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AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 22 July 2019

Public question time will
commence shortly after 6.00pm.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN DAREBIN

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 pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council also pays respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Darebin.

Council recognises and pays tribute to the diverse culture, resilience and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities and the right to self-determination in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect.



English

This is the Agenda for the Council Meeting. For assistance with any of the agenda items, please telephone 8470 8888.

Arabic

هذا هو جدول اعمال اجتماع المجلس. للحصول على المساعدة في أي من بنود جدول الاعمال، يرجى الاتصال بالهاتف 8470 8888.

Chinese

这是市议会会议议程。如需协助了解任何议项，请致电8470 8888。

Greek

Αυτή είναι η Ημερήσια Διάταξη για τη συνεδρίαση του Δημοτικού Συμβουλίου. Για βοήθεια με οποιαδήποτε θέματα της ημερήσιας διάταξης, παρακαλείσθε να καλέσετε το 8470 8888.

Hindi

यह काउंसिल की बैठक के लिए एजेंडा है। एजेंडा के किसी भी आइटम में सहायता के लिए, कृपया 8470 8888 पर टेलीफोन करें।

Italian

Questo è l'ordine del giorno della riunione del Comune. Per assistenza con qualsiasi punto all'ordine del giorno, si prega di chiamare il numero 8470 8888.

Macedonian

Ова е Дневниот ред за состанокот на Општинскиот одбор. За помош во врска со која и да било точка од дневниот ред, ве молиме телефонирајте на 8470 8888.

Nepali

यो परिषद्को बैठकको एजेन्डा हो। एजेन्डाका कुनै पनि वस्तुसम्बन्धी सहायताका लागि कृपया 8470 8888 मा कल गर्नुहोस्।

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਏਜੰਡਾ ਹੈ। ਏਜੰਡੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਆਈਟਮਾਂ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 8470 8888 ਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Somali

Kani waa Ajandaha Kulanka Golaha. Caawimada mid kasta oo ka mid ah qodobada laga wada hadlay, fadlan la xiriir 8470 8888.

Spanish

Este es el Orden del día de la Reunión del Concejo. Para recibir ayuda acerca de algún tema del orden del día, llame al teléfono 8470 8888.

Urdu

یہ کاؤنسل کی میٹنگ کا ایجنڈا ہے۔ ایجنڈے کے کسی بھی حصے کے بارے میں مدد کے لیے براہ مہربانی 8470 8888 پر فون کریں۔

Vietnamese

Đây là Chương trình Nghị sự phiên họp Hội đồng Thành phố. Muốn có người trợ giúp mình về bất kỳ mục nào trong chương trình nghị sự, xin quý vị gọi điện thoại số 8470 8888.

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Agenda

1. MEMBERSHIP

Cr. Susan Rennie (Mayor) (Chairperson)

Cr. Susanne Newton (Deputy Mayor)

Cr. Steph Amir

Cr. Gaetano Greco

Cr. Tim Laurence

Cr. Kim Le Cerf

Cr. Trent McCarthy

Cr. Lina Messina

Cr. Julie Williams

2. APOLOGIES

3. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 24 June 2019 and the Special Meeting of Council held on 8 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

5. QUESTION AND SUBMISSION TIME

Members of the public can lodge questions for Council to answer or make a Comment or Submission prior to a specific item listed on the Agenda of an Ordinary Council meeting.

QUESTIONS

Members of the public can ask up to two (2) questions at an Ordinary Council meeting.

Questions submitted online will be responded to in the first instance. If you are not present at the meeting, the Chairperson will read the question and provide a response. The Chairperson may then take questions from members in the gallery.

Any question not answered at the meeting will be taken on notice and a written response will be provided to the person asking the question.

In accordance with the Darebin Governance Local Law, the Chairperson may disallow a question if it:

- is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance; or
- deals with a subject matter already answered; or
- is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an officer.

If you are unable to submit your question prior to the Ordinary Council meeting, the Chairperson may take questions from the floor.

SUBMISSIONS OR COMMENTS

Members of the public may make a comment or 2 minute submission on a matter listed on the Agenda prior to the item being debated.

A person who is unable to stay at the meeting until the Agenda item is heard, may make their comment or submission during Question Time.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION OR MAKE A COMMENT OR SUBMISSION

Members of the public who wish to ask a question, or make a comment or submission to an agenda item, at an Ordinary Council meeting are encouraged to do so in one of the following ways:

- (a) online at darebin.vic.gov.au/questionsandsubmissions by 3pm on the day of the meeting; or
- (b) by email to Q&S@darebin.vic.gov.au; by 3pm on the day of the meeting; or
- (c) in person at the Preston Customer Service Centre, 274 Gower Street, Preston; or
- (d) by mail to PO Box 91, Preston 3072; or
- (e) with a Council officer prior to a Council meeting.

Council meetings can be viewed at the Watch Council and Planning Committee meetings page.

Agenda's will be available for viewing on Council's website at the 'Meeting Agendas and Minutes' page by 5pm, up to 6 days prior to the date of the meeting. Copies are also available at Customer Service centres and libraries.

6. PETITIONS

7. URGENT BUSINESS

8. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

8.1 AGE FRIENDLY DAREBIN REVIEW

Author: Coordinator Department Transition and Assessment
Manager Aged and Disability
General Manager Community

Reviewed By: General Manager Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to Commonwealth Government planned reforms of the funding of home support services, Council commissioned the Age Friendly Darebin Review in May 2018. An Independent Panel was appointed of Dr Rhonda Galbally and Peter Allen to conduct the review.

Since the review was commenced, the Panel has:

- Prepared and issued a preliminary discussion paper;
- Conducted a first round of consultation and considered the feedback received;
- Prepared and issued a draft report with recommendations;
- Conducted a second round of consultation and considered the feedback received;
- Finalised the report and recommendations for consideration by Council.

Soon after the Independent Panel completed the text of the draft report, the Federal Government announced that planned changes to Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding would be delayed. Instead, Commonwealth block funding for CHSP services was extended until 30 June 2022.

Darebin Council has previously committed to continue providing its existing home support services while federal block funding is in place. Council will therefore certainly continue to provide its existing home support services for at least three further years, and hopefully longer. Council continues to advocate for further extension and continuation of CHSP block funding beyond 2022.

The Age Friendly Darebin review's 98 recommendations would see many new initiatives, new and improved services, increased advocacy, and changes in strategic direction for Darebin Council.

Some of the major new services and initiatives proposed are:

- An innovative new service with expert staff to assist and support older people to navigate the challenging national My Aged Care system (Navigation Support Service), combined with a new volunteer program to address social isolation (Social Inclusion Program).
- A new gardening service to assist older people to maintain their gardens or lawns, via a volunteer program or another service model, subject to a future report for consideration by Council.
- A Service Improvement Plan to make additions and improvements to existing Council aged care services to better address social isolation and promote independence and

inclusion. This would also include trialling the provision of services to people receiving Home Care Packages.

- A Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan to consider future funding and infrastructure needs for Senior Citizens Groups.
- A participatory Information Project for older people to redesign Council communications to better align with their needs and preferences.

This report to the 22 July Council meeting includes:

- The final report from the Independent Panel (**Appendix B**); and
- Council officer advice on the Independent Panel's revised recommendations (**Appendix A**).

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Thanks all participants for their contribution to the Age Friendly Darebin review, and thanks the Independent Panel for their work.
- (2) Accepts or takes other action for each of the recommendations, as set out in the final column of **Appendix A**.
- (3) Allocates the \$500,000 set aside in the 2019/20 budget for implementation of the Age Friendly Darebin recommendations as follows:
 - (a) Trial implementation of the new Social inclusion Volunteering Program and Aged Care Navigation Support Service - \$200,000
 - (b) Trial implementation of a lawn mowing and/or gardening service or volunteer program, subject to future Council decision - \$120,000
 - (c) Implement service improvement plan to address improvements and expansion of Council's existing aged care services - \$50,000
 - (d) Implement Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan - \$60,000
 - (e) Implement new grants for community groups - \$15,000
 - (f) Funding for Your Community Health Men's Shed - \$32,000
 - (g) Miscellaneous programs, informations and workshops as recommended - \$23,000.
- (4) Notes that a report on options for the lawn mowing and/or gardening service or volunteer gardening program will be considered by Council in September 2019.
- (5) Notes that Council will receive an Age Friendly Darebin implementation progress report in February 2020, and annual implementation reports from August 2020.
- (6) Reaffirms commitment to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities, noting that the WHO requirements for a cycle of planning, implementation, progress evaluation and continual improvement will be met by the Age Friendly Darebin implementation and governance.
- (7) Continues to advocate to other levels of government for improvements to systems, resourcing and infrastructure that support equity, wellbeing and quality of life outcomes for older people, including the extension of block funding for Commonwealth Home Support Program services beyond June 2022.

