

Special TERMS OF REFERENCE

Interfaith Advisory Committee



1. Establishment	Council may establish an Advisory Committee as part of its Governance Framework according to <i>Council's Governance Rules 2020</i>. An Advisory Committee can only be established by a Council resolution.
2. Purpose	The Interfaith Advisory Committee provides independent, informed and representative advice to Council on matters affecting faith communities and the role of religion, belief, and spirituality in community life. The Committee acts as a conduit between Council and faith communities, enabling Council to better understand community perspectives, identify emerging issues and develop policies, services and initiatives that promote community inclusion, mutual understanding, respectful relationships and community wellbeing.
3. Application of these Terms of Reference	These Terms of Reference apply to the Interfaith Advisory Committee. Throughout this Terms of Reference, the word "Committee" refers to the Interfaith Advisory Committee.
4. Scope	The Committee will provide advice to Council on strategic planning and policy matters, including: • Council plans, strategies and policies that may impact faith communities. • Opportunities to strengthen community connectedness, inclusion and respectful relationships across the municipality. • Emerging demographic, cultural and faith-related trends within the municipality. • Barriers to participation experienced by faith communities in civic and community life. Council may also seek advice from the Committee on: • Strategies that foster respect, understanding and positive relationships between people of different faiths and backgrounds. • The promotion of inclusive communities where residents feel welcome, safe and valued. • Community responses to discrimination, prejudice and exclusion. • Strengthening community resilience during emergencies, crises or significant community events. • Opportunities to encourage greater understanding of the municipality's religious and cultural diversity.
5. Term	All Advisory Committees will end on 1 October in the year following the General Council election, or as determined by the Governance Rules whichever is the sooner. Council may at any time by resolution set a date or a milestone that when reached or completed causes the cessation of the Committee and the expiry of Committee Members' terms.
6. Committee limitations and indemnity	The Committee is to act in an advisory capacity to Council only and has no delegated authority, therefore Members are not indemnified, to make decisions or form policy on behalf of Council.

	Committee advice is only one mechanism by which Council decisions are informed and is complemented by other community engagement activities undertaken in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy. The Committee is not responsible for expenditure, nor does it have an operational role, and neither it, nor its Members, may direct Council staff in the performance of their duties.
7. Honorarium	Community Members (Individual) will be paid a \$50.00 honorarium for each Committee Meeting they attend.
8. Recruitment and induction of Community Members	All Community Members are appointed by Council resolution following a public Expression of Interest (EOI) process, for a term specified in the resolution. The EOI process must align with Darebin strategies, frameworks, policies, and relevant legislation: • Towards Equality Framework – Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029 • Legislative obligations, including positive duty obligations, under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Gender Equality Act 2020, and Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. • Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2026-30 Committees comprise the following types of Members: • Councillor Members – appointed annually (non-voting) • Community Members - individual/professional (voting) The Committee Secretariat (Council Officer) is nominated by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to support the Committee and is not considered a Member of the Committee. Where vacancies occur 'mid-term,' a replacement Community Member may be appointed by Council's CEO, subject to an EOI process. Members appointed because of a 'mid-term' vacancy will serve the balance of the former Member's term. A position becomes vacant if a Committee member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings without reasonable grounds or communication, on a case-by-case basis. Community Members may apply for, and be appointed, to multiple Committees concurrently. Prioritising diversity of membership will be considered in Members who are appointed. Gender Equity Gender equity will inform the recruitment and selection of Community Members (individuals and representatives of organisations) and Councillor Members for all Committees. Women must comprise at least 50% of overall membership. As directed by the Governance Rules 2020, any person appointed to an Advisory Committee that nominates for election to Council, State Parliament or Federal Parliament must take leave of absence from their member position from the time of declaring they have nominated (or intend to nominate). If elected, they will be deemed to have resigned from the Committee.

