



**Community Safety Reference Group**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE 2015**

# Community Safety Reference Group

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### 1. Introduction and background

The Darebin Community Safety Reference Group is a multi-agency forum comprising representatives from government, non – government, police and community agencies at the local level who share a collective commitment to improving community safety and perceptions of safety. The goal of the reference group is to lead a coordinated response of actions to reduce the incidence and effect of crime in the community.

The Reference group was initially established in 2002 as the “Local Safety Committee”. Following a review of all advisory committees, at a Council meeting held on 6 October 2014, Council made the resolution to continue the Committee in a revised form with the following recommendations:

- Be titled a Council Reference Group
- Not have Councillor representation
- Requirement to report annually to Council.

The Darebin Community Safety Reference Group Reference Group was established in January 2015 response to this resolution.

### 2. Purpose and objectives of Community Safety Reference Group

The purpose of Darebin’s Community Safety Reference Group is to coordinate a ‘whole of community’ partnership response to priority community safety issues and assist Darebin Council to develop and monitor the strategies implemented via the Darebin Community Safety Strategy 2012-16.

Members of Darebin’s Community Safety Reference Group will also provide community safety and crime prevention advice to Council, raise awareness and advocacy about crime and safety issues in the Darebin community.

#### 2.1 Policy context

Darebin’s Community Safety Reference Group supports Darebin City Council’s goal articulated in the Council Plan 2013-2017 of a “Healthy and Connected Community” to:

- Develop a strong physical, social and economic environment that supports and enhances the health and well-being of all Darebin residents.
- Build a safe, inclusive and equitable community where all feel socially well connected, respected and valued.

Darebin’s Community Safety Reference Group directly supports the implementation of *Strategy 2.2 Community safety: work in partnership with the community and partners to reduce the impact of crime, improve perceptions of safety, promote freedom from all forms of discrimination and violence and build a safe, respectful community.*

The reference group supports the implementation of the Darebin's *Community Safety Strategy 2012-2016*, through the delivery of three priority areas.

1. **People:** To improve social inclusion and community participation to create strong, safe, respectful neighbourhoods.
2. **Place:** To design and maintain our city to reduce crime, and enhance public safety and perceptions of safety.
3. **Partnership:** To work in partnership to increase community education and reduce the opportunity for crime, injury and violence.

The group also supports the implementation of the Darebin's Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-17 and the Department of Justice North Metropolitan Regional Community Safety Strategy.

## 2.2 Guiding principles

The guiding principles of Darebin's Community Safety Reference Group are grounded in the National Crime Prevention Framework, affirming that:

- Community safety and crime prevention must occur across within a multifaceted Crime Prevention Framework encompassing, Information Gathering & Coordination, Criminal Justice Prevention, Situational Prevention, Social Prevention and Developmental Prevention.
- The experience of crime and safety in our community is influenced by a range of social, economic, cultural, built and natural conditions. While these are not all created nor easily changed by local government, Darebin Council does and can play a significant role, as a strong partner, to mitigate and transform these conditions.
- Community safety and crime affects our capacity to participate in and contribute to the community. In striving to improve community safety and reduce crime, we are striving for better health and well-being outcomes and the opportunity for all people to feel included and participate meaningfully in community life.
- Addressing preventing crime and improving community safety requires strong and supportive collaboration and partnership. Partnership is the basis for enacting, learning, monitoring and ongoing development of Darebin's Community Safety Strategy and work.

## 2.3 Objectives

The objectives of Darebin's Community Safety Reference Group are:

- To champion community safety strategies outlined in the *Darebin Council Plan 2013-17*, *Community Safety Strategy 2012-16*, *Safe Travel Strategy* and promote a 'whole of community' response to priority community safety issues identified.
- To ensure successful community participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community safety initiatives.

- To collect quantitative and qualitative evidence that assists the planning and review of community safety projects and strategies.
- To develop an integrated approach to responding to local safety issues involving action by Council, police, community agencies and government departments.
- To provide a forum for community groups to refer community safety issues for appropriate action and coordinate responses to community safety priorities as required; and
- To support broader projects that promotes 'best practice' in community safety.
- To support the Northland Precinct Action Group is recognised as a sub-group of the Darebin Community Safety Reference Group

### 3. Membership

Membership of Community Safety Reference Group will comprise a number of positions that will include representatives with:

- An interest in developing partnership responses to local community safety priorities,
- The personal or organisational resources to assist the implementation of relevant community safety strategies outlined in the *Darebin Community Safety Strategy*, *Darebin Safe Travel Strategy*, *Darebin's Health and Wellbeing Plan* and the *Victoria Police The Way Ahead Strategic Plan*
- A commitment to integrated collaborative planning and community participation in strategies and projects that improve levels of community safety in Darebin.

Membership will comprise of:

- Officers from relevant Council Departments including Community Wellbeing, Youth Services, Transport Management.
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- Representatives from a range of community safety and crime prevention agencies in the City of Darebin including:
  - Department of Human Services;
  - Department of Justice (Reservoir Community Correctional Services);
  - Victoria Police;
  - VicRoads;
  - Universities and TAFE colleges;
  - Darebin Community Health Service;
  - Metropolitan Fire Brigade;
  - Public Transport Providers;
  - State Emergency Services (SES)
  - Community agencies;
  - Other agencies and groups as deemed necessary by Council, Police and the reference group.
- When meetings are structured around particular themes, additional participants (outside of the core membership) may be invited to contribute.

- Membership will be by invitation from the City Of Darebin.
- Membership is for 3 years but will be reviewed annually to determine any gaps.
- The Reference Group's membership will not have a fixed number.

