

Darebin City Council
Business Development and Employment Strategy

2012 – 2015

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1. Executive Summary

The Business Development and Employment Strategy 2012 – 2015 outlines the framework and clarifies Council's role in providing economic development opportunities, creating the right conditions and environment for business success and increasing local employment opportunities.

Local businesses, developers, traders, investors and other key stakeholders were consulted in the preparation.

This includes concentrating Council's actions in five key strategic directions:

- Marketing
- Employment and Skills
- Business and Industry Development
- Business Support
- Environmental Sustainability

The vision for the Strategy is Darebin will have a positive and connected business environment with a dynamic and diverse economy that:

- has sustainable growth and operations and
- generates local employment opportunities.

2. Introduction

The City of Darebin is located in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, between 5 and 15 kilometres north of the Melbourne bounded by the City of Whittlesea in the north, the City of Banyule and Darebin Creek in the east, the City of Yarra in the south, and the City of Moreland and Merri Creek in the west. The City of Darebin includes the suburbs of Alphington (part), Bundoora (part), Fairfield (part), Kingsbury (part), Macleod (part), Northcote, Preston, Reservoir and Thornbury.

The City of Darebin encompasses a total land area of 53 square kilometres. Darebin is an established residential, industrial, commercial, cultural and educational area, with substantial parklands.

The estimated resident population of Darebin is 141,139. Currently Darebin has 10,500 registered businesses operating within the Municipality employing over 54,000 people.

3. Background

The Business Development and Employment Strategy 2012 - 2015 was an opportunity to review the actions undertaken in the past 12 years and introduce a more focused level of support to ensure continued economic prosperity for Darebin businesses and increased employment opportunities for residents.

Council commenced the Business Development and Employment Strategy by undertaking a detailed Background and Research Paper prepared by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). This work provided valuable research into understanding the key issues and trends that influence and affect the local economy and the northern region.

The Strategy has been developed with input from a wide variety of stakeholders including business groups, community representatives and small to large business owners and operators. All information gained through this consultation process helped shape the preparation of the Business Development and Employment Strategy.

4. The Approach

The following is the process that has been undertaken in the development of the Strategy:

- Establishment of the Business Development and Employment Steering Committee and an Internal Project Team.
- Development of Background & Research Paper.
- Review of policy and strategic documents.
- Review of economic profile.
- Development of draft vision for the Strategy.
- Undertook extensive business, industry and community consultation.
- Identification and assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Identification of strategic themes and actions.
- Development of a draft Business Development & Employment Strategy.
- Approval of Strategy.

5. The Vision

Darebin will have a positive and connected business environment with a dynamic and diverse economy that:

- *has sustainable growth and operations and*
- *generates local employment opportunities.*

To realise this vision the Strategy identifies 5 key strategic directions each with a goal as its framework to guide Darebin's economic development over the next three years:

Key Strategic Direction	Goal
MARKETING	To build a 'brand' which promotes Darebin as a liveable city full of economic, social, art, cultural and education experiences
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS	To provide Darebin residents the opportunity and capability to participate in the local workforce
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT	To assist businesses and Industry to diversify and maximise opportunities for business development
BUSINESS SUPPORT	To provide effective support to businesses in Darebin
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	To create more environmentally sustainable businesses in Darebin

The three year Strategy is the first step towards achieving long term desired outcomes for Darebin businesses which includes:

- A business community that invests in and employs a local workforce.
- A vibrant and leading City, which is digitally connected with the latest technology.
- Darebin businesses are competitive in a local, regional and globally economy
- A highly regarded and recognised sustainable business City.

6. Council's commitment

This Strategy will provide a framework for action by both the City of Darebin and its stakeholders to realise the vision for Darebin's economic development. The focus on the five key strategic areas aims to strengthen Darebin's position as the destination of choice and a desired place to do business.

The Business Development and Employment Strategy is one of Council's key strategic documents that is supported by the Local Government Act 1989 and aligned and suitably integrated with other key strategic documents such as the Council Plan 2009 – 2013 and Darebin's Municipal Strategic Statement.

The Strategy will also provide direction for the delivery of sustained prosperity in Darebin's business community. Council will use the Strategy as a guide for making long term strategic planning and business decisions. The Strategy will be viewed as a flexible document that recognises the need for participation and partnerships to achieve the desired outcomes. The Strategy will allow Council to adopt actions that reflect changes in economic conditions and meet the needs of the business community.

By linking actions within these strategies, Council aims to support a streamlined approach to its economic, social, cultural and environmental directions.