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

Age Friendly Darebin Review Process to date

In May 2018 Council commissioned the Age Friendly Darebin Review, as a result of forthcoming federal government reforms to Commonwealth Home Support Program funding.

Dr Rhonda Galbally AC and Peter Allen were appointed as the Independent Panel to conduct the review. They were supported by staff and research assistance.

The Panel released a discussion paper *Towards an Age Friendly Darebin: Opportunities, Constraints and Opportunities* in October 2018. A consultation period (the first round of consultation) took place over October – December 2018. This consultation included meetings with key stakeholder groups including senior citizens groups, Aboriginal community service agencies and Darebin community groups. A range of information sessions, workshops and focus groups also took place. A public hearing was held where anyone who wished to address the panel could do so.

Over 1,100 people participated in the first round consultation, with 773 people providing feedback in some form.

The Panel considered the results from the first round of consultation, as well as research. In April 2019 they released a draft report including 98 recommendations, *Towards an Age Friendly Darebin*. The text of this was finalised in late March and, following layout and printing, was published and released on 11 April 2019.

In the meantime, the Federal Government announced on 2 April 2019 that the Commonwealth Home Support Program funding would be extended until 30 June 2022. This was positive news and reflected Council's advocacy for an extension to block funding.

Due to Council's previous resolutions on this topic, this meant that Council would certainly continue to provide Commonwealth Home Support Program services until 30 June 2022. An explanatory note was added to the draft report to explain this and Council wrote to all people using Council aged care services to advise them of this positive news.

The Independent Panel conducted a second round of consultation from 11 April – 15 May 2019, inviting submissions on the draft report. The Panel received 22 submissions from individuals and community groups that provided feedback on the draft report.

The Panel has now completed the final report. A number of recommendations have been amended in response to feedback; these amended recommendations are marked up in **Appendix A**.

Council officers have been considering the Panel's recommendations to prepare advice to Council and develop an implementation plan. Staff considered the recommendations in three themes for ease of discussion:

- Theme 1: Existing Aged Care services, improvements and modifications to existing aged services and some new services
- Theme 2: Community services and programs including library, digital strategy, neighbourhood houses, community safety
- Theme 3: Public realm, open space, housing, accessibility, transport, parking.

The report contains 98 recommendations that have a broad range of intended outcomes.

The potential implications for organisational investment and resource commitments could be significant, therefore it has become very important that officer's recommendations to Council prioritise implementation activities and efforts within the constraints of available resources.

To support the implementation, Council has allocated \$500,000 in its budget for 2019/20 financial year. This amount is non recurrent and had been taken into account in the year one (2019/20) implementation plan.

Of the 98 recommendations in the review, Council staff are recommending:

- Fully accepting: 73 recommendations;
- Further investigating 21 recommendations, in many cases by running a pilot or a trial;
- Not accepting 3 recommendations, and deferring 1 recommendation.

System context

The original aged care system context for the Age Friendly Darebin Review in 2018 was significantly changed by the federal budget announcement in April 2019 of extension of block funding for CHSP services until at least 2022.

Council's Assessment services, however, may still be facing significant changes due to Commonwealth reform. The most recent advice from the Commonwealth is that they intend that a new unified national assessment service will be in place in July 2020. There are still many unknowns as to what may happen in practice and what it means for Council's assessment service and for local residents accessing the My Aged Care system.

Previous Council Resolution

At its meeting held on 8 April 2019, Council resolved:

'That Council:

- (1) *Notes previous resolutions of Council to:*

 - a) *Advocate for the federal government to extend block funding of Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services beyond June 2020;*
 - b) *Continue to provide existing Council-run aged care services while Commonwealth block funding is in place;*
 - c) *Advocate for the state government to exempt local council CHSP services from National Competition Policy; and*
 - d) *Commission the Age Friendly Darebin to review Darebin's services to older people, as a result of the federal government intention to remove block funding for Commonwealth Home Support Program services.*

- (2) *Welcomes the Commonwealth Government's 2 April 2019 budget commitment to extend CHSP block funding until 30 June 2022*
- (3) *Notes that the ALP's national platform refers to an extension of CHSP funding beyond 2020 although the length of extension is not specified*
- (4) *Notes that the draft Age Friendly Darebin report will be released during April 2019 and will include recommendations about Council's future aged care services, and that Council will receive the final report in June or July 2019.*
- (5) *Reaffirms its commitment to continue CHSP-funded services while CHSP block funding is in place.*

- (6) *Writes to the State Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Robin Scott, MP for Preston, seeking an exemption for local Council-run CHSP services from the National Competition Policy so that it can continue to provide quality subsidised home care packages to residents should bulk funding cease in the future.'*

At its meeting held on 7 November 2018, Council resolved (in two parts):

'That Council:

- (1) *Notes the legal advice provided as a confidential attachment.*
- (2) *Releases the legal advice to the public.'*

'That Council

- (3) *Immediately writes to Premier, Opposition Leader, Leaders of Minor Parties and Cross benchers in the State Parliament, local Federal and state members of parliament seeking a commitment to modify the application of The National Competition Policy in Victoria, to formally exempt Council run Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Services from the requirement to comply with National Competition Policy.*
- (4) *Immediately writes to all Victorian Mayors and requesting that they join Darebin Council in making firm representation to the above federal and state members of parliament including their respective local members seeking a commitment to modify the application of The National Competition Policy in Victoria, to formally exempt Council run Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Services from the requirement to comply with National Competition Policy.*
- (5) *Writes to other Councils Inviting them to establish a task force to lobby relevant government ministers and parliamentarian to seek a commitment to modify the application of The National Competition Policy in Victoria, to formally exempt Council run Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Services from the requirement to comply with National Competition Policy.*
- (6) *Immediately informs state and local media outlets of the actions Council will take as a result of this motion.*
- (7) *If indicated by the findings of the current Aged friendly Darebin review, Council commits to conducting a Public Interest test process at the appropriate time.'*

At its meeting held on 3 September 2018, Council resolved:

'That Council:

- (1) *Acknowledges that if the Commonwealth ceases block funding for aged care services as currently planned, this will inevitably affect how Council will provide services to older people.*
- (2) *Notes that because of the Commonwealth's plan to cease block funding, Council has commissioned an independent 'Creating an Age Friendly Darebin' review for the express purpose of ensuring our older people continue to receive quality services they need.*
- (3) *Calls on the federal government to extend block funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Program to provide certainty for community and staff, and writes to relevant ministers, shadow ministers and members of parliament requesting that a moratorium be put in place till such time the government conducts a comprehensive review of block funding to Councils.*
- (4) *Encourages community members to participate in the independent panel review commissioned by Council, to help plan our services in the longer term.*

- (5) *Notes that this Council commits to continue its annual \$6 million investment into the longer term in facilities, programs and services promoting the health and wellbeing of older people.*
- (6) *Notes that the independent review terms of reference will investigate expansion of Council's services including the potential for Darebin Council to provide home care packages.*
- (7) *Continues to provide commonwealth home support program services while in receipt of any block funding from the Commonwealth Government.'*

At its meeting held on 21 May 2018, Council resolved:

'That Council:

- (1) *Establish the Review Panel on Creating an Age Friendly Darebin, with terms of reference as attached as Appendix B.*
- (2) *Appoint Rhonda Galbally AO and Peter Allen as members of the Review Panel.*
- (3) *Add a point 10 to the principles of the Terms of Reference to read "Is committed to open and transparent decision making processes and will therefore bring any recommendations emanating from the review process back to an open Council meeting for a decision by Councillors.'*

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

The Age Friendly Darebin Review engaged with the community through two periods of consultation. Over 1,100 community members and stakeholders engaged with the first consultation period through 50 different events and activities.

Council also received a petition organised by community members, in support of ongoing delivery of CHSP services by Darebin Council, including over 1,800 signatures.

In the second round of consultation, the Panel received 22 submissions from individuals and community groups that provided feedback on the draft report. For further details, see the Consultation report in Towards an Age Friendly Darebin Final Report.

Communications

A communication plan was developed to promote participation in the process, and to update stakeholders on progress of the Age Friendly Darebin review. Communication activities to inform community and stakeholders are planned for Council's resolution following this meeting. The extension of block funding for CHSP services until June 2022, announced in the federal budget in April, was incorporated into the communications plan because of its obvious implications for some of the outcomes and implementation of the Review. The Panel adjusted several recommendations in their final report as a result.

The Age Friendly Darebin implementation plan will include a number of new initiatives that, if adopted by Council, will be promoted as Age Friendly flagship projects. These present an opportunity to generate and reinforce positive community attitudes about ageing and Council's role in supporting older residents. They also provide Council with opportunities to demonstrate, in positive and practical ways, how it has listened and responded to community feedback.