	Community Members (individuals and representatives of organisations) will be selected based on membership in clause 8, in addition to the following considerations: Community Members (Individual): Council will seek to appoint individuals from a diverse range of faith traditions who have strong connections within their communities and can contribute community perspectives, knowledge and experience relevant to the Committee's purpose. Community Members (Organisation Representatives): Some members may be appointed as representatives of organisations, peak bodies, faith organisations or agencies that can contribute specialist knowledge, expertise and perspectives relevant to the purpose of the Committee and the diversity of faith communities within Darebin. Where a member is appointed as the representative of a particular organisation, a proxy may attend meetings on their behalf if the nominated representative is unable to attend. Organisations represented on the Committee must: • Be a not-for-profit organisation, public sector agency, community service provider, registered faith organisation, social enterprise, Traditional Owner Corporation, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO), or another entity that operates for public or community benefit. • Have a demonstrated connection to faith communities, interfaith collaboration, community cohesion, social inclusion, cultural diversity, community wellbeing, or related areas relevant to the Committee's purpose. • Be based in Darebin, or demonstrate a clear connection to and involvement with communities within the City of Darebin. • Be able to contribute knowledge, expertise or perspectives that support the Committee's objectives. Induction: Community Members must participate in an induction arranged by Council at the commencement of their term on the Committee. The induction will include an overview of the Council's role and functions as a Local Government Authority, the relationship of the Committee with Councillors and the community, governance protocols, and any other matters to ensure that members are well supported. Members may be required to participate in specified training relevant to the work of the Committee from time to time, or attend meetings, forums, or workshops with Members of other Committees, to share knowledge and for the collaborative provision of advice as appropriate.
--	--

9. Membership and term of membership	The Committee will consist of: • Two Councillor Members: ◦ One Chairperson and one Deputy Chairperson ◦ Appointed annually by Council resolution • Up to fifteen (15) Community Members, comprising both individual and professional members: ◦ Applications received through a publicly advertised Expression of Interest (EOI) process. ◦ Appointed by Council resolution for a two-year term. ◦ If a Community Member successfully applies for a second term, the maximum cumulative term they can undertake is 4 years (e.g. 2 x 2-year terms). Community Members (Individual) must live (primary or secondary residence), work, or study in the Darebin community. In addition, Community Members should meet one or more of the following criteria, which will be evaluated when selecting successful applicants in the Expression of Interest (EOI) process: • Involvement in the wider community with strong community networks and connections, leadership, engagement, or advocacy experience. • Good knowledge and understanding of local issues relevant to the Committee's focus. • Willingness to contribute positively to meetings in a fair and respectful manner. • Have lived experience from a faith community or communities. Community Members (Organisation Representative) are appointed to represent an organisation, which should meet one or more of the following criteria in addition to the criteria listed in clause 7 of the Terms of Reference: • An organisation, agency, or service that focuses on and supports people and communities that relate to diverse faith communities. Council (by resolution) may elect to cease a member's participation earlier than the term of appointment for reasons such as: • The Member no longer meets the criteria of membership • The Member breaches the Terms of Reference. A Community Member may choose to cease their membership at any time. Members may be required to hold a valid Working with Children Check to ensure compliance with Council's Child Safe obligations.
10. Role and term of Chairperson (Councillor)	The Chairperson is responsible for the following: • Attend and chair all meetings of the Committee, except where absence is unavoidable, in which case the Deputy Chairperson will temporarily assume the role. • Approve the meeting schedule and meeting agenda with the Committee Secretariat (Council Officer). • Ensure the Committee's business is conducted in a manner that upholds Aboriginal Cultural safety. • Ensure the Committee's business is conducted with zero tolerance for racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or discrimination of any kind. • Ensure the Committee's business is conducted in an orderly manner in compliance with the Darebin's Governance Rules, including Conflict of Interest protocols.