The Business Development and Employment Strategy is also related to a number of key Council strategies, plans and visionary documents:

Corporate Plans:

- Strategic Resource Plan (2011 – 2015)

Council Strategies and Schemes:

- Retail Activity Centres Strategy (2005)
- Darebin Transport Strategy (2007 – 2027)
- Bell Street Corridor Strategy (2007)
- Leisure Strategy (2010 – 2020)
- Activity Centre Structure Plans for Preston Central and Northcote
- Pathways to Employment and Social Inclusion Policy 2011

Strategies and Plans under development:

- Draft Northland and Reservoir Activity Centre Structure Plans
- Draft City of Darebin Youth Services 10 Year Strategy 2011 – 2021

Plans:

- Darebin Community Climate Change Action Plan (2009 – 2015)
- Darebin Health and Wellbeing Plan (2009 – 2013)
- Plenty Road Integrated Land Use and Transport Study (2009)
- Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan (2009 – 2013)

Programs:

- Darebin Youth Commitment Program

7. Darebin's Economy

The Local Landscape

Darebin is a well established residential, industrial, commercial, cultural and educational area, with substantial parklands. It is situated in northern metropolitan Melbourne and encompasses over 53 square kilometres, stretching from Melbourne's inner northern suburbs of Northcote and Fairfield out to the middle ring suburbs of Reservoir and Bundoora.

Darebin is well placed with assets such as retail areas and shopping centres, healthcare and educational facilities, parks reserves and sport centres – all very important to the function of an economy for attracting skilled people to the area and for promoting Darebin to potential investors and residents.

Location

Darebin has a location advantage with its proximity to Melbourne GPO (10km), Tullamarine Airport (20km), Essendon Airport (13km) and the Port of Melbourne (12km).

Darebin is well serviced by public transport, with a rail line, two tram lines and numerous bus routes. These transport services provide easy access to our amenities, education institutions and activity centres. High Street and Plenty Road are the City's major north-south road linkages and act like a 'spine' with the Tram Route 86 linking many of Darebin's activity centres.

The main east-west link is Bell Street and is supported by Heidelberg Road. Darebin is adjacent to the Metropolitan Ring Road, Eastlink and Citylink, providing access to the City, airports, Port of Melbourne and western, eastern and south-eastern suburbs.

Darebin is a centre for higher education with campuses of La Trobe University, RMIT and Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) within or near the Municipality. Darebin boasts over 30 primary schools and 11 secondary schools. It is also close to major hospitals including the Austin Hospital and the Mercy Hospital for Women.

Lifestyle

Darebin is known for its varied shopping experiences including the independent shopping available in High Street Northcote and Thornbury, and the Villages of Reservoir and Fairfield. Preston, which includes the renowned Preston Market, is the multicultural capital of the City. The Market is the second largest market in Melbourne. Darebin is also known for Northland, a regional shopping centre. Northland and the Preston Market are destination shopping features of Darebin which attract visitations across the region. Darebin has established wholesale and factory outlets in Fairfield and Preston which are remnants to its manufacturing past.

Darebin has a great and wide array of eating and entertainment establishments particularly around Thornbury, Northcote and Preston. Iconic live music venues such as the Thornbury Theatre and the Northcote Social Club have assisted the music and creative scene to flourish in Darebin. The significant gentrification of the Southern end of Darebin has seen a thriving café and restaurant offering with a variety of cuisines ranging from the large concentration of Italian restaurants to Nepalese and Baltic restaurants. An Asian food precinct has established in High Street Preston providing a range of authentic and premium Asian food.

Bordered by the Darebin and Merri Creeks, the City of Darebin contains a diverse range of open spaces, ranging from small local parks to major regional parklands such as the All Nations Park in Northcote and Bundoora Park in Bundoora. In addition to this are environmentally sensitive areas such as the Central Creek Grasslands, the Wildlife reserve at La Trobe University and the Leamington Street Wetlands.