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 2 - Opportunities to live well

The purpose of the Age Friendly Darebin review was to explore how Council *can best create an Age Friendly Darebin where older people are valued, supported and empowered to live well*. Research and consultation activities as well as the recommendations, have been guided by that purpose. The evaluation of pilots and activities in the implementation plan will provide data to inform future activities that also contribute towards this goal.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

A number of the recommendations have indirect implications for environmental sustainability. For example, discussions around improved access to public transport for older people, whilst balancing use of private cars and access to parking, have been guided by environmental sustainability principles. Independent Panel members met with members of Council's environment and sustainable transport team.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

Equity, inclusion and wellbeing for Darebin's older people was one of the main drivers for the Age Friendly Darebin Review with many specific recommendations aimed at reducing disadvantage for older people.

The second round of consultation resulted in modifications to the original recommendations based on cultural considerations. These included feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders suggesting more emphasis on culturally appropriate system navigation assistance, and consideration of a culturally appropriate meeting space and respite options. There was strong representation from CALD seniors groups and individuals in both rounds of the consultation.

Cultural Considerations

There are specific recommendations in the Final Report that look at older people's active contribution to and inclusion in Darebin's diverse cultural life. The implementation plan explores opportunities to enhance existing activities and develop greater synergies internally that will ultimately improve cultural outcomes for older people.

Economic Development Considerations

The review recommendations explore several ways to increase participation of older residents in the community and this would potentially have a positive economic impact. The Independent Panel met with members of the economic development team.

Financial and Resource Implications

The adopted 2019/20 budget includes a one-off allocation of \$500,000 for the implementation of Age Friendly Darebin recommendations during this financial year.

This report recommends allocating the implementation funds for 2019/20 as follows:

<i>Initiative for 2019/20</i>	<i>Allocation</i>
Trial implementation of the new Social inclusion Volunteering Program and Aged Care Navigation Support Service	\$200,000
Trial implementation of a lawn mowing and/or gardening service or volunteer program, subject to future Council decision	\$120,000
Implement service improvement plan to address improvements and expansion of Council's existing aged care services	\$50,000
Implement Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan	\$60,000
Implement new grants for community groups	\$15,000
Funding for Your Community Health Men's Shed	\$32,000
Miscellaneous programs, informations and workshops as recommended	\$23,000
Total	\$500,000

Future funding after 2019/20 of new services and initiatives arising from the Age Friendly Darebin Review will be subject to Council's annual budget processes.

Legal and Risk Implications

A small number of recommendations potentially have legal issues. Many of the recommendations have risks that need to be managed and controlled including proposals for a volunteer program and a gardening service.

There are risk considerations for all new trials including a more flexible approach to delivery of existing services.

DISCUSSION

Overview

The Panel's draft report contained 98 recommendations and was released for consultation from 10 April to 15 May 2019.

The Panel's final report has been completed for presentation to Council for this meeting on 22 July 2019. The final report also contains 98 recommendations, some of them amended from the draft report.

Implementation and funding

The Age Friendly Darebin report recommends a range of new service initiatives, many with financial implications. There are also a range of recommendations about advocacy or new directions that require no direct additional resources.

Staff advice about each of the Independent Panel's recommendations is attached at **Appendix A**.

Key new services and initiatives arising from the recommendations include:

- An innovative new service with expert staff to assist and support older people to navigate the challenging national My Aged Care system (Navigation Support Service),

combined with a new volunteer program to address social isolation (Social Inclusion Program).

- A new gardening service to assist older people to maintain their gardens or lawns, via a volunteer program or another service model, subject to a future report for consideration by Council.
- A Service Improvement Plan to make additions and improvements to existing Council aged care services to better address social isolation and promote independence and inclusion. This would also include trialling the provision of services to people receiving Home Care Packages.
- A Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan to consider future funding and facility needs for Senior Citizens Groups.
- A participatory Information Project for older people to redesign Council communications to better align with their needs and preferences.
- An expansion of existing community grants program.
- Various programs and activities to improve older people's health and wellbeing.
- Advocacy around accessibility, transport and housing and their critical role in older people's wellbeing and social inclusion.
- Many other initiatives and recommendations.

As discussed in the Finance section above, in the first year, 2019/20, the \$500,000 one off allocation would fund the implementation and trial programs of new service initiatives. New infrastructure would be subject to future budget processes.

Other comments

- The Age Friendly Darebin Review offers an opportunity for Darebin City Council to reorient itself internally and externally toward a more age friendly, liveable, connected city. Internally, this means more integrated, inclusive and transformational approaches to planning, communications and operations. Externally this means that Darebin's older people are more visible and visibly included, experience improved quality of life and that this in turn makes Darebin a better place for everyone.
- In considering the many recommendations, consideration was given to:
 - feedback from the community
 - interrelationships/ dependencies between projects and aspects of projects;
 - a range of uncertainties about implementation and future context.
- All Council departments implicated in the recommendations, have significant business as usual outputs and responsibilities. Appropriate resourcing and realistic timeframes to support the achievement of endorsed, prioritised projects are important considerations.
- Therefore, specific costing and implementation planning has been undertaken primarily for the first year, 2019/20. Second year implementation will be substantially determined by the results of year 1, and by the availability of funds.
- Staff recommend at least a five year view, as per World Health Organisation Age Friendly City continuous improvement cycle.

Furthermore, the Age Friendly Darebin Review now provides a vehicle to renew Darebin's Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy which expires in 2021. A revised Strategy will be brought to Council in 2020.

Governance and Reporting

An overall Age Friendly Darebin governance structure is needed to maximise outcomes of the implementation plan and achieve an integrated, whole of council approach. It will also enable well-informed reporting to council and community and integrated, evidence-based planning.

Staff recommend that council follow up its current in-principle association with the WHO Age Friendly Cities framework by committing fully to application for membership into the WHO Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities.

The Age Friendly Darebin work already undertaken provides a solid foundation and would place Council at the 1-2 year mark of the five year Age Friendly Cities implementation framework. Membership to the Network reflects cities' commitment to work collaboratively with older people, assess and monitor age-friendliness and create accessible spaces and opportunities for social inclusion. Membership is also a commitment to share age friendly initiatives as demonstration projects with other cities and communities.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Staff have provided advice on every recommendation of the Independent Panel. Council could accept staff advice, or alternatively make a different determination for some or all of the recommendations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

- 22 July 2019: Council meeting to consider final report and officer advice, and adopt implementation plan
- Late July 2019: implementation commences.
- February 2020: Interim progress report to Council to report against the Implementation Plan. This report will include a Service Improvement Plan addressing existing Council services.
- August 2020: Annual implementation report to Council.

Communication

Council's decision on the recommendations will be publicised to the community, clients and to participants in recent consultations via the usual multiple channels and accessible formats.

As each new service or improvement to service is trialled or implemented, there will be a specific communications plan for each service.

Timeline

Key decision-making timelines are above.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- WHO Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities

Attachments

- Age Friendly Darebin Final Recommendations and Officer Advice (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)

- Towards An Age Friendly Darebin, Final Report July 2019 (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
1	Assessment/ My Aged Care	While the Australian Government continues to provide block funding for CHSP services to DCC, and until the full extent of new arrangements for Assessment Services is made clear, DCC should continue to provide Regional Assessment Services (RAS)	Currently, the Commonwealth contracts the Regional Assessment Service to the Victorian government, and the State Government sub-contracts to local councils. Council has already resolved to continue providing assessment services while block funding continues. However, the federal government's current advice is that it will proceed to create a new unified national assessment service, effective July 2020. A tender is likely to be released in coming months. Council has been exploring possibilities for tendering and is also encouraging the Victorian government to continue its role.	Accept
2	My Aged Care	Until, and possibly beyond, the time when the full extent of new arrangements under the Australian Government reforms are made clear, DCC should gather intelligence and case studies highlighting both strengths and weakness of existing practice to inform baseline performance requirements of the new arrangements.	We can collect data from our own clients about people's experiences of Council's services and of My Aged Care. We can also collect feedback from the broader community about their experiences of My Aged Care, and other service providers. This data may inform our own service improvement and Council advocacy efforts.	Accept
3	My Aged Care	DCC monitors: (a) demand and supply trends for MAC across the broader catchment area than just the Darebin LGA; (b) the impact of the functional separation ('Chinese walls') between assessment and provision of CHSP; and (b) the impact of MAC processes on clients, for example, time from referral to response by a provider, or if clients are left without a response.	My Aged Care does not currently release data referred to in recommendation 3(a). More systematic collection of feedback about My Aged Care would assist Council advocacy.	3(a) Accept, subject to My Aged Care providing data 3(b) Accept

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4	CALD community	DCC works closely with CALD communities, seniors' groups and providers to build their capacity to effectively support older people from their communities	Staff will develop a Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan that will, among other things, plan to build the capacity of CALD community groups. This will be reported on in the formal progress reporting to Council of progress in implementing the Age Friendly Darebin recommendations. The first implementation report to Council will be in February 2020.	Accept.
5	Performance targets re CALD in programs	DCC sets performance targets for the number of people from specific CALD communities participating in programs, including My Aged Care, for older people.	The first Age Friendly Darebin implementation report will be in February 2020 and will include performance targets for Council programs for older people including Aged and Disability programs, and Recreation & Libraries. As My Aged Care does not release relevant statistics allowing us to track CALD participation in My Aged Care, Council could seek to understand CALD participation in My Aged Care through the Darebin Community Survey or through additional Council-run surveys.	Accept, noting that data for My Aged Care may not be available.
6	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MAC participation	<i>DCC conduct targeted work aimed at improving the current rates at which eligible indigenous residents are engaged in assessment and connected to recommended aged care services. This should include targeted and culturally appropriate information, navigation and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and older people to assist them access the aged care services that are available to them. Alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services, mainstream services must be encouraged to provide culturally informed services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents</i>	The future of Council's assessment service is uncertain after 30 June 2020, due to planned Federal Government changes. However, if the proposed new Darebin navigation and social inclusion service is approved, this could include targeted promotion and engagement with the Aboriginal community with the goal of seeking to increase the rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait community members accessing the My Aged Care system.	Accept.