	• Support and encourage participation from all Members present at the meeting by adapting their approach to meet differing styles and needs of attendees. • Direct any person to be excluded from a meeting or for any item of business, for example, on the grounds of confidentiality or a conflict of interest. • Ensure that advice and recommendations recorded by the Committee Secretariat (Council Officer) in the meeting represent the collective views of the Committee. • Report the Committee's advice and recommendations to Council with the administrative support of the Committee Secretariat (Council Officer). • Report the outcomes of the Council Meetings in relation to Committee advice at the following meeting. Upon appointment, all Councillor Members must undertake training (or demonstrate relevant recent training and proficiency) in running and participating in effective, inclusive, and culturally safe Committee meetings.
11. Role of Committee Secretariat and Executive Sponsor (Council Officers)	Committee Secretariat An appointed Council Officer will fulfill the role of Committee Secretariat. General responsibilities: • Support Committee meetings, including scheduling, agenda development, meeting minutes, records management, venue bookings, and catering arrangements. • Support good governance by providing procedural and policy advice to the Committee. • Develop and coordinate the Member recruitment and induction process. • Prepare briefing and meeting reports as required. • Provide customer service and support to Members, including responding to email and telephone enquiries. • Maintain up to date information regarding Advisory Committees at Council (internal and external). • Prepare the Annual Committee Outcomes Report • Undertake essential training to ensure skills in Aboriginal Cultural Safety, disability inclusion, and awareness, LGBTIQ+ inclusion and awareness, and other appropriate areas relating to inclusion and equity. Agenda development: • The Committee Secretariat will draft the agenda in consultation with the Chairperson, Executive Sponsor, and where appropriate, relevant Council staff. • Members can request the Committee Secretariat to list items on the agenda. Such items will be included on the agenda subject to agreement of the Chairpersons and Executive Sponsor. • The Committee Secretariat will coordinate meeting attendance. Special guests / subject matter experts may be invited to the meeting at the combined discretion of the Chairperson, including the Deputy Chairperson and Committee Secretariat (Council Officer). • Committee agendas will be forwarded to Members by email no later than five working days before a scheduled meeting. • Minutes will be provided to the Chairperson no later than 10 working days after the meeting and will include a summary of discussions, details of any conflicts of interest disclosed, and any advice for Council consideration.

	• The Chairperson shall ratify the Committee minutes prior to their distribution via the meeting minutes of the next Ordinary Council meeting. • Committee minutes will be received at noted at the subsequent Ordinary Council meeting. Executive Sponsor The CEO will appoint a senior council officer (usually a member of the executive management team) as the Executive Sponsor of each Committee. The Executive Sponsor will be responsible for determining frequency of any additional meetings in accordance with the needs of Council, agenda development (as per clause 14 above) and reviewing minutes before they are released to Council.
12. Responsibilities, duties, and conduct of Members	In conducting its activities associated with its purpose and scope the Committee will: • Conduct itself according to, and within, the Terms of Reference and any relevant Council resolution. • Inform itself of issues, opportunities, constraints, and urgent actions relating to the Committee. • Provide honest, considered, and constructive advice to Council that will improve Council decision making. • Provide advice on strategic and other planning work to help set short and longer-term direction and action. • Foster a culture that seeks to understand and explore diverse views of Members, which are reflected in advice to Council. • Participate in a manner that upholds cultural safety, with zero tolerance for racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or discrimination of any kind. All Members will be given every opportunity, encouragement, and support to put their views before the Committee to be considered by Council. During all Committee undertakings, Members must: • Prepare for, attend, and actively participate in meetings • Act honestly and treat others with respect by listening to one another and by allowing all Members to have a voice. • Exercise reasonable care and diligence. • Not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired because of their position. Respectful behaviour is inclusive of all Committee meetings, emails, correspondence, telephone calls, and online meetings. Members must work co-operatively with other Members, respect the authority of the Chair(s) and meeting procedures, and must not seek to dominate the meeting or insist or imply that their own views and ideas carry more weight than those of others.
13. Quorum	A quorum for meetings of the Committee will be: • Half of the voting Members plus one • At least one Councillor Member (Chairperson or Acting Chairperson) • At least one Council Officer to provide secretariat support. If a quorum is not met within a reasonable time of the scheduled meeting start time: • The meeting must be adjourned or rescheduled, at the discretion of the Chairperson.