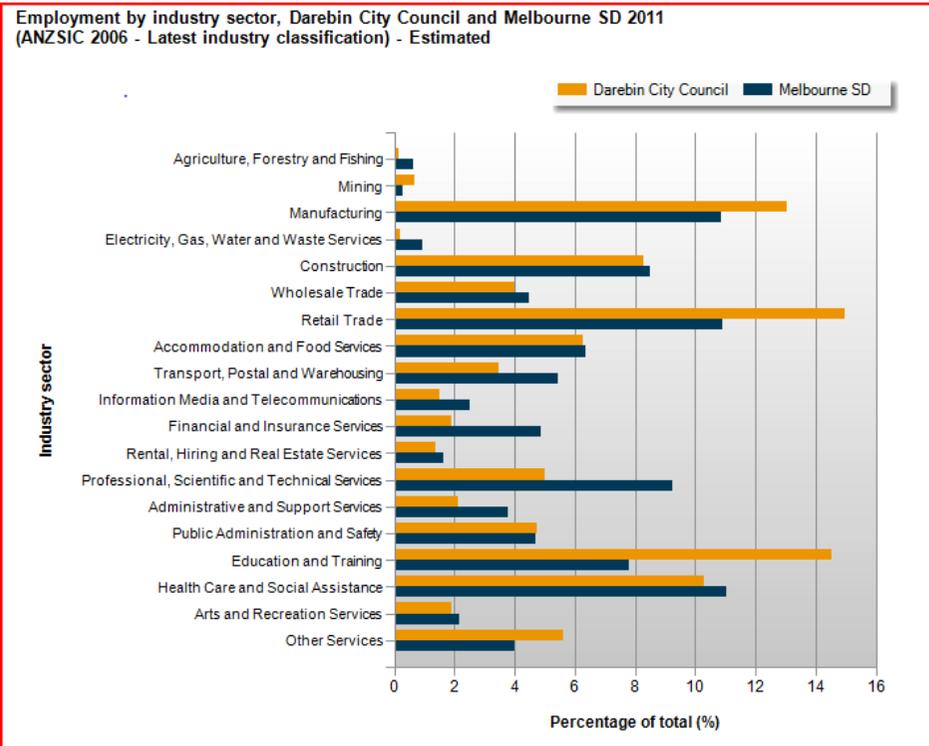
Industry

Darebin has a thriving and diverse local economy serviced by more than 10,500 active businesses.

Darebin has three major industrial parks which are located in Reservoir, East Preston and Fairfield.

The key employing industry sectors in Darebin are:

- Retail (14.9%)
- Manufacturing (13.5%)
- Education (13.4%)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (10.6%)



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)

The business profile is characterised by a high proportion of self employed, sole trader and home based businesses where:

- 63% of businesses are self-employed
- 90% of businesses employ less than 5 employees
- 1.5% of businesses employ between 50-200 employees

Business Incubators

Darebin has a number of successful business incubators operating within the City.

- Darebin Enterprise Centre Limited (DECL) based in Alphington accommodates office based and small manufacturing businesses and assist them to successfully enter the wider business community.
- ArtsDECL Darebin's Creative and Digital Arts Incubator, is based in Northcote offers similar services to DECL for creative green business.
- The Artery Cooperative based in Northcote is an artists' initiative where studio space is made available in a cooperative environment. They provide a sustainable and mutually supportive working environment for renowned artists.
- The Technology Enterprise Centre (TEC) and the Victorian AgriBioscience Centre (VABC) are both situated at La Trobe University in Bundoora and act as incubators for a range of science, research and development businesses.

Skills and Qualifications

Darebin has a diverse and growing workforce that offers increasing levels of skills and qualifications for local businesses to utilise. The resident labour force is becoming more skilled, as the number of people with formal post school qualifications increases.

Darebin's student population is important to the Darebin economy as secondary, TAFE and University students make up approximately 13% of the total population. There are currently over 30,000 students completing their tertiary education in the City of Darebin.

Workforce

Darebin is proud of the diversity of its workforce. In 2010:

- there were 72,000 residents working
- Darebin businesses provided 56,096 jobs and employed over 16,000 residents
- the largest percentage of Darebin's workforce was in the 35-44 age group.

Between 1991 and 2010 the number of resident workers has grown by 13,200 and the number of jobs in Darebin has grown by 17,800.

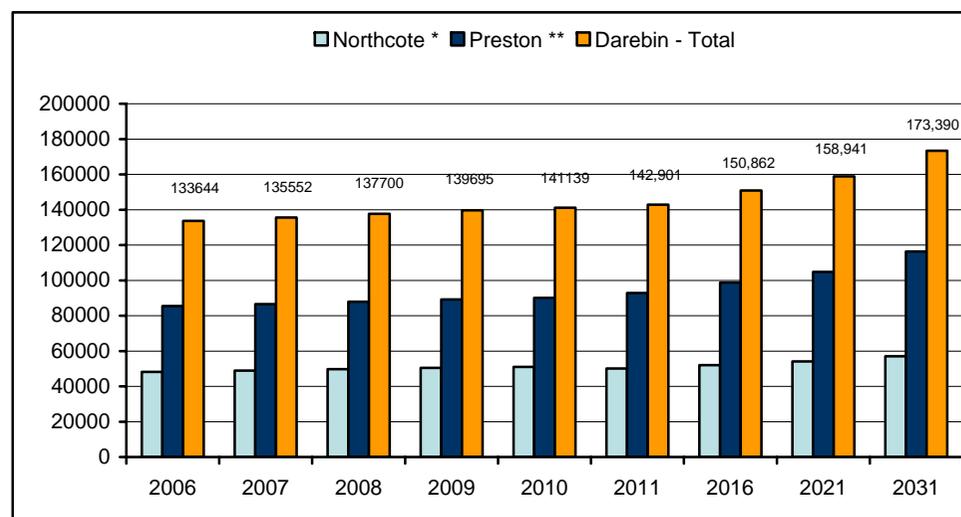
Four industries that have made major contributions to this trend are:

- Education – net growth 2,450 jobs
- Retail – net growth 2,200 jobs
- Transport – net growth 1,700 jobs
- Wholesale Trade – net growth 1,450 jobs

Population

The City of Darebin has more than 141,000 residents and is home to one of the largest and most diverse communities in Victoria. Residents originate from 126 countries with more than 118 languages spoken and more than half the population speaking a language other than English.