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7	Advocacy to MAC re Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<i>In consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</i> , DCC identifies both good and bad practice in responding to the needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communicate this to the Australian Government to improve practice guidelines for My Aged Care, specifically in delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Darebin	This would support and add to Council's advocacy.	Accept.
8	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MAC participation	DCC conducts targeted work aimed at improving the current rates at which eligible Indigenous residents are engaged in assessment and connected to recommended aged care services. <i>DCC should consider providing support, such as respite trips or retreats, for community elders who are carers, while providing support for the people they care for.</i>	This is a new recommendation based on the Panel's meeting with Elders after the initial draft report. Council could work towards providing respite retreats for elders who are carers in 2020/21.	Accept
9 <i>(new)</i>	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MAC participation</i>	<i>Given that Darebin is a hub for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it is important there is a dedicated meeting space within the municipality. It is recommended that Council, in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, investigates creating such a space that services could provide outreach to.</i>	This is a new recommendation based on the Panel's meeting with Elders after the initial draft report. This would be a long term goal potentially requiring substantial investment and/or reallocation of existing spaces and would need to be investigated. Advice will come back to Council in 2020.	Investigate further
(formerly 9 now obsolete)	Continue Services while Block funded	While the Australian Government continues to provide DCC with the block grant for CHSP, DCC continues to deliver CHSP services		--

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10	Continuous improvement of services	DCC commits to continual improvement of service effectiveness and impact including maximising independence, socialisation and inclusion, through consultation and co-design with older people	A Service Improvement Plan (a living document) will be prepared to plan improvements to existing aged care services with particular reference to maximising independence and social inclusion. The Plan will be presented to Councillors in February 2020, and will include co-design of at least one service initiative, to be initially implemented and assessed via a trial. Note: consideration of improvements and additions to the meals service will take place in coming months, with a Councillor briefing and potentially a Council report later in 2019.	Accept.
11	Client skill building	DCC focuses domestic assistance on building the older person's confidence and capability to perform everyday tasks, with workers undertaking tasks that are beyond the capacity of clients.	This will form part of the Service Improvement Plan, to be presented to Councillors in February 2020.	Accept.
12	Personal Care on Weekends	DCC considers providing personal support services on weekends.	This will form part of the Service Improvement Plan, to be presented to Councillors in February 2020.	Accept

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13	Phase out Respite Services	DCC closely monitors demand for respite with a view to phasing out delivery of respite funded through the CHSP while either (i) offering respite through HCPs (option 2); or (ii) confirming that other providers are available to respond in a quality and timely way	<p>Darebin's flexible respite service provides a daytime support service for carers of clients needing assisting support. It also provides one-on-one structured activities to give clients a social experience. Usually this is for maximum 4 hours per fortnight.</p> <p>Client numbers for this service at Darebin have reduced; nonetheless in 2017/18 we had 138 clients for this service.</p> <p>Given that block funding is continuing until at least 2022, winding up this service would be inconsistent with the previous Council resolution to continue CHSP services while block funding is in place.</p>	Not accept. Continue to monitor demand for respite services and regularly review.
14	Redesign Meals	DCC's meals service is re-designed to: a. further emphasise assisting older residents to prepare their own meals and to share meals; b. provide meals that better match the dietary and cultural preferences of residents; c. consider the addition of alternative providers, including the recent growth of home delivery services from a wide range of culturally appropriate local food retailers; and d. increase the numbers of residents attending meals outside their home, possibly with expanded use of volunteers supplied by the proposed volunteer service.	<p>Currently, Council's meals service delivers meals Monday - Friday. Weekend meals are delivered in advance. In 2017/18 there were 412 clients across the year, and there were 30,818 meals provided.</p> <p>A new service model would <u>retain</u> the elements of the current model for those people who depend on it. But Council can redesign other aspects to 'add value' and better meet currently unmet needs - such as social inclusion, monitoring, support and skill building.</p> <p>Options for additions and improvements to the meals service will be developed for consideration by Council in coming months.</p>	Accept

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15	Social support	DCC promotes Yanada House as an outstanding and unique social support program for older people with dementia and tries to build up numbers to ensure viability. Failing this, DCC ascertains the interest of other providers of social support groups in establishing a dementia group for the Yanada House clients	Yanada House provides group-based activities. Almost all clients of this service have dementia and would probably transfer to Home Care Packages in time. There are currently 77 clients of Yanada House. Yanada House services are highly valued by clients and their families and could potentially be part of a trial of Darebin Council offering services to Home Care Package recipients.	Accept, as part of a marketing plan to be developed for all Darebin Aged Care Services.
16	Community Transport	DCC focuses on ensuring community bus availability is more fully utilised by: a. building up demand; b. increasing flexibility in routes; c. exploring the possibility of using newly available digital network tools to enhance door to door responsiveness and availability. and d. encouraging the use of community transport by older people living in boarding and rooming houses, public housing and from other vulnerable groups, and in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin, to broaden the group of older people who know of its availability and how to access it.	This will be part of the Service Improvement Plan to be developed. The changes can include social inclusion components .	Accept.
17	Home Maintenance	In addition to its own provision of home maintenance services, DCC investigates establishing a panel of local trades people who would be willing to undertake more extensive work than DCC provides.	This would have community benefit, but there are risk and compliance issues still to be resolved. This proposal will be further investigated and reported back to Councillors.	Investigate further.

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18	Gardening	DCC provides a gardening service which includes mowing plus a focus on DCC staff working alongside older people to garden	<p>A gardening service would assist people to live well in their homes; it would likely be extremely popular and, depending on the service model, would therefore potentially require very significant resources. There are different options that could be considered ranging from a professional gardening or mowing service, to a volunteer program, to a program to connect neighbours to help each other.</p> <p>An investigation of the options will be considered at a Council meeting in coming months. In the meantime, it is proposed that money be put aside in order to implement a new service or trial a new service during 2019/20.</p> <p>Note: there is currently some very limited gardening (eg pruning back of overhanging branches) done occasionally as part of the existing Darebin home maintenance service.</p>	Consider options for a lawn mowing and gardening service at a Council meeting later in 2019.
19	Nature Strip Mowing	DCC provides nature strip mowing and a trimming service for overhanging trees and bushes as these can be risk hazards for older people walking and wheeling on footpaths.	See comments for recommendation 18 above.	Consider options for a lawn mowing and gardening service at a Council meeting later in 2019.

