



Youth Services Strategy 2019 – 2021

A Framework for Action

DRAFT

Acknowledgement

First People

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and affirm that Wurundjeri Woi

Wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their customs and ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

Council respects and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination. Council also recognises the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have had and continue to play a unique role in the life of the Darebin municipality. Council recognises and values this ongoing contribution and its significant value for our city and Australian society more broadly.

- Darebin City Council's Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2019 (extract)

Young People

Council acknowledges the contribution of the many dedicated, insightful young people who shared their wisdom, experience and ideas to inform this Strategy.

Council also thanks the many organisations who contributed to the development of this Strategy for their continued commitment to the wellbeing of Darebin's young people.

Introduction

Darebin City Council wants Darebin to be a place where young people feel they belong; safe, secure and supported, free to be themselves, secure in their identity and culture. Council is committed to ensuring that the voices of all young people are heard; that young people are valued for their contributions and respected as equals free from discrimination and inequity.

Young people are passionate change makers that are at the forefront of progressive thinking and policy ideas. We understand that when empowered and well supported, young people bring a different perspective to that of adults which, when heard, improves our decision making and enriches our community.

We know that adolescence and the transition to adulthood can be a challenging time for young people and their families, particularly for those who need extra support. Structural barriers may also prevent young people from being active, engaged community members. Council recognises that it has an important role in helping strengthen the wellbeing and resilience of young people and their ability to exercise and enjoy their rights.

Darebin City Council is committed to providing the leadership required to ensure young people have their needs and aspirations met by a supportive community. We are committed to supporting and engaging with young people who live, work, study and play in Darebin through all stages of their development; ensuring that we continue to have a vibrant and healthy city.

Youth Services Strategy 2019-2021 is the City of Darebin's plan for young people aged 12 to 25 years, with young people leading the way.

The Youth Services Strategy 2019-2021 provides clear direction to guide Council's work with, and for, young people. It is based on what young people have told us is important to them now and for a positive future. It reports on how young people are faring and, guided by young people, what are the key areas of focus for Council and its partners. We also heard from a range of agencies about what they think are the main challenges facing young people and how they can partner with us in supporting young people's health and wellbeing.

Guiding Principles

This Strategy, and Council's work with young people, is guided by the following principles.

Principle 1: Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights

We proactively work to reduce discrimination, disadvantage and the unequal distribution of resources, so that we build a strong, healthy and harmonious community. It is about recognising and valuing our diversity.

Principle 2: Strengths Based

We believe each young person is capable and competent, possessing unique strengths and talents. We seek to support young people by building on their strengths rather than focussing on perceived problems or issues. It is a respectful starting point in supporting positive outcomes for young people.

Principle 3: Co-design and Youth Led

We place young people at the centre of all matters that affect them. All activity needs to engage with young people including governance, planning and delivery, relationships and communication. It includes giving young people access to experiences that build leadership and boost self-confidence.

Principle 4: Primary Prevention and Early Intervention

As a universal youth service provider, our focus and expertise is in the prevention and early intervention level of risk and vulnerability. We will actively partner with specialist service providers to support young people with increased vulnerability to ensure they get the right kind of support they need, when they need it.

Principle 5: Shared Responsibility

We all have a role to play; effective partnerships are critical to success and no effort is too small. Together we can achieve more than any one of us could working alone.

Principle 6: Evidence Based

Our actions must be informed by effective consultation, needs analysis and research. This will ensure they are effective, reach those who need extra support and make the best use of limited resources.

Darebin's Young Citizen Jury

Darebin's Young Citizen Jury was established in 2017 as a way for young people to provide recommendations to Council, and other relevant bodies, on what Darebin young people want and need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The Jury enables young people to contribute to Council's decision making about issues that directly affect them and have a voice about possible solutions.

Twenty active young people currently make up the Jury; 10 identify as male, 10 identify as female. The average age of members is 17 years of age; youngest member being 14 years, the oldest being 25 years. All members either live, work or study in Darebin. Forty five percent of members speak a language other than English at home. Ten percent of members identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander with 40% of members coming from newly arrived or refugee families. Twelve percent identify as LGBTIQ.

