

Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–2019 Implementation Reference Group



Terms of Reference

April 2015

1. Introduction and background

Darebin Libraries provides public library services to the Darebin community through four library branches located at Fairfield, Northcote, Preston and Reservoir, and online via darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au. As one of the City of Darebin's most valued services, Darebin Libraries enjoys a high level of community satisfaction and support.

In February 2015, Council endorsed the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–2019 and requested the establishment of an Implementation Reference Group. Given the nature of the implementation task, this Reference Group will be operationally focused.

Over the five-year term of the Strategy, Darebin Libraries will direct its resources and energies to delivering high quality library services, collections, programs, spaces and experiences to and for library customers. The Strategy lists a number of actions to achieve four key goals: 1. the pride of our community; 2. knowledge-driven innovation; 3. embracing technology; and 4. excellent professional service.

Darebin Libraries is committed to a consultative approach to the implementation of the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–2019.

2. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide advice, feedback, support and guidance to Council on the delivery of actions outlined in the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–2019.

2.1 Policy context

Darebin Libraries actively contribute to several of the strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2013–2017, in particular:

- Goal 2: Healthy and Connected – Build a safe, inclusive and equitable community where all feel socially well connected, respected and valued
- Goal 4: Thriving and Creative Culture – Foster inspiration, celebration, innovation, creativity and diversity in Darebin's arts and culture and encourage it to thrive, entertain, challenge and delight

Darebin Libraries is also an important contributor to the achievement of the City of Darebin's 2013–2017 Health and Wellbeing Plan goals by:

- strengthening opportunities for children to develop, thrive and learn in their early years (goal 1)
- supporting equitable lifelong learning opportunities and outcomes (goal 2)
- providing safe and accessible places for people to live well, play and connect (goal 4).

2.2 Guiding principles

Darebin Libraries provide convenient, accessible library services, events and facilities which cater for the cultural, educational and recreational needs of the community, fostering interaction, community connectedness, cultural engagement, lifelong learning and economic wellbeing.

The Reference Group will be guided by and share the following values with library customers, Darebin City Council staff, partners and the Darebin community:

- respect and understanding
- access and equity
- partnership and collaboration
- enthusiasm and creativity
- transparency and accountability.

2.3 Objectives

The objectives of the Reference Group are:

- to provide advice, feedback, support and guidance to Council on the delivery of actions outlined in the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–2019
- to provide an avenue of consultation and communication regarding the implementation and outcomes of the Strategy
- to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the Strategy.

3. Membership

Reference Group membership will be open to all those interested in the future of Darebin Libraries who live, work or study within the City of Darebin.

The Reference Group will consist of:

- up to eight (8) community, industry and stakeholder representatives
- two (2) Darebin Libraries representatives: Manager Libraries, Learning and Youth and Strategy and Business Advisor, Libraries and Learning.

Apart from Council officers, the Reference Group's membership should not exceed eight (8).

3.1 Membership diversity

The Reference Group should reflect as far as possible the diversity of the Darebin community in terms of gender, age, sexuality, cultural and linguistic background, employment status, education and income levels, and associated industry/sector. This will be a key consideration in the selection and recruitment of members. The Reference Group will seek to build and reflect diversity within the membership and be inclusive in practice.

3.2 Reimbursement of members' expenses

To enable diverse participation, Council will support participation through provision of assistance for childcare, transport or other specific needs (interpreting, assistance support, etc.) as required.

Application for assistance should be made at the Expression of Interest stage (see 4.1), but can also be made at any time if changing circumstances mandate it.

3.3 Role of members

Reference Group members will fulfill their role by:

- providing input, views and advice on the implementation and evaluation of the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–2019
- facilitating Council's engagement with the community and assisting Council to connect with Darebin residents and to take into account, balance and reflect the different perspectives and requirements of all groups that form the Darebin community.

4. Terms and method of nomination

4.1 Method of nomination

Nomination for the appointment of members of the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–2019 Implementation Reference Group will be called through an Expression of Interest process. The process will be advertised widely through appropriate promotion (including a public notice in local newspapers, Council and Library websites, and notices in all Darebin Libraries branches).

All appointments will be made based on responses to the selection criteria and approved by the Director Community Development.

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 a subsequent expression of interest may be invited. Members will have the option to reapply.

If a member resigns during the course of their term, invitations will be sent to those who registered interest in being members in the most recent call for members.

Membership will be reviewed yearly or as required by Council. If a member does not attend at least two (2) of the four (4) meetings each year, their position may be considered vacant.

5. Meetings and procedures

The Reference Group will meet four (4) times per year (quarterly) for up to two (2) hours duration. Meetings will be held at a Darebin Libraries branch or other Council facility if required. Locations may include but are not limited to the Northcote Library, Preston Library or Reservoir Community and Learning Centre.

Dates and times will be determined by Council, taking into consideration members' constraints and the need to enable participation from a range of representatives across the municipality.

5.1 Chairperson

Meetings will be chaired by the Manager Libraries, Learning and Youth or, in their absence, the Strategy and Business Advisor, Libraries and Learning.

The responsibilities of the Chair include:

- guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available
- facilitating fruitful discussions, with care to ensure members understand what is outside the scope of the Reference Group
- assisting members to abide by the Code of Conduct (see 5.4), 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, e.g. through Council Reports at Council meetings.

5.2 Officer support

Council officers will provide support to the Reference Group, including provision of meeting agendas and minutes.

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

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

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

5.3 Recommendations to Council

The role of the 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 Council officers) present at the meeting, the recommendation will be put to a vote with the majority recommendation being endorsed as the Reference Group's. Council officers can never take part in the 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.

While the Reference Group has an operational focus, it does not have an operational role and may not direct Council staff in the performance of their duties.

5.4 Conduct of 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, 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 the Reference Group are not authorised to speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of the Reference Group or Council.

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 Reference Group will be evaluated yearly via a number of methods (including self-evaluation of the Reference Group) to ensure 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 yearly no later than October (prior to the Statutory Council meeting) and any changes are to be endorsed by Council.