Darebin's population grew by more than 9000 people over the last 6 years and is expected to grow by approximately 30,000 people over the next 20 years.



Source: ABS, Regional Population Growth Cat. No. 3218.0; Forecast ID, updated 25 February 2011

*South includes Alphington, Fairfield, Northcote and Thornbury
** North includes Preston, Reservoir, Kingsbury and Bundoora

Cultural Diversity

Darebin has a culturally diverse population. This is highlighted through the following statistics:

- Approximately 30% of the population was born overseas and 28% were from a non English speaking background; India and China being the largest birthplace groups.
- 20% of people speak English as the sole language only.
- 22% speak another language with minimal fluency in English.

It is important that Council assists businesses to leverage the cultural diversity, as a culturally diverse workforce will:

- Enable Darebin businesses to better adapt to change.
- Help meet the need and impact of working in a global environment to do business.
- Strengthen leadership in business by acknowledging people as individuals and encourage different views enabling analysis of issues, and resulting in more innovative and sustainable solutions to problems.
- Enhance better customer and business relationships throughout Darebin.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

A total of 1,110 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in Darebin contributing 0.9% of the total population. Of the 31 municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne, Darebin has the largest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and its indigenous community is among the largest in Victoria.

8. Competitive Advantages

- Darebin has a locational advantage which is highlighted by its proximity to the CBD, Melbourne airports and road networks. Darebin also has great access to public transport.
- Darebin is a culturally rich and diverse City. There are 126 countries represented in Darebin.
- Darebin has large pockets of vacant industrial and commercial land. These strategic sites are able to attract investment, new businesses and provide future employment opportunities for residents.
- The presence and growth of intellectual assets within the Municipality include La Trobe University and NMIT, and RMIT which is located just over the northern border.
- The vibrancy and uniqueness of Darebin's activity centres and shopping strips.
- Darebin is home to a large number of community agencies and employment providers. This ensures support is available through access to greater training and employment outcomes for Darebin residents.
- The Preston Activity Centre is well positioned to accommodate additional office, retail, community and residential development.
- Northcote and Thornbury are considered the arts, music and entertainment capital of the north.
- Council is committed in investing in large redevelopments such as the Reservoir Library and the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre.

Competitive Advantages continued

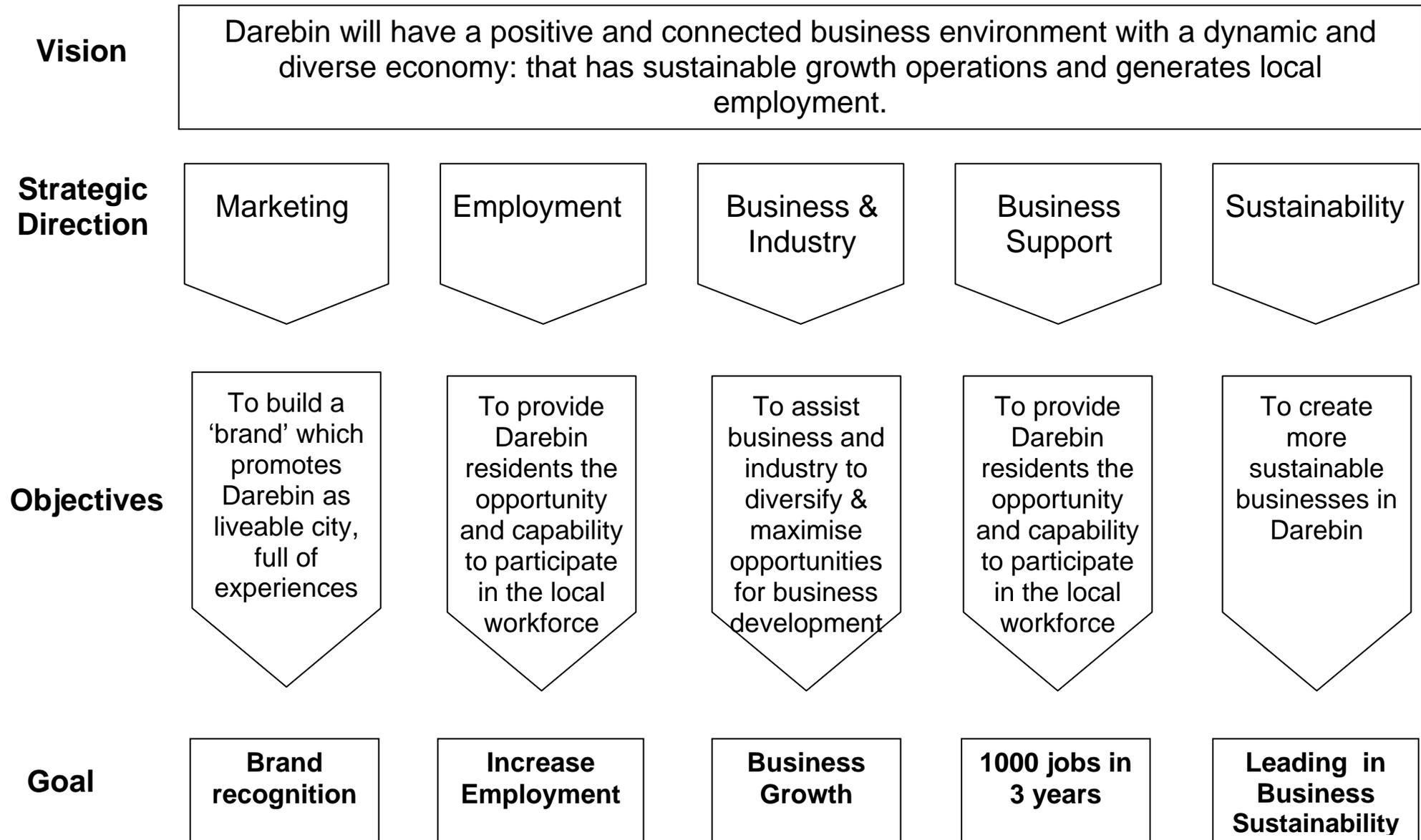
- Excellent access to quality health, education, recreational and cultural facilities.
- Well maintained parks and recreational facilities.
- A creative community. Darebin has a high number of resident artists, musicians and writers living in Darebin.
- Darebin residents and businesses are proud of where they live and a major reason why they choose to do business in the Municipality.
- Darebin is well known for its events and festivals which generate large numbers of visitations to the City.
- Darebin has a host of successful Business Incubators including DECL & ArtDECL, the Artery Co-op and LaTrobe University's Technology Enterprise Centre and the Victorian AgriBioscience Centre.