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20	Home Care Packages	<p>While the block funding continues from the Australian Government for CHSP, DCC positively investigates the feasibility of providing HCP Levels 1-4 by DCC developing a detailed business case and operating model for a HCP service. Reputational risk associated with DCC applying high client fees and service costs should be explicitly addressed in the business case. <i>DCC to continue CHSP and consider the feasibility of expansion into the delivery of HCP services to enhance continuity of care of clients.</i></p>	<p>Darebin does not currently usually provide services to people with Home Care Packages. Staff are currently exploring a trial of Council providing services to clients in Darebin who have home care packages, in partnership with a not-for-profit home care package provider.</p> <p>A trial could commence during 2019/20, and could also collect data on client experiences of transitioning from CHSP to packages. This could also inform the proposed navigation support and social inclusion service.</p>	<p>Investigate trial to start in 2019/20 of providing services to Darebin residents with home care packages.</p>

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21	Social Inclusion Services	If block funding by the Australian Government for CHSP is discontinued, DCC discontinues CHSP service delivery, does not provide Home Care Packages and implements Option 4, including supporting current clients through their transition to an alternative provider. <i>DCC to pilot a social inclusion program while addressing older people's navigation and utilisation of Aged Care system-related risks.</i>	<p>It is proposed that this program be part of a new Social Inclusion & Aged Care Navigation Support Service. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer program, providing social visiting • Professional advice and assistance on navigating My Aged Care and systems supporting older people, eg home care packages. <p>Proposed components to be funded in 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of volunteer program (policy development, staffing coordination, volunteer recruitment) • Program of coordinated social visits by trained volunteers • Navigation service, staffed by trained staff with expertise in My Aged Care and knowledge and understanding of local support services. <p>The service could start on a relatively small scale in 2019/20 with a pilot program, and if Council wishes to continue, expand in 2020/21.</p>	Accept
22	Social Inclusion Services	If the Commonwealth Government ceases funding DCC with a block grant for the delivery of CHSP, DCC to commence a trial of Social Inclusion Service when resource availability permits, by redirecting its own source revenue; and redeveloping roles and responsibilities to utilise Assessment officers and community support workers discontinuing delivery of Regional Assessment Services; and providing new roles for assessment officers and home support workers in delivering a monitoring and social inclusion service.	See comments for recommendation 21 above.	Accept, with a trial to commence in 2019/20.

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23	Volunteer Service	DCC provides a volunteer service to support the social inclusion service with more intense engagement where needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the volunteers would not replace paid workers, rather social inclusion workers call in volunteers as needed to provide more intense and informal contact; the volunteer service would include older people as volunteers for isolated older people. 	See comments for recommendation 21 above.	Accept, with a trial to commence in 2019/20.
24	Thin Market services	Alongside the Social Inclusion Service, DCC continues to provide its own directly funded services where there is a risk that vulnerable CHSP clients may not be able to access necessary services for ageing in place due to 'service holes' or 'thin markets' for example: delivered meals and home maintenance (including gardening)	Council has already resolved to continue providing all current CHSP services while federal government block funding is in place.	Accept, as per previous resolution
25	Landlord Concessions	DCC examines schemes that give private landlords rate concessions for charging moderate rents to low income older people.	Legal advice has been obtained which suggests that this may be legally possible in some circumstances. This will require further investigation.	Investigate further.
26	Expand Social Housing	DCC considers purchase of additional land or alternative use of its own land to partner with potential social housing providers or with the Office of Housing to expand the volume of fully accessible public and community housing stock to be offered to older people who are homeless and/or older people living in Supported Residential Services (SRS) or rooming houses.	Council already has a project to commission affordable housing at Town Hall Avenue, and also to identify other sites for affordable or social housing. Council could choose to change its policy so that potential new affordable housing developments could actively include older people, rather than focusing on addressing disadvantage generally. This would be a change in approach. It will be investigated as part of the development of an Affordable Housing Statement, which will then be presented to a Council meeting for consideration.	Consider as part of the development of an Affordable Housing Position Statement, to be developed in 2019/20.

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27	Advocacy Private Dwelling Access	DCC renews its efforts to advocate hard for a minimum regulation for private dwelling accessibility so that there is more accessible rental stock for frail older people	Council could advocate for minimum accessibility regulations to be triggered when a dwelling is renovated. It would be likely that long-term advocacy to the State Government may be required.	Accept
28	Planning Advocacy	DCC updates its approach to access in its planning requirements by: a. reviewing existing tools/levers in the planning scheme that could be used to encourage/require accessible features in housing; b. developing additional tools and resources to support developers; and c. implementing liveable housing guidelines similar to Banyule City Council.	Council staff are currently developing a Darebin Accessible Housing Background Paper which will consider guidelines for mandating and/or encouraging accessible features in new housing. The Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board has been consulted at its June 2019 meeting. The development of the Housing Strategy should also take account of this recommendation.	Accept

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29	Policy and Advocacy affordability and access	DCC adopts a policy position and advocacy commitments similar to the City of Whittlesea: • “That every person has a right to affordable, adequate and appropriate housing to enable their participation and sense of belonging in community life.” • Commitment 1: State-wide planning measures should be adopted that mandate and incentivise Social and Affordable Housing (Victorian Government). • Commitment 2: All new social housing dwellings should be required to comply with the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines Housing (Victorian Government). • Commitment 3: Take action to break the cycle of homelessness by adequately investing in the housing and homelessness sector to assist people across all life-stages (Victorian and Australian Government). • Commitment 4: The National Rental Affordability Scheme should be reinstated (Australian Government).	This will be incorporated into the affordable housing position statement which will be developed, for consideration at a Council meeting in 2019/20.	Accept, with a Affordable Housing Position Statement to be developed for consideration by Council.
30	Mobility equipment loans	DCC establishes a Mobility Equipment Loans Scheme (similar to a Toy Library), in partnership with a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) expert in disability equipment.	Need further investigation of the demand and need in Darebin for this service. There are existing local equipment options locally available through Austin and Northern Health, plus equipment loan schemes available outside Darebin (eg Travellers Aid, Yooralla). A mobility equipment loans scheme would be a significant new Council run service. Council could instead promote existing services and monitor service gaps.	Investigate further.

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31	Refurbish mobility equipment /volunteers	DCC examines the feasibility of donated and recovered mobility equipment being restored by using a volunteer program established with a Men's Shed, also including older people.	This can be investigated as part of the investigation of a mobility equipment loans scheme (recommendation 30).	Investigate further.
32	Home Modification social enterprise	DCC examines the opportunity for facilitation of a start-up home modification social enterprise, connected to a Men's Shed and/or TAFE and supported by local businesses in a community business partnership.	Further investigation is required and it will be considered in conjunction with recommendation no. 17 (Panel of Trades). This would likely be considered for implementation in year 2, 2020/21.	Accept.
33	Hoarding/ Squalor	DCC considers the extent of services for people living in squalor, particularly considering older people living in rentals and boarding and rooming houses, as well as home-owners, and develops an appropriate response with existing providers.	There is existing work being undertaken by an internal Council working group that addresses this recommendation in part. Referral pathways and resident support would also be enhanced by establishment of the recommended Social Inclusion and Aged Care Navigation Support Service.	Accept
34	Responses to extreme weather	DCC adds to its monitoring of CHSP clients during heatwaves by also monitoring those at risk on extreme cold days, especially focusing on homeless older people.	Darebin currently monitors Council's CHSP clients at risk on hot days. This will be extended to include cold weather responses. Extending monitoring to people who are <u>not</u> clients could potentially be done through the proposed new social inclusion and navigation service support service.	Investigate through a trial.

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35	Safe from Crime	DCC formalises a program to collaborate with local police to improve older peoples' awareness of common at-home risks.	DCC already has formal points of collaboration and existing relationships with police and other stakeholders, including the Community Safety Reference Group. Council should work to increase the focus on older people to help them feel safer at home and more connected in their neighbourhoods. This will be reported on in the regular Age Friendly Darebin implementation reports.	Accept
36	Neighbourhood Watch	DCC partners with Victoria Police to reinvigorate Neighbourhood Watch to have a particular focus on older people	<p>Staff advice is that Neighbourhood Watch is not an effective approach for Council . Recommendation 35 should instead address this issue.</p> <p>Darebin Council currently engages in community development in neighbourhoods where community safety concerns are prevalent among older people. This is to build greater community connections across generations, either directly or by supporting other organisations.</p> <p>A community development framework is more appropriate, rather than a Neighbourhood Watch model. This can include older people in activities that make people feel safer – through building community connections. Safety programs should be tailored to the issues perceived in the neighbourhood and seek inclusion not exclusion.</p>	Not accept, however pursue this outcome through Recommendation 35.

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37	Home Share/Co-housing	DCC facilitates the establishment of a Darebin Home Share and co-housing program in partnership with an NGO with established home share systems and processes	<p>Home Share Pilot schemes are occurring in Sydney (two Councils and an NGO) and in Adelaide (a research project matching older persons into share accommodation). City of Port Phillip were investigating with Launch Housing - as a solution to people at risk of homelessness, however the model did not proceed.</p> <p>Staff suggest that Home Share be investigated further in 2020 in the light of results of the pilot schemes.</p> <p>Co-Housing would be a major new project with very significant challenges - for instance of new developments, where a number of homes have a mix of private space with shared communal amenities.</p>	Investigate Home Share further
38	Home Share/ Co-housing	DCC markets and promotes Home Share and co-housing to older people via social inclusion workers and community organisations.	See Recommendation 37.	Investigate Home Share further
39	Home Phone Engagement	DCC explores establishing a Home Phone Engagement Scheme with a NGO partner for social engagement on the phone for isolated and/or housebound residents.	Investigate and pilot volunteer program as part of a proposed trial of a Social Inclusion and Aged Care Navigation Support Service and volunteer program.	Accept
40	Walking and Wheeling groups	DCC develops a walking (and wheeling) group program to facilitate groups of older people, including older people in public housing, boarding and rooming houses as well as those using walking frames and wheelchairs	This will be informed by the recommended group/club mapping exercise in Recommendation 70. it could encompass joined up walking networks in partnership with Neighbourhood Houses, Community Health services etc.	Accept.