14. Recommendations of the Committee to Council	Formal advice and recommendations of the Committee to Council will be determined by the Members and finalised by the Chairperson. Where agreement cannot be reached by the majority of Members, the minutes should reflect that a common view was not reached.
15. Conflict of interest, privacy, and confidentiality	The conflict of interest and confidentiality provisions in the Local Government Act 2020 apply to all Members. Councillor Members must disclose any conflict of interest in a matter being considered by the Committee in accordance with the Act and Council's Governance Rules 2020. A Community Member who has a personal interest in a matter being considered by the Committee must disclose that personal interest to the Committee and leave the room and not participate in any discussion and/or decision in relation to that matter. All committee members must respect confidential and sensitive handling of information as appropriate. Any disclosure made in accordance with this clause must be recorded in the minutes of the relevant Committee meeting by the Committee Secretariat (Council Officer).
16. Committee meetings, frequency, and arrangements	The Committee will meet quarterly. Meetings will: • Be held at an accessible and suitable Darebin venue or may be held virtually. • Offer a hybrid in-person and online option to attend. • Be held on a quarterly basis. • Usually commence at 6pm on a Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday, unless another day or time is required. • Commence on time and conclude by the stated completion time, not extending beyond a 120-minute duration. • Be scheduled and confirmed in advance. • Be recorded through minutes. • Notice of any additional Committee meetings will be provided 2 weeks in advance. • Be closed to the public.
17. Reporting requirements and transparency	Committee meeting minutes and recommendations will be submitted to the next practical scheduled Council Meeting. • A Councillor Member (Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson) will speak to the minutes if required. • After receiving Committee meeting minutes, a Councillor Member (Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson) will provide an update back to Members at the next Committee meeting. To maintain transparency of Committee operations and in alignment with Council's Governance Rules the following information is to be published on Council's website in respect of each Committee: • The Terms of Reference of this Committee • The names of all Members • Minutes of Committees meetings in Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes <i>*Note that in some instances identifying details may be redacted to maintain safety for some Members, if required.</i>

	Annual Committee Outcomes Reporting: An annual report will be compiled to summarise the actions and outcomes of each committee. • Annual actions include committee membership, meeting attendance, and the number of meetings conducted. • Annual outcomes include agenda items considered as they relate to the purpose of the committee, summary of advice provided to Council, and outcomes of advice provided.
18. Member support	Council will provide a range of support and reasonable adjustments to enable Member participation, if required. Examples include; • Wellbeing support and debrief arrangements for sensitive discussions, particularly in the context of Aboriginal Cultural Safety. • Access supports and reasonable adjustments. • Language support, including translation and literacy support.
19. Meeting expenses	Expenses that relate to the access needs of Members to attend meetings and participate in the Committee will be covered by Council, e.g. Auslan interpreter. Council will cover the cost of interpreters and other language supports required by culturally and linguistically diverse Members to attend meetings and participate in the Committee. Venue and catering costs for meetings will be covered by Council. Catering provided will meet the cultural and dietary requirements of all meeting attendees.
20. Committee limitations	Committee advice is only one mechanism by which Council decisions are informed and is complemented by other community engagement activities undertaken in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy.
21. Out of scope (Groups, Taskforces, Networks, Alliances, Panels Delegated Committees, and External Groups)	On occasion, Council may also form groups, committees, and other bodies during the delivery of operational projects, programs, and services that are not considered Advisory Committees and are not covered by this Terms of Reference. Formation of these groups will be in line with Council Community Engagement Frameworks and Policies and project management protocols. Examples include: • Community Reference Group • Working Group or Taskforce • Network • Alliance. • Panel • Delegated Committees External (Non-Council) Groups: Councillors and Officers may have a role to play in groups established by other organisations, including other local government authorities, which are not covered by this Terms of Reference. Councillors may be appointed as representatives of Council, or Officers may be members of these external groups. when they strategically align to Council priorities.
22. Other relevant information	Media and Publicity: • Council may feature photographic or videographic content or names of Members through their communications channels to promote the work of the Committee. • Members' contact details will not be shared publicly. • Members must not speak to the media, or make posts or comments on social media, on behalf of the Committee unless

	Council provides written authorisation. Any unauthorised contact with the media may result in a review of the person's membership and may result in suspension or removal. <i>*Note that in some instances identifying details may be redacted to maintain safety for some Members, if required.</i>
23. Committee contact details	The appointed Committee Secretariat (Council Officer) will be the contact point for enquiries relating to the Committee.
24. Date of Council adoption of Terms of Reference	25th August 2026
25. Review of Terms of Reference	These Terms of Reference current until the Committee term ends but may be reviewed by Council resolution at any time. Members will review and provide advice to Council on this Terms of Reference at the first meeting and then annually.