9. Challenges

- The local economy in the City of Darebin is currently undergoing significant change from one of a traditional manufacturing to a knowledge economy.
- Businesses and developers felt Council was more of a regulator rather than a facilitator of business development - general impression was that the regulatory processes hindered rather than encouraged development.

- Industries in particular manufacturing and retail are facing challenges posed by changes in the economy, government regulations (such as the carbon tax) and increase competition from overseas and online business.
- Many local businesses are experiencing skills shortages, problems accessing labour and increasing associated costs in comparison to imported goods.
- The steep increase in the value of residential and commercial property is putting pressure on Darebin workers, residents and artists as an area to live in.
- There is a lack of variety in secondary education facilities in Darebin and this is indicative in the movements of families away from Darebin to the west and east of Melbourne
- There is a need to increase the skill level of residents
- There is a need to create opportunities for industry to utilise the pool of long term unemployed residents within the City There is a need to address the negative perception of Darebin. Council needs to build a consistent and clear 'brand' which promotes the City's liveable experiences, Council's business services and strategic sites to existing and future investor
- The availability of good quality, up to date information for businesses is a priority for Council to attract investment and grow the employment base of the City. Darebin must be in a position of understanding the local economy and identifying trends and key growth sectors.

10. Shaping a new direction for Darebin



11. KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

MARKETING

To build a ‘brand’ which promotes Darebin as a liveable City full of economic, social, art, cultural and education experiences.

Darebin has many important characteristics which make it a liveable City. The goal is to build a “brand” for Darebin so that it is recognised as a City with a strong sense of local identity, unique characteristics in its activity centres and as the destination of choice to do business.

With large pockets of vacant industrial land, Darebin has many opportunities to accommodate new commercial and industrial development. Through marketing and providing a clear message to investors, Darebin can become an attractive place for business and therefore create additional employment for residents.

The focus of the marketing will be at a precinct level where the variety and vastness of Darebin’s profile can be showcased. This will be achieved through

the development of a Business Prospectus which will identify benefits and opportunities for doing business in Darebin and promote strategic sites.

Darebin City Council has the following retail activity centres:

- Preston including Preston Market - Principal Activity Centre
- Northcote, Reservoir and Northland – Major Activity Centres
- Fairfield – Neighbourhood Activity Centre

It is important that Council work with these activity centres and their trader associations to ensure their vibrancy and unique branding is recognised and maintained.

Darebin’s retail centres, locational destination, arts and cultural activities, and food precincts make this City an attractive place to live and do business.