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41	Older People Open space audit	DCC establishes the Older Peoples' Open Space Audit Advisory Team made up of older volunteers who would be willing to participate in regular audits with DCC staff to consider footpaths, seating, toilets, bus and tram shelters and lighting.	<p>This would be implemented as a panel of older people trained in place audits, safety and accessibility requirements. This would provide a pool of residents to draw from, with the pool to be recruited to intermittently.</p> <p>The panel of people could contribute to select projects each year so as to fulfil the 'age lens' on funded projects (or in specific locations). The timing of the involvement of the audit team within each project will need to be managed so as to enable expectations (of the audit team) to be achievable. Funds and capacity would need to be budgeted for 2020/21 so that place-based audit recommendations could be implemented.</p>	Accept
42	Walking redefined and embedded in policy	DCC adds the word 'wheeling' and the disability symbol into all of its walking policies, strategies and projects in order to normalise 'walking' with a walking frame, in a wheelchair or on a mobility scooter, and ensure that people who use mobility equipment are included in walking strategies.	Walking and wheeling' can be inserted into relevant strategies, and where appropriate mobility graphics can also inserted into design.	Accept

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43	Footpaths PPN	DCC introduces an additional footpath category into the Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) that addresses access for older people. This additional category should: a. be based on the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access activity and recreation centres, health and community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping; b. have a higher inspection frequency than the current 'Other' category (i.e. 12 months); c. provide a mechanism to allocate targeted funding to address priority renewals (i.e. additional to the footpath renewal budget); and d. identify footpaths and roads to be prioritised for renewal in order to construct appropriate ramps across curbs and gutters (i.e. pram crossings)	<p>The Darebin Principal Pedestrian Network is based on weighted heat mapping of journeys between homes, employment origins and 14 key destinations, including public transport stops, shopping areas, community and health facilities and parks and open space. Council investment is based on a number of criteria, including likely pedestrian volumes and safety issues, to deliver the level of service identified in the Walking Strategy. The level of service for older adults will generally be improved through the investment program, which will support access for all age groups, but especially older and younger pedestrians as vulnerable users.</p> <p>Based on census data, the locations of highest concentrations of older adults in Darebin do mostly have PPN routes accessing them. However they might not provide the fine grained network that would be ideal, and in a few cases they are not on PPN routes. A possibility might be a new Aged Friendly walking infrastructure funding stream, similar to the existing schools focused stream.</p>	Investigate future Age Friendly infrastructure funding scheme for the Principal Pedestrian Network, subject to budget allocation in 2020/21.
44	Toilet location (planning)	DCC ensures that the location of new toilet facilities (which should all be fully accessible to people in wheelchairs) is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access activity and recreation centres, health and community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping. In particular, the location of new toilets should be integrated with the proposed new Older Person category of PPN discussed above.	For consideration as part of open space planning and other planning involving consideration of new toilet facilities.	Accept

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45	Toilet (operations)	DCC ensures that public toilets, including accessible toilets be open, at a minimum, for use during daytime.	Some toilets within sports grounds that are attached to sports facilities are closed during daylight hours and are open only when sports clubs are in attendance. To open them daily will have budget implications including opening/closing and cleaning. Opening these toilets on a 7-day per week basis would cost approximately \$100K p.a.	Consider as part of budget process for 2020/21.
46	Pedestrians (planning)	DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings be well signed, clearly marked, plentiful and well positioned to prevent older people from taking risks crossing roads, most particularly in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin.	Two new crossings are scheduled for 19/20 in line with existing strategies. These factors are already taken into account through existing transport planning and engineering practices.	Accept
47	Pedestrians (planning)	DCC ensures that traffic lights be positioned in high traffic areas and have mechanisms to slow them down so that older people can walk across the street safely.	This is in line with existing strategies. A pedestrian crossing gap analysis was conducted and endorsed by Council in 2017, with the priority list referred for future funding.	Accept

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48	Pedestrians (planning)	DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings are brought into alignment with the new Older Person category of PPN to create a seamless safe walking network.	This will be covered as part of the PPN response above - as per Recommendation 43	Investigate future Age Friendly infrastructure funding scheme for the Principal Pedestrian Network, subject to budget allocation in 2020/21.
49	Water Fountains	DCC ensures that water fountains be available and easy to use in all open spaces and along walking paths.	This should be a Council goal but will be an ongoing challenge. Additional water fountains were funded in 2018/19. Water fountains are considered as part of master planning and park and street upgrades but there is no overarching water fountains strategy. Can also be looked at by Older person's Audit advisory team (as per Recommendation 41).	Accept
50	Street seats	DCC ensures that street seats are sufficient in number and are well- positioned on walking routes for older people to be required to walk for no more than 0.5 km before being able to have a seat.	This should be a Council goal but will be an ongoing challenge. Seating is considered when site specific master plans or projects occur. There is currently no overarching seating strategy. Can consider budget allocation for a new seating program and consider budget allocation 20/21. Long-term funding would probably be required to meet the 0.5km goal.	Accept
51	Recreation, seating and inclusion	DCC ensures that in parks and gardens and other recreation spaces, seats are plentiful and grouped to encourage conversation and exchange.	This is important where the local context supports it and will be implemented gradually through planned open space renewal works.	Accept

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
52	Seats	Street seats have backs rather than benches.	Guidelines will be developed which require backs on street seats, except for in special circumstances.	Accept
53	Lighting	DCC refers street lighting, particularly in relation to risk of falls and personal injury, to an Older Person Open Space Audit Advisory Team.	See Recommendation 41	Accept
54	Open Space	A specific section of Darebin's Open Space Strategy be developed with the aim of increasing older peoples' usage. The development of this strategy should involve older people as the lead advisors	Older people have been involved in consultations. The draft Open Space Strategy has looked at open spaces being as accessible as possible for all users. Draft strategy wording will be updated so as to be made more explicit.	Accept
55	Recreation/exercise equipment	DCC explores the possibility of permanent games and exercise equipment for older people as part of this targeted strategy aimed at older people.	This will be considered in future open space planning.	Accept
56	Open Space	Open space planning is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access to activity and recreation centres, health & community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping.	Open space planning needs to be informed by all user needs. This must include older people and the needs identified in this recommendation.	Accept
57	Dogs in parks	DCC takes into account risks and benefits to older people in any future reviews about the rules relating to dogs in open spaces.	This will be considered in any future reviews.	Accept

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58	Accessible Community Facilities	DCC's next infrastructure audit: • undertakes a comprehensive access audit of all Council facilities; • develops a priority list to address the access issues as identified above; • allocates adequate recurrent funding for annual minor works that should not be less than \$50,000; and • considers an appropriate and feasible timeframe to ensure that all DCC facilities are accessible for the current generation of older people.	Council's previous building condition audits include review of compliance with building accessibility standards. The building renewal budget, which is \$6 million in 2019/20, funds (among other things) progressive accessibility upgrades for Council's buildings. A timeline for achieving compliance at all buildings will be developed.	Accept
59	Public Transport	DCC undertakes a strategic piece of advocacy in conjunction with other Councils, targeting the State Government's unrealistic timelines for making public transport fully accessible for the current generation of older people.	Consistent with Council plan and current advocacy activities.	Accept
60	Training - Public transport	DCC provides public transport familiarity training opportunities for older people.	Staff report past trials have been conducted with limited success. Opportunity could be to either collaborate with an organisation providing similar training such as Travellers Aid, or for Council to run sessions as part of a program with social connection goals as well.	Investigate further.
61	Public Transport (advocacy)	DCC consults with the State Government on the development of an implementation plan to ensure adequate provision of bus and tram shelters	This is supported as an advocacy measure.	Accept - Council will advocate to the State Government
62	Seating - Public transport	DCC ensures that seating at bus and tram stops is consistent with recommendations in relation to a seamless, safe and accessible walking network for older people.	This is supported as an advocacy measures.	Accept - Council will advocate to the State Government

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63	Seniors' Driver Education	DCC arranges for regular 'driving brush up' courses for older people to be provided with driving instructors as a way of lowering risk.	Already in existence at Darebin, with programs run twice annually with RACV.	Further promote existing programs available
64	Car Parking	DCC expands the number of non-regulated parking places close to senior citizens centres, considering a range of more innovative approaches to meet older people's need for parking, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates drop-off/pick-up parking zones for older people in front of services older people frequently use; e.g. health services, shopping centres, seniors' clubs, sport and community groups; • Allocates parking for older people at designated times; • Works with business owners/traders' associations to allocate parking for older people at the rear entrance of shops (i.e. where staff park or for non-delivery times) • Links with volunteer driver or develop 'Uber local' for pick-up and drop-off (this could also be considered as possible economic development activity); • Advocates for free public transport for older people in off-peak periods; and • Includes drop-off/pick-up drive throughs as a requirement in the design of new developments or redevelopments. 	<p>There is no current mechanism to have parking spots allocated for older people only - this would be unenforceable.</p> <p>Additional car spaces at Seniors Centres or changes to parking restrictions near Seniors Centres will be considered on a case by case approach (that is, a local approach).</p> <p>Advocating for free public transport for older people may be a possible position for Council but would need to consider other disadvantaged groups as well.</p> <p>Developing an Uber Local program is not supported.</p> <p>Council will be reviewing its community transport service as part of the Service Improvement Plan.</p>	Defer for further consideration.

