- Committee agendas will be forwarded to SSGD Advisory Committee members by email or post no later than seven days before a scheduled meeting
- Minutes will be provided to Committee members no later than ten working days after a scheduled meeting including details of proceedings and resolutions made clearly expressed, and including relevant documentation as attachments where necessary
- Records of agendas and minutes will be maintained by Council's Diversity Policy Officer in accordance with Public Records Act requirements

5.1 Recommendations to Council

- The SSGD Advisory Committee will act in an advisory capacity to the Council only and has no delegated authority to make decisions
- The Committee does not have an operational role and neither it, nor its members, may direct Council staff in the performance of their duties

5.2 Conduct of Committee members

In performing the role of a SSGD Advisory Committee member, persons are required to:

- Act honestly
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence
- Not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired because of their position

Where a member of the SSGD has an interest or conflict of interest in relation to a matter in which the Committee is concerned, or is likely to be considered or discussed, the member must disclose their interest to SSGD Advisory Committee before the matter is considered at the meeting. Disclosure must include the nature of the relevant interest and be recorded in the meeting minutes.

No members of Darebin's SSGD Advisory Committee are authorised to speak to the media on behalf of the Committee or Council, except where the member of the Advisory Committee is a Darebin Councillor.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Operations of the SSGD Advisory Committee will be evaluated annually via a number of methods including reflective self-evaluation of the Committee, to ensure that the Committee is achieving its objectives. Results of the evaluation will be reported in an annual progress report submitted to Council detailing the Committee's activities and achievements.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee is also required to be reviewed at the end of each three year term. Any proposed changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference resulting from a review must be agreed on by the Committee and endorsed by Council.