Key Strategic Direction	Resources	Timeline	Measures
MARKETING: To build a 'brand' which promotes Darebin as a liveable city full of economic, social, art, cultural and education experiences			
Objective 1: Create a stronger sense of local identity and place			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a Darebin business brand. ➤ Participate in various programs that promote Darebin as a destination. ➤ Promote Darebin's residential and natural advantages, cultural diversity, attractions and business locations. ➤ Facilitate programs that support the development and residency of local artists. 	BDSP & RDM BDSP RDM BDSP	2012 – 2013 Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a new recognisable business brand for Darebin • Increase brand recognition and promotion of Darebin.
Objective 2: Strengthen the unique characteristics of Darebin's Activity Centres			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify and promote the unique characteristics and experiences of individual shopping centres. ➤ Improve the brand recognition for each precinct to raise the profile and increase awareness locally. ➤ Support business activities that relate positively to and attract activity at street level within our shopping centres. ➤ Undertake a strategic review of infrastructure, access, maintenance and service provision for each of our activity centres. ➤ In collaboration undertake programs that assist to improve the amenity and safety of our shopping centres. 	RDM BDSP RDM	Ongoing 2013 - 2014 Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of businesses within Darebin. • Develop a Business Prospectus
Objective 3: Promote Darebin as the destination of choice and a great place to do business			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote Darebin to business, investors, industry, regional organisations, State and Federal Government departments. ➤ Develop a prospectus to identify and showcase key commercial and strategic sites for investment. ➤ Organise an annual business gala event to showcase Darebin. ➤ Raise the profile of Darebin through the use of business welcome kits, including promoting key festivals and cultural events of the City. 	BDU BDSP RDM	Ongoing 2013 – 2014 Annually	

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

To provide Darebin residents the opportunity and capability to participate in the local workforce.

Darebin has a culturally diverse community and through Council's Equity and Inclusion Policy, it will be important to support and promote programs and initiatives that assist the employment needs for the following target groups:

- Aboriginal
- Low SES (Socio Economic Status)
- CALD (Cultural and Linguistically Diverse)
- People with Disabilities
- Women
- Elderly
- Youth

These groups are an important portion of Darebin's population and are valuable participants in our local economy. Therefore, Council's support for social inclusion programs that assist these groups to become workplace ready is an essential part of the Strategy.

The establishment of a strong local employment sector is essential for Darebin to work towards a more sustainable local economy. Through the Strategy, Council is well placed to promote local employment opportunities to the community to ensure that residents can participate in employment and training initiatives.

By forming strong partnerships with government agencies, employment networks and education and training providers, Council will have an excellent knowledge and understanding of local employment issues and will be better positioned to assist in the delivery of a workforce that meets the needs of local employers.

The key will be to encourage business to invest in its people in order to grow skills and the local workforce. Economic growth, innovation and productivity are all dependent on the skill levels of the workforce. It is crucial to provide the workforce with opportunities to develop its skills and abilities.

Another key challenge will be to improve the capability of local businesses to recruit locally. This will require support to ensure there is a greater match between the skills of the local workforce and the skills required by local businesses. Meeting this demand will ensure that Darebin has an increased skilled workforce. This support includes providing linkages for local businesses to relevant employment networks and also to programs that assist businesses with workforce retention and succession planning. Anecdotal evidence from local businesses suggests that there is a need to support our local businesses with planning for their future so that their business remains operational and continues to grow.

Youth Services is another important area of work covered in the Strategy. There are many disadvantaged youth in Darebin who do not re-engage in education or training and therefore are not competitive in the labour market. Council is currently involved in the establishment of the Darebin Youth Commitment – a strategic initiative involving key stakeholders in the region to develop a range of strategies to improve outcomes for young people. It is essential that Council support pathways and transition programs and promote school-industry engagement initiatives that provide youth with the opportunity to have positive education, training and employment outcomes in Darebin.

Darebin has close to 40 social enterprises located or operating within the City. Social enterprises are a valuable part of Darebin's business landscape. They strengthen the local economy and include positive local social impacts, such as offering employment and training opportunities to unemployed and disadvantaged local residents. Council would like to encourage more social enterprises to locate within Darebin to further address local unemployment issues.

Key Strategic Direction	Resources	Timeline	Measures
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS: To provide Darebin residents the opportunity and capability to participate in the local workforce			
Objective 1: Enhance pathways to learning and employment			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support and promote work experience initiatives, local employment pathways and targeted mentoring programs. ➤ Support school-industry engagement programs and initiatives. ➤ Work with the Youth Services Sector to assist disengaged youth, support youth employment and business initiatives. ➤ Advocate for secondary education facilities in Darebin. 	IDE	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in local employment. • Decrease in the unemployment rate in Darebin to 5%.
Objective 2: Strengthen linkages with employment related networks and increase participation in local employment initiatives			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote programs that will lead to improved job opportunities. ➤ Facilitate skills development programs that address areas of skills shortages to increase local workforce needs. ➤ Develop knowledge and understanding of local employment issues faced by employment providers, networks and education agencies 	IDE	Ongoing	
Objective 3: Improve the capability of businesses to source employment locally			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support businesses to improve their skills in workforce recruitment, retention and succession planning. ➤ Provide linkages for local businesses to relevant employment networks and skills programs. ➤ Develop partnerships with education and training providers in Darebin to facilitate training programs for local businesses. 	IDE	Ongoing	
Objective 4: Promote programs and enterprises that assist the employment needs of a diverse community			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support social inclusion programs that assist marginalised groups to become workplace ready. ➤ Increase the awareness of the benefits of using local social enterprises to the business community. ➤ Encourage social enterprises to locate in Darebin. 	IDE & BDSP BDSP BDSP	Ongoing	

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

To assist businesses and industry to diversify and maximise opportunities for business development.