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
65	Community Transport (vulnerable cohorts)	DCC encourages the use of community transport by older people living in boarding and rooming houses, public housing and from other vulnerable groups and also in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin, to broaden the group of older people who know of its availability and how to access it.	This will form part of the Service Improvement Plan.	Accept.
66	Information Project	DCC establishes an ongoing Older Peoples' Participatory Information Project.	This should be targeted at improving or transforming particular information resources (eg Older and Active in Darebin newsletter, or the Living in Darebin guide). This could be set up as an ongoing group or alternatively participatory panels could be established for each specific project.	Accept - subject to the Advisory Committees Review
67	Information Advisory Group	DCC establishes an Information Advisory Group of older people, including representatives from all vulnerable groups.	Prior to establishing a new advisory group consider the framework and criteria as the result of the advisory committees review.	Accept - subject to the Advisory Committees Review
68	Support access to Information (volunteers)	DCC considers using volunteers from the proposed volunteer service at libraries to assist older people to fill in online and paper forms and applications – regular weekly sessions could be trialled.	This can form part of the trial design of the recommended Social Inclusion, Information Navigation, Support and Volunteer Service. This service could extend its volunteer service offering to assist residents with filling out forms. This service could potentially complement existing programs in libraries, such as the Justice of the Peace sessions. The trial would start in 2020.	Accept

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
69	digital access and capacity	DCC takes a systematic approach to ensuring that digital opportunities are extended to vulnerable older citizens who are currently excluded. This includes: • supply of basic equipment such as iPads; • supporting Neighbourhood Houses to develop mobile training and equipment for house-bound older people; • developing robust outreach programs to encourage those who are able to attend to come into a wide range of community groups for flexibly timetabled digital learning opportunities; and • courses to be provided in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin and tailored for diverse needs that may include social media, communication such as Skype or email or for those who want to find information online.	There are existing digital opportunities offered through libraries that address some of the needs of older residents. Future initiatives would be best guided by a clear understanding of the practical needs and preferences of this target group. For example, would some people prefer to have transport assistance to participate in existing/new programs? As technology changes rapidly, program offerings are required to be regularly reviewed and tailored to changing community needs. Needs analysis would also be informed by the mapping exercise suggested in Recommendation 70.	Accept, with the development and implementation of digital strategy as part of the overall Library strategy and subsequent action plan.
70	community capacity building/social inclusion	DCC pilots a model in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin that enables a council worker to run social activity programs for older people, with the aim of developing local ownership and governance, so that ultimately the program turns into a senior's group with its own local ownership, control and governance rather than remaining as a service offering.	Existing Council programs have a presence in areas of lower socioeconomic status directly and through partnerships, using a range of models to support communities and groups. For example through co-design, information provision, the social food project, and other resourcing. These existing projects do not generally have a goal of developing a stand-alone independent community group. For future development to be most effective, it would need to be based on evidence of needs and what is currently available in local neighbourhoods. This would enable determination for example, of whether local partners are already involved and who may be best placed to deliver these programs via neighbourhood based work, or other courses of action.	Investigate initially through mapping groups and activities against geographical concentrations of low SES.

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
71	community development/clubs and groups	DCC develops and facilitates an Older Persons Community Group Network of all older peoples' community groups for learning and knowledge exchange, with participation by all Presidents of older peoples' community groups.	This is one of several recommendations about seniors' groups and clubs. (Recommendations 4, 40, 70, 71, 80, 81, 84, 85.) The proposed Seniors Groups Action Plan would address these collectively. Progress against the plan would be reported on as part of Age Friendly Darebin reporting.	Accept
72	Spaces and co-location arrangements	DCC considers adding to the space available for older peoples' groups that would benefit from a permanent venue by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying one larger DCC owned space that is little or unused and two smaller DCC owned spaces - with at least one of these being located in a more disadvantaged part of Darebin; • refurbishing the three spaces into numbers of offices/desks (sharing photocopiers etc.) and numbers of large meeting and activity spaces - enough so that groups can schedule many more activities; • some of the larger community organisations such as University of the Third Age (U3A) could have branches in the co-shared spaces; • a lead organisation such as U3A or a Neighbourhood House should be identified and funded to manage the space as well as support the other co-tenant groups. 	This would be a longer-term goal. Potentially, rather than a new stand-alone facility this proposal could be incorporated into currently planned community facility developments (eg new intergenerational hubs planned in coming decade). Trialling co-shared spaces at East Preston Community Centre may also be a possibility in the shorter or medium term.	Accept

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
73	Grants and intergenerational inclusion	DCC provides targeted grants for general community groups who are planning to include more older people by providing grants for: • adapted equipment for sports and recreation; • outreach to attract older people; • development of creative works with older people as lead participants.	This needs to be investigated further by review of data from grant applications and appropriate actions determined.	Investigate through trial in 20/21
74	Grants (New)	DCC makes small grants available to support new groups and activities, as well as to assist generic community groups to adapt and include older people. These grants should focus particularly on assisting community activities and groups in geographically disadvantaged areas of Darebin, <i>and groups, such as Matrix, that have not received funding to date.</i>	Current small grants criteria do consider disadvantage and place-based approach. Many groups for older people receive grants through Council's small grants scheme. There will be a future report to Council in October 2019 reviewing the application of the new grants process overall, and this recommendation will be considered in that report.	Accept, noting that this is already in place.
75	Events/co-design	DCC supports older peoples' events that encourage older people to lead festivals and event initiatives.	Incorporate as part of Arts Strategy - one which makes inclusion of older people systemic, focusing on intergenerational opportunities: 1) Aim for integration of seniors' creative work as part of Autumn festival 2020. Incorporate into Open Access program. Promote older people and groups to register their events and arts initiatives. 2) Aim for the Seniors Festival to have broader community engagement than it has had previously– so that Seniors Festival events are celebrating, not segregating, creative works for and by seniors. Funding will be required to implement this recommendation.	Accept, with a trial to occur in 20/21 subject to funding.

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
76	Events, participation/inclusion	DCC develops a robust outreach strategy for festivals and events focused on including disadvantaged older people and ensuring that participation in the event is not limited to those 'in the know'.	Festivals and events currently have an extensive and inclusive range of promotion and participation approaches. Further investigation will look at barriers to access, and developing an appropriate response. Addressing barriers to participation may be achieved through the work of Social Inclusion, Information Navigation, Support and Volunteer Service. For instance, volunteers may accompany people to festivals and events.	Accept
77	Arts/funding	DCC provides certainty for multiyear funding for events to increase participation rates.	The Arts Strategy and the Festivals Framework provides strategic direction for events and festivals, but annual budget allocations are subject to annual budget process under the Local Government Act.	Note that annual budget allocations are subject to the annual budget process under the Local Government Act.

