



DAREBIN ABORIGINAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

Darebin City Council has a long standing commitment and relationship with the Darebin Aboriginal¹ community as articulated in Council's Statement of Commitment:

Darebin City Council recognises the past dispossession and the need to redress current disadvantages of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. We acknowledge that present disadvantage stems from past injustice.

Darebin City Council is committed to building a future based on equity, respect, understanding and the elimination of the disadvantages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffer.

Darebin City Council respects the diversity and distinctiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. They provide Australia with a powerful and unique heritage. We recognise and accept our responsibility to promote and protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, sacred and significant sites.

The Darebin area is now occupied by people from diverse ethnic, race and cultural backgrounds who share the Reconciliation Council's vision of a 'united Australia which respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres

¹ Aboriginal People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and are accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person in the community in which they live, or have lived.

Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all. ²This Commitment is further underpinned within our Council Plan (2009-2013) and the Darebin Council Diversity Policy (2003) that commits Council to develop programs and deliver services that are culturally appropriate to Aboriginal people in the municipality.

The Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee (DAAC) was established following agreement between Council and the former Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council (DATSICC) to implement a new advisory structure that would further strengthen membership and community participation, capacity and level of engagement and influence on Council matters.

2. Purpose

DAAC is a formal advisory body to Darebin City Council. Its purpose is to provide strategic advice to Council and advocate on issues affecting Aboriginal communities to inform and improve Council decision making in relation to policy, program, and service delivery.

3. Objectives

DAAC objectives are to:

- Develop and maintain strong relationships between Council and the local Aboriginal community – so as to be a bridge between Council and the Aboriginal people of Darebin
- Inform Council program and policy development initiatives
- Advocate for an increase in the visibility of Aboriginal language, symbols and signs in Darebin to ensure a visible presence of Aboriginal culture in the municipality
- Increase the awareness of the contemporary and the traditional Aboriginal culture in Darebin
- Promote the benefits of increasing Aboriginal personnel at all levels of Council
- Advocate for improved access to Council services by Aboriginal people and the cultural relevance and appropriateness of all Council services, policies and programs
- Initiate, promote and monitor projects that assist Aboriginal people in Darebin

² City of Darebin Statement of Commitment 1998

DAAC progresses these objectives through the Darebin Aboriginal Action Plan that is reviewed and monitored on an annual basis.

4. Membership

Membership of DAAC will include:

- Two Councillors (one of whom will fill the role of Chairperson)
- Up to 12 community members

In addition, Council officers will attend meetings as required at the invitation of the Chairperson.

4.1 Members' responsibilities

Prime responsibility of DAAC is to advocate on behalf of the Aboriginal community and to build a collaborative relationship with Council. Members are required to attend at least half of the meetings and make a commitment to actively contribute to the activities of the Committee.

DAAC's role and input is valued by Council but as described, DAAC is not a decision-making body. Council receives submissions from a wide range of stakeholders and all submissions are considered through the same process.

4.2 Selection of Members

- Councillors are appointed to DAAC at its Special Meeting in December each year.
- Community members are two year appointments, with all members eligible to reapply for membership at the end of the two year term.
- Selection of community members follows an expression of interest process conducted in May 2011 and every two years thereafter.
- Membership applications are reviewed by a selection panel. The selection panel is made up of a nominated Council Officer, Aboriginal Policy Officer and an external Aboriginal community member.
- The selection panel provides a recommendation to Council on the successful candidates.
- Community members of DAAC are appointed by resolution of Council.

4.3 Selection Criteria for Members

- Demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to issues, particularly issues relevant to local government and the Darebin community
- Demonstrated commitment to community action/involvement
- Understanding and interest in local government issues
- Ability to articulate the views of their community, as well as provide professional advice based on expertise in a particular field.
- A broad representation of the Darebin community will be sought
- Availability and commitment to attend Committee meetings and contribute
- Preference will be given to people living or working within the Darebin municipality.

4.4 Replacement of Members

- If a Councillor resigns at any time, a replacement will be appointed by Council at the next practicable Council Meeting.
- If a community member resigns within six months of appointment, the selection panel will reconvene and select a replacement from the unsuccessful candidate's at the most recent expression of interest process. This candidate will be recommended to Council for appointment.
- If a community member resigns within six months of the end of their term, they will not be replaced.
- If a community member resigns at any other time, DAAC shall determine an appropriate mechanism for selecting a replacement, with any appointments to be made by Council.
- Members may be replaced at any time by resolution of Council.

5. Meetings

The Committee meets bi-monthly. Flexible arrangements can be put in place to facilitate participation in the meetings, such as telephone, video or internet hookups. Meeting times are determined by the Committee. The duration of meetings is 2 hours. Meetings are normally held at Darebin City Council, Preston.

5.1 The role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson is a Councillor appointed by Council at its Special Meeting in December each year. The Chairperson serves a 12 month term.

The responsibilities of the Chairperson include:

- Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available
- Providing a report to Council on the business of DAAC
- Perform a representative and leadership role on behalf of the Committee at events and Council activities. Where the Chairperson is unavailable, this role may be delegated by the Chairperson to another member of the Committee.

5.2. Quorum

For decisions where a vote is required, a majority of community members must vote.

If quorum is not met, the meeting will continue inquorate with any decisions postponed until the next meeting. If this is not possible a vote via email/mail may be pursued.

5.3 Extraordinary meetings

An extraordinary meeting may be called by:

- The Chairperson
- By resolution of Darebin City Council
- By written request to the Chairperson from half the community members

6. Support to the Committee

To support the DAAC, Darebin City Council:

- Resources the administration of DAAC, ensuring bi-monthly meetings and appropriate reporting
- Considers the recommendations arising from DAAC meetings

- Provides feedback to DAAC about how its recommendations have been incorporated into Council's policy and decision-making
- Provides each community member of DAAC with a 'sitting fee' for each formal meeting attended to cover travelling costs and other expenses associated with attending the meetings.

7. Reporting and Review

DAAC may review its Terms of Reference at the end of each two year cycle. Any proposed changes to DAAC's Terms of Reference will be submitted to Council for consideration and approval.

The August meeting each second year will be set aside for review of the Terms of Reference and DAAC processes in general.

At the December meeting of each year a summary document and discussion of DAAC 's achievements through the year will be presented to the group by an officer. This document will also be provided to new members. A report of DAAC's achievements will also be made to Council on annual basis.