The strength of Darebin's economy has rested on the four key employing industry sectors being retail, manufacturing, education and health care. It is important to maintain strong collaborative relationships with business and industry so that opportunities to share ideas, research and innovation can be utilised to maximise their development.

Technology and Innovation

Council will also promote programs and services that optimise business development, in particular, supporting the development of a Digital Strategy which will provide industry with the latest technology and opportunities to improve their capability to compete globally. The rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN) will support Darebin businesses to access this technology and grow their businesses' both locally and internationally.

A great economic resource for any Council is a talented and innovative workforce. The importance of encouraging innovation and nurturing ideas and technology should not be underestimated. By building on existing links with tertiary institutions and research organisations, and encouraging businesses to translate their products and services into commercial opportunities, will lead to a talented and innovative business sector for Darebin.

Council has a real opportunity to work closely with La Trobe University not only as a major employer in the area, but as a leader in research. La Trobe has several areas of research strength where key strategic projects can be identified so that opportunities for supporting emerging businesses and industries are maximised.

The New Knowledge Economy

The 2009 Melbourne's North – the new knowledge economy report recognises the importance of the knowledge economy as the key driver of economic growth and regional integration. Darebin is well placed to grow its knowledge economy because of the skills and diversity of its residents, the range of its businesses and institutions and its growing amenities. Through the Strategy, Council will support businesses to be 'smart' in how they operate, in terms of growing knowledge, skills and innovation.

The manufacturing sector remains a strategic industry for the north, even though jobs in this sector have declined over recent years. However, there has been a slight revival in training in advanced manufacturing and opportunities exist to build advanced manufacturing businesses and therefore support an increase in manufacturing employment.

Both Regional Development Australia (RDA) and NORTH Link are strong advocates in this area and Council has firmly established partnerships with each of these organisations and will continue to work together to build on opportunities to develop business services to the advanced manufacturing industry.

Advocating for Darebin businesses

As part of business and industry development, the Strategy will also have a focus on supporting new businesses starting up in Darebin as well as the growing number of micro or home based businesses. The type of support would include opportunities for networking so that ideas and information can be shared as well as encouraging local procurement and spending between businesses. Furthermore, as part of its work, the Business Development Unit will assist businesses by advocating on their behalf, to ensure that the businesses have a voice in relation to Council policies and initiatives.

Key Strategic Direction	Resources	Timeline	Measures
BUSINESS & INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT: To assist Businesses and Industry to diversify and maximise opportunities for business development			
Objective 1: Encourage the use of new technology and innovative ideas that optimise business development			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop and implement a Digital Strategy for the City of Darebin. ➤ Explore the feasibility of a community business hub housing the latest technology in meeting space and conferencing capabilities. ➤ Undertake demonstration projects in partnership with education institutions and Industry that showcase the benefits of new technology. ➤ Encourage businesses to use the latest technology to create greater workplace efficiencies, increase capabilities and opportunities to compete globally. 	BDSP IDE BDU	2012 – 2013 2013 – 2014 Ongoing Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase numbers of Darebin businesses are utilising broadband technology to enhance their operations and increase their competitiveness.
Objective 2: Support Industry in the transition to a knowledge economy			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist in developing Darebin business areas into knowledge and advanced manufacturing. ➤ Facilitate a range of industry forums to educate and encourage development and provide networking opportunities. ➤ Undertake research and promote clusters that exist in Darebin. 	IDE BDSP	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase numbers of creative businesses.
Objective 3: Nurture and encourage emerging and diverse businesses			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a range of initiatives that promote business start-up opportunities. ➤ Support and promote the growing number and range of micro and home based businesses in Darebin. ➤ Implement initiatives that encourage local spending and procurement. ➤ Undertake business visitations to develop a more personable service and increase knowledge of business issues. 	BDU BDSP BDU	2012- 2013 Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase satisfaction levels of businesses who have submitted permit applications to Council.
Objective 4: Encourage a strategic approach to business to facilitate future investment			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist with the development of internal strategies that relate to industrial, commercial and activity centres. ➤ Advocate on behalf of business in existing and future Council policies to advance business development. ➤ Collaboratively work with permit approving departments to enhance permit facilitation. ➤ Build strong strategic partnerships with local, regional and federal stakeholders to deliver positive economic outcomes. 	BDU	Ongoing	

BUSINESS SUPPORT

To provide effective support to businesses in Darebin.

A key factor to the success or failure of a business is access to information. It is therefore important that Council has a role in supporting and encouraging the growth of existing businesses by providing access to networking, training and mentoring opportunities so that businesses can increase their competitiveness. Council is well placed to facilitate opportunities for businesses to come together, share ideas and develop new networks. Networks provide an important means of gathering and disseminating information, whether through formal training programs or informal seminars and presentations.