### **3.1. Membership diversity**

The Reference Group should seek to reflect the full diversity of the Darebin community relevant to crime and safety issues within the municipality. This will be a key consideration in the selection and recruitment of members. The Reference Group will seek to build and reflect diversity within membership and be inclusive in practice.

### **3.2. Role of members**

Members of the Community Safety Reference Group will fulfil their role by:

- Providing input, views and advice on the implementation of the Community Safety Strategy 2012-2016 and contributing to the planning, implementation and evaluation of a range of projects where relevant.
- Advising Council on crime and safety issues in the Darebin community.
- Where relevant provide specific crime prevention advice on the design of public space and Council infrastructure.
- Supporting and facilitating Council's engagement with the community and assisting Council to connect with residents on programs which aim to improve their safety outcomes.
- Sharing information relevant to Council and other reference group members work to improve health and wellbeing in the Darebin community.

## **4. Terms and method of invitation**

### **4.1 Method of invitation**

Membership to Community Safety Reference Group will be through invitation from the City of Darebin.

- Membership is open to not for profit community safety, crime prevention and emergency service providers that are based in or provide services to the Darebin community.
- All appointments will be determined by Council.
- Member agencies may have one or more representatives.
- Agencies may be invited to attend one meeting due to the topic and relevancy.
- Member agencies can nominate another agency for membership.
- Membership will seek to represent the diverse health and wellbeing issues and needs of the Darebin community.

### **4.2 Terms of appointment**

Appointments to the Reference Group will be for a period of three years. Three months prior to the end of this term, the supporting officer will review appointments and invitations will be

made to the relevant agencies. Member agencies will be invited to continue for a further three years. All invitations will be subject to Council approval.

## **5. Meetings and procedures**

The Community Safety Reference Group will meet at Council's offices a minimum of four (4) times a year, with the possibility to organise additional meetings as required.

Dates and times of the meetings will be determined by Council, taking into consideration members' constraints.

Meetings may be hosted by member agencies and focus on a particular topic / theme.

Decisions will be made on a consensus basis.

### **5.1 Chairperson**

Council and Police shall share the duty of Chair. In the event that the Police Inspector cannot attend a meeting, a Chair will be appointed by reference group members for that meeting.

The responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available,
- Facilitating fruitful discussions, with care not to enter into operational matters and ensuring members understand these are outside of the scope of the Reference Group,
- Assisting members to abide by the Code of conduct (see 5.4. below), including by taking action in case of breaches,
- Reviewing and approving minutes before distribution as needed,
- Where appropriate, updating Council on the progress and discussions of the reference group.

### **5.2 Officer support**

Darebin City Council's Community Safety Officer will take responsibility for providing executive support to the Reference Group including provision of meeting agendas and minutes.

Reference Group agendas will be forwarded to the reference group members by email no later than one week (five working days) before a scheduled meeting.

Minutes will be provided to Reference Group members no later than two weeks (ten working days) after a scheduled meeting, including details of proceedings and clearly expressed resolutions (where applicable), and including relevant documentation as attachments where necessary.

The Community Safety Officer will coordinate the implementation of projects selected. The implementation may involve Reference Group members of staff from their agencies.

Agencies and organisations not directly represented on the Reference Group may be involved in the strategies implemented.

Records of agendas and minutes will be maintained in accordance with *Public Records Act* requirements.

### 5.3 Recommendations to Council

The role of the Community Safety Reference Group is to provide **advice** to Council. As such it does not have any decision-making powers.

Where the Reference Group wishes to make recommendations to Council, a consensus of all members present will be sought.

In the absence of such consensus, and provided there is a **quorum of at least half of the members** (apart from the officer(s)) present at the meeting, the recommendation will be put to a vote with the majority recommendation being endorsed as the Reference Group's. Officers can never take part in the vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

It is up to the supporting officer to follow up on the Reference Group's recommendation, including deciding on the most appropriate means to report back on it to Council or internal departments.

The Reference Group **does not have an operational role and may not direct Council staff** in the performance of their duties.

### 5.4 Conduct of Reference Group members

Members will:

- act honestly and treat others with respect. Failure to do so will be dealt with by the Chair as appropriate
- exercise reasonable care and diligence
- not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired because of their position

Where there is a requirement for confidentiality, this is to be noted in the minutes if the matter arises during a meeting, or made clear to members if arising in communication outside of a meeting (e.g. provision of a draft policy ahead of a meeting, for discussion and feedback at the meeting), and addressed accordingly.

Members must disclose a conflict of interest in relation to any matter the Reference Group is concerned with or that the Reference Group will, or is likely to, consider or discuss. The conflict of interest, including the nature of the relevant interest, must be disclosed before the matter is considered and must be recorded in the minutes.

Members of Darebin Community Safety Reference Group are **not authorised to speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of the Reference Group (and much less Council)**. In that case, any engagement with the media will be in accordance with Council's standard media and communications policy.

Members are authorised to disclose general information such as objectives of the Reference Group, membership procedures, list of activities and information in regard to any issues that have already been previously dealt with and approved in the Reference Group's discussions.

Members must ensure that new issues raised by the public or community are brought back to the Reference Group for consideration before any public information or response is provided in relation to the issue.

## **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

Operations of the Community Safety Reference Group will be evaluated annually via a number of methods (including reflective self-evaluation of the Reference Group) to ensure that the Reference Group is achieving its objectives. Results of the evaluation will be reported in an annual progress report submitted to Council detailing the Reference Group's activities and achievements.

The Terms of Reference for the Reference Group are also required to be reviewed annually no later than October (prior to the statutory meeting) and any changes are to be endorsed by Council.

### **6.1 Reporting to Council**

The Reference Group will conduct its role as per these terms of reference.

The Reference Group does not make decisions but rather provides advice and recommendations as per the terms of reference.

The Reference Group will report to Council on actions and outcomes achieved on annual basis.