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78	Senior Citizens Clubs new funding model	<p>DCC develops a new model for funding senior citizens clubs, which should include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ceasing funding based on per capita membership; • providing a base amount to all groups for the running cost for the group - meetings, governance; • continuing to provide in-kind financial auditing and public liability insurance for all groups; • providing in-kind venues (and where requested office/desk); • directly subsidising bus trips, including procuring a bus charter; • ensuring that older people from vulnerable groups are included in club activities with targeted funding for specific activities; • funding (via application process) specific outreach activities and Darebin area focused membership drives, as well as activities in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin; • looking for three locations to establish co-location spaces for interested senior citizens groups to be able to have office/desk space to establish as headquarters; • funding a lead organisation to undertake venue management, support, facilitation, mediation; • establishing clear expectations and outcome measures regarding outreach and inclusion of older people who are vulnerable and/or currently excluded. 	<p>The report identifies a number of ways that support for senior citizens clubs could be changed in order to add to community benefit. The report proposes changing the funding model for senior citizens groups in various ways and introducing more targeted funding. Currently, clubs are funded on a per-member basis.</p> <p>Some senior citizens groups are concerned about changing this model and further investigation is required.</p> <p>The recommendation also includes establishing three co-location spaces for senior citizens groups. This will require longer-term investigation of potential sites.</p> <p>Proposed changes would be included in the Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan which will be developed.</p>	Investigate as part of the development of the Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan

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79	U3A funding	DCC supports U3A with an annual DCC grant of a minimum of \$4,000.	This can be funded in 2019/20. Going forward in future years it can be considered as either part of the seniors groups' action plan, or incorporated into the community grants process in some way.	Accept for 2019/2020 subject to a funding agreement
80	U3A outreach	DCC provides targeted funding to U3A to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about U3A and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation.	Investigate through a funded pilot program with U3A and/or other community groups, subject to negotiation and agreement	Investigate through a funded pilot program with U3a, subject to negotiation and agreement
81	U3A Lead organisation	DCC considers U3A as a possible lead organisation in the recommended co-located space for older peoples' community groups.	Investigate further as a long term goal. Possibly, the review of East Preston Community Centre governance and operation model could see opportunities for U3A. To explore with U3A and/or other community groups.	Accept
82	Transport and Men's Sheds	DCC provides community transport assistance to allow more men to attend a Darebin Men's Shed.	This will form part of the Service Improvement Plan.	Accept

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83	New Men's Shed	DCC considers establishing a new Men's Shed in Darebin, to promote geographic access, either co-located with a Neighbourhood House or at the proposed new co-located community hub (refer to Recommendation 72).	There are two existing Men's Sheds- one at Your Community Health and the other at Alphington Community Centre. Span community centre also have a program called OMNI - Older Men New Ideas. The Your Community Health Men's Shed was not successful in its grant application to Council for 2019/20, due to strong competition for grants from community groups and services. Given the Age Friendly Darebin recommendation to expand the number of men's sheds, staff recommend that Age Friendly Darebin funding be used to support the Your Community Health Men's Shed in 2019/20, to avoid a reduction in services available.	Accept, for investigation in the longer term.
84	Probus Outreach	DCC considers offering targeted funding to Probus Clubs to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about Probus and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation.	Investigate through a funded pilot program with Probus and/or other community groups, subject to negotiation and agreement	Investigate through a funded pilot program with Probus, subject to negotiation and agreement
85	Carers Support Groups (diversity)	DCC considers commissioning Carers Victoria to partner with DCC in supporting the development of new Carers' groups for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTQI), CALD and in other locations and communities that do not have carers groups.	Carers Victoria has a model and program to support LGBTQI carers, which could be delivered locally with Council support. Establishing need would be the first step and then a program could be developed. Note- there may potentially be a need for a stand-alone carers group to support carers who are both LGBTQI and CALD, anticipating they will have unique and complex needs.	Accept

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86	Grief Groups	DCC considers commissioning Compassionate Friends to partner with DCC to explore the benefits of trialling grief groups for older people experiencing grief from loss.	<p>There are existing programs run by agencies such as Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement and Carers Victoria. Staff will seek to collaborate with Compassionate Friends or similar with a view to promoting their programs to the Darebin community.</p> <p>Council's new navigation support and social inclusion service would provide appropriate referral pathways for people in need of grief support.</p>	Accept
87	Neighbourhood Houses information	<p>It is recommended that DCC works with Neighbourhood Houses to undertake an audit and survey of older participants with a view to developing a specific Neighbourhood Householder Peoples' Inclusion Strategy. <i>DCC works with neighborhood houses and older people to develop a list and best method for information dissemination (dynamic - with in-built update mechanism) of low-cost and free programs, services and events that Darebin neighborhood houses run for older people.</i></p>	This recommendation can be implemented in 2019/20 and could align with implementation of other recommendations to improve communication and information for older people.	Accept

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88	Neighbourhood Houses Outreach	It is recommended that DCC partners with the Neighbourhood Houses Network to establish an Older Persons' Neighbourhood House Inclusion Strategy Advisory Committee with membership comprising older people and representatives from Neighbourhood Houses and DCC. <i>DCC works with neighborhood houses and older people to identify best methods for outreach to older people who currently do not participate in neighborhood house programs and to assign shared responsibility for outreach -</i>	This is supported.	Accept.
89	Neighbourhood Houses Information	It is recommended that DCC receives annual reports from the Neighbourhood Houses on activities undertaken to target support for older people and/or increasing the numbers of older people participants in Neighbourhood House activities. <i>In annual reports provided by neighborhood houses there is a request for information regarding specific activities and numbers of older people participating, and generic activities and numbers of older people participating.</i>	This is already in place and should continue.	Accept, noting that this already occurs

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
90	Digital inclusion	DCC adopts the goal of enabling and encouraging older people from all income levels and backgrounds to bridge the digital divide and join online community groups and activities.	Libraries already have a focus of bridging the digital divide and there is opportunity to strengthen this. Current library activities include workshops, provision of equipment for loan and use, computer accessibility software and assistive technologies. The Library will strengthen its digital support for seniors through equipment, advice and programs. This will be included in the new Library Strategy.	Accept, to be incorporated into the forthcoming Library Strategy
91	Digital inclusion	DCC develops an online community group strategy, including an implementation timeline.	An action plan and implementation timeline will be developed.	Accept, to be implemented in the Senior Citizens Group action plan
92	Visiting library service	DCC funds the visiting library service to expand its support of homebound residents.	For additional functions or expansion of the Home Library Service budget would need to be considered.	Accept, subject to consideration in the 2020/21 budget
93	Libraries - age friendliness	DCC's new Libraries Strategy strongly considers the needs of older people particularly in terms of their residential location and geographical access.	The Library Strategy will address this.	Accept

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
94	Volunteers	DCC establishes a Volunteer Program to provide the opportunity for older people and people of all ages to contribute to others in the community.	<p>The Social Inclusion and Aged Care Navigation Support Service will involve a pilot of a volunteer service. Volunteers could be trained to assist residents with basic My Aged Care issues, while also visiting regularly to provide social connection.</p> <p>The value of linking the volunteer service with the navigation and information service is to provide volunteer matching, oversight and support as clients' needs change.</p>	Accept, with a trial to commence in 2020 with the new Social Inclusion and Aged Care Navigation Support Service.
95	Volunteers	DCC's Volunteer Program undertakes identifying, recruiting, informing, as well as training and support for volunteers, including older volunteers.	This is supported.	Accept

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
96	Implementation, Monitoring and reporting	DCC establishes a Cross-Organisational Project Control Group, to be charged with responsibility for implementation. The Project Control Group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be chaired by a General Manager from DCC's Executive Leadership Team and comprised of officers from across DCC with appropriate experience, information and authority to oversee the development of an Age Friendly Darebin; • consider and provide advice for Council regarding prioritisation, resourcing and implementation of Age Friendly Darebin initiatives and activities; and • conduct regular consultation and seek advice from DCC's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board - Older Persons Community Group Network - Information Advisory Group - Older Person Open Space Audit Advisory Team - Older Persons' Neighbourhood House Inclusion Strategy Advisory Committee. 	This is a recommendation for an internal project control (or steering) group, which will be established by the CEO to ensure whole-of-organisation implementation.	Accept

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Rec. No.	Topic	Recommendation from Review Panel <i>(Note: any changes from draft recommendations are marked up)</i>	Officer comment	Officer recommendation to Council
97	Implementation, Monitoring and reporting	The Cross-Organisational Project Control Group reports to Council on progress towards agreed commitments to develop an Age Friendly Darebin annually as part of the monitoring achievement towards Council's 2017- 2021 Goals, particularly: • Goal 2: improving the wellbeing of people in our community by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well; • Goal 3: ensuring our planning system facilitates high-quality and sustainable development that extracts social, environmental and economic benefits for our community; and • Goal 5: leading on equity and recognizing our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges.	It is proposed that progress reports would be provided to Council as follows: - in February 2020 (an interim progress report including the proposed Service Improvement Plan, and matters for consideration for the 2020/21 budget) - in August 2020 (first annual progress report) - in August 2021 and every August thereafter, an annual progress report. Note: during 2019/20 there will also need to be various additional Council briefings and Council reports e.g. on the gardening service.	Accept
98	Implementation, Monitoring and reporting	When reporting against these goals the Cross-Organisational Project Control Group should provide advice to Council on: • progress and challenges in ensuring an Age Friendly Darebin; and • appropriate action to address emerging issues that may impact on DCC's ability to deliver its Age Friendly Darebin commitments.	This is supported.	Accept

Towards an Age Friendly Darebin

FINAL REPORT
JULY 2019

BY DR RHONDA GALBALLY AND PETER ALLEN

The Age Friendly Darebin Report was developed and submitted to Darebin Council by an independent expert Panel. Panel members and authors of this report are Dr Rhonda Galbally and Peter Allen.



Rhonda Galbally

Rhonda is well known for her leadership across the public health and community sectors, and as an advocate for people with disability. The many distinguished positions she has held include CEO of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), the cofounder and CEO