It is envisaged that the Business Development Unit will become the first port of call for businesses within Council for any enquiries.

To reach Council's target of creating 1000 jobs in 3 years, the Business Development Unit will work together with other Council departments to help resolve business and Council issues and actively promote investment opportunities to ensure that permit and planning application processes are streamlined and red tape is reduced for businesses.

Providing a positive environment to do business will not only help existing Darebin businesses. It will also assist to attract new investment and hence provide more employment opportunities. Delivering actions from this Strategy, Council will be able to foster a business friendly culture and environment, ensuring excellent customer service so that businesses are given every opportunity to grow and further develop.

Key Strategic Direction	Resources	Timeline	Measures
BUSINESS SUPPORT: To provide effective support to businesses in Darebin			
Objective 1: Deliver high quality events that meet the needs of business			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide innovative training and networking opportunities to business. ➤ Encourage residents to attend training and business events that assist them to start a business or create their own employment. ➤ Explore opportunities on how to develop the 'Made in Darebin' concept. 	BDU RDM	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created 1000 jobs in 3 years. • Businesses have access to effective support and information.
Objective 2: Improve communication with business to provide relevant research, information and assistance			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop and implement a Business Communication Strategy. ➤ Provide precinct based communication and information. ➤ Engage with business in a friendly and helpful manner that adds value to their operations and development. 	RDM BDU	2012 – 2013 Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses are aware of Council services.
Objective 3: Support a business focused approach to facilitate a positive experience and increase employment			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be the first port of call for Business within Council. ➤ Streamline permit processes and procedures to improve the ease and time for business to obtain an outcome. ➤ Actively promote investment opportunities and facilitate pre application meetings for new and existing businesses. ➤ Work cooperatively with other Council departments to resolve business and Council issues. ➤ Create 1000 jobs in 3 years. 	BDU		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of businesses are promoters for Darebin events.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

To create more environmentally sustainable businesses in Darebin.

The Darebin business sector is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions (51%), the consumption of energy (51%) and water (23%) within the municipality. A key role in with this sector is to help them become more resource efficient and help reduce their energy costs. Council also has a strong imperative to actively work with local businesses to ensure that they remain viable and competitive in what will increasingly become a more resource constrained economy (peak oil, reduced food production, increased electricity, water and waste disposal charges etc).

A number of ways have been identified in which Council can work in partnership with other key stakeholders to support businesses that are looking to reduce their environmental impacts. These include:

- Further develop and provide education, training and events to Darebin businesses to show how they could improve the environmental sustainability of their businesses.
- The design and delivery of sustainable business programs that directly target resource use, environmental impact, e.g. energy, water, waste and pollution savings.
- The investigation of ways to actively encourage more 'green' businesses to move into Darebin.
- The facilitation of peer learning, support and networking opportunities to help create an environment in which businesses and organisations can share their experiences, knowledge and skills and provide support and inspiration to each other.
- Actively marketing and communicating what Darebin businesses are doing in terms of environmental sustainability to other businesses and the broader Darebin community to both acknowledge their efforts and create a motivation and demand for them.
- Darebin Council continuing to demonstrate leadership in sustainability, through the way it operates its organisation and buildings.

Key Strategic Direction	Resources	Timeline	Measures
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: To create more environmentally sustainable businesses in Darebin.			
Objective 1: Encourage existing businesses to work towards zero net emissions			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deliver and expand the Light\$mart program. ➤ Develop and implement programs that achieve efficiency in terms of energy, water and waste for business. ➤ Work with key environmental partners to promote and deliver their energy, water and waste efficiency programs to Darebin businesses. ➤ Deliver sustainable business education and information to Darebin businesses. 	SB	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A highly regarded and recognised sustainable business City. • Produce a Green Business Attraction Strategy.
Objective 2: Attract and support green businesses in Darebin			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop and implement the Green Business Attraction Strategy. ➤ Market, promote and support new green businesses. ➤ Explore the feasibility of a green business precinct. 	BDSP SB BDSP	2012 –2013 Ongoing 2013 – 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the percentage of green businesses operating in the City.
Objective 3: Increase the awareness of environmentally sustainable practices amongst businesses and promote their successes			
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish partnerships and networking opportunities for innovative and sustainable businesses. ➤ Develop and implement a sustainable business recognition scheme. ➤ Support innovative demonstration projects, to encourage businesses to be more sustainable. ➤ Profile and promote leading examples of local sustainable businesses and benefits of a localised economy. 	SB	Ongoing 2012 Ongoing Ongoing	

Key – Resources

BDSP – Business Development and Strategic Projects Officer

RDM - Retail Development and Marketing Officer

IDE – Industry Development and Employment Officer

SB – Sustainable Business Officer

BDU – All officers within the Business Development Unit