The principles of co-design and youth led are integral to Youth Services Strategy. The Jury has been engaged as expert consultants, central to the development, implementation and monitoring of the Strategy by:

- Providing a youth voice to all parts of the Strategy
- Supporting the design and delivery of the two year Action Plan
- Maintaining a strong focus on the practical needs and aspirations of young people

Council's Role

Plan	We will work with young people, service providers and partner agencies to identify local needs and ensure there is coordinated planning and delivery of services for young people in Darebin.
Advocate	We will partner with young people to amplify their voices to ensure young people's strengths are recognised and their ideas and voices are heard around their aspirations, challenges and areas of need.
Facilitate	We will work with all services providers and other levels of government to ensure there is a coordinated response to emerging issues, service gaps and community needs.
Deliver	Guided by young people, we will improve the lives of all young people by providing and supporting a range of prevention and early intervention activities that enhances young people's health and wellbeing outcomes and their participation in community life.

A Snapshot of Darebin Young People

In 2016, there are 22,160 young people aged 12 to 25, 15.1% of the population.

By 2026, there will be 29,880 young people, 15.7% of the population, a 7,720 increase in the number of young people

Percentage of people residing in suburb areas aged 12-25 years (Fairfield – Alphington 20%, Kingsbury – Bundoora 34%, Northcote – 14%, Preston – 17% and Reservoir – 15%)

17% of young people unemployed with a further 2,500 underemployed

7% of young people aged 15 -24 years are disengaged from education and employment

1,169 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, of which 290 are young people aged 12 -25 (24.6%)

The most common overseas countries of birth are Italy (4.2%), China (3.3%), India (3.1%), Greece (3.1%) and United Kingdom (2.3%)

Languages spoken at home (English 56.3%, Italian 6.6%, Greek 6.3%, Mandarin 3.6%, Arabic 3.0% and Vietnamese 2.3%)

32% of 15 to 24 year olds were born outside of Australia, the most common countries of birth: China, India, Vietnam

2.5% of young people have a disability

10.1% of 15 to 24 year olds are young carers

19.3% of households were classed as low income

9.1% one-parent families with children/ young people

What Matters to Darebin's Young People?

Through our consultation with over 1000 young people, we've developed a picture of what's important to Darebin's youth, what they want to see us advocate for, what services and programs they'd like to see delivered and what they'd like to participate in and contribute too. We also talked with 21 service providers and peak bodies who had similar views to those expressed by the young people.

Our consultation with young people indicate that they are highly engaged with many issues relating to society. There is also strong sense of social justice that exists within Darebin's youth.

Darebin young people are most concerned about:

- Their own mental health and wellbeing, and that of their friends (Mental Health)
 - Finding and keeping a job and in turn having enough money to survive (Employment and Financial Security)
 - How their friends consume alcohol and drugs (Drugs and Alcohol)
 - Issues associated with equity and discrimination (Equity, Racism and Discrimination)
 - How young people are portrayed in the community and media (Perceptions of Young People)
 - Climate Change and what that means for the future (The Environment)
- 45% of young people are concerned that they do not have the confidence and/or access to platforms to be assertive and have a voice.
 - 38% of young people are very concerned regarding the portrayal of young people in the community and the media
 - 56% of young people are concerned with climate change or environmental issues.
 - 40% of young people are concerned about their own and their peer's mental health
 - 30% of young people are very concerned about alcohol and drug use
 - One in four girls and one in 10 boys consciously restricted their food intake to control their weight.
 - 30% of young people want to know more about education and employment programs and supports
 - 44% of young people agreed they experienced stress when studying at school
 - 30% of young people indicated they are concerned with discrimination
 - 34% of young people stated that the culture they grew up in is different to the culture their parents grew up in

Quotes from young people:

- *More youth led committees that tackles important issues e.g. rising mental illness rates, poor environmental awareness, drug abuse, lack of employment growth (Young person 20, Reservoir)*
- *“Empower young people’s political voices and support their participation” (Young person 17, Preston)*
- *“Ensure there is greater transparency at all levels of democracy. This can only be achieved by grassroots action” (Young person, 17 Bundoora)*
- *We need to listen to young people. People need to be open and start listening” (Young person, 17, Kingsbury)*
- *‘This area needs more young people to be involved to actively make change. There are so many passionate young people in this area but they don’t know each other so a group needs to be formed so they can meet and share ideas.’ (Young person, 19, Preston)*
- *“Do not patronise young people, be serious with us but not like we don’t know about the issue. Actively show that you are concerned about what we are concerned about. Climate change, mental health, LGBT issues. The government needs to be willing to listen so we can make progress” (Young person, 17, Bundoora)*
- *“The biggest challenge facing young people and society is global warming/ climate change, we need to do something and stop ignoring it” (Young person, 18, Reservoir)*
- *‘Providing safe spaces for young people to come together and make strong friendships to help fight mental illness.’ (Young person, 20, Northcote)*
- *‘Learn how to balance study and life, and learn how to study without over-studying so much that you do harm to yourself.’ (Young person, 16, Thornbury)*
- *“Promote things like RUOK day or similar things so that it begins conversations about mental health, as well as perhaps having a team of young ambassadors that get teenagers involved in youth issues (Young person 17, Preston)*
- *Myself and many other young people are struggling to survive, we can’t afford food and are always trying not to get cut off Centrelink for no reason” (Young person, 24, Reservoir)*
- *‘Managing a work/study life whilst trying to make enough money to pay for necessities, and make time for personal growth by exercising and eating healthy.’ (Young person, 20, Northcote)*
- *‘Deciding on a career path, and gaining sufficient knowledge, skills and work experience to enter the desired field. Additionally, finding part-time work is difficult with no certificates and minimal work experience. Many of my friends also struggle with debilitating mental illnesses, which hinder their ability to complete everyday tasks.’ (Young person 18, Reservoir)*
- *‘Darebin city council can support us by implementing new programs concerned with developing skills necessary in the workforce. They can also bring in some industry professionals to give lectures on their field of work, so young people can determine their future career path. Entry level job opportunities can also be further advertised to help young people looking for work.’ (Young person, 17 Preston)*
- *More employment support in Reservoir – like what’s on offer at The Hub” (Young Person, 16 Reservoir)*
- *‘Honestly? The stress for our future and the cost of school and rent and university + the recent terrorist attacks had a big effect on my Muslim friends + I’m depressed and I don’t have a support network.’ (young person, 17, Bundoora)*
- *“More work around defining an inclusive space for all young people. Are the spaces REALLY inclusive? (Young Person, 18, Northcote)*
- *Be a voice of queer young people and don’t shy away from supporting us. (Young person, 23, Thornbury)*
- *Less racism, homophobia and bias and more equity for everyone” (Young person, 19, Reservoir)*

How Will We Respond?

We have heard Darebin's young people. The Youth Services Strategy 2019-2021 is based on what young people, service providers and other experts have told us. The Strategy will guide planning, advocacy and the delivery of services, programs, events, spaces and places for all young people through its vision, goals, focus areas, actions and outcomes.

Our Vision

Valued, empowered young people contributing to, and thriving in, an ever changing world.

Our Five Goals, Focus Areas and Outcomes

Darebin's young people identified five aspirational goals that they see as being the most important areas for Council and the community to strive for with them. Focus areas have been identified within each goal for us to focus on over the next two years.

Goal 1: Healthy, Connected and Resilient

Focus Areas

- Improve physical and sexual health
- Improve mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Promote harm minimisation with drug and alcohol

Outcome

Young people have positive social, emotional, mental and physical health.

Goal 2: Employed, Educated and Financially Secure

Focus Areas

- Strengthen engagement to learning
- Support skill development and training
- Improve employment pathways and address under-employment
- Advocate to increase social housing

Outcome

Young people have financial, housing and food security and access to jobs and education.

Goal 3: Safe and Welcomed

Focus Areas

- Create safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces and places
- Support a positive sense of self and freedom of expression
- Promote respectful relationships

Outcome

Young people have a positive sense of who they are in the world, and can be themselves

in all situations.

Goal 4: Empowered, confident and Engaged

Focus Areas

Outcome

- Support young people to have a strong voice
- Create opportunities for young people's participation in local decisions
- Promote gender equity and non-discriminatory practices

Young people in Darebin are able to express themselves and in involved in decisions that affect them.

Goal 5: Hopeful About The Future

Focus Areas

Outcome

- Support young people's passion to be change makers in addressing the climate emergency.
- Promote the strengths of young people within the community and media

Young people in Darebin are able to handle the situations that they face and are positive about their future and that of the planet.

Keeping on Track

A two year Action Plan will be developed to accompany this Strategy. The Action Plan is a shared responsibility; young people, community groups, agencies and experts will come together to further identify and develop actions, measures, timeframes and partnerships in delivering the Strategy. A forum will be held, co-led by Council's Youth Services Unit and Darebin's Young Citizens Jury, to determine collectively the actions each of us will commit to over the life of the Strategy. It is the Action Plan that transforms the Strategy into positive outcomes for young people.

It is also important that the collective efforts of young people, Council and its partners are monitored and evaluated to make sure we remain on track and are achieving what we set out to achieve. Darebin's Youth Services Unit and Darebin's Young Citizen Jury will have primary responsibility for this, with input from our partners and research bodies. Progress will be reported to Council and the community on an annual basis.

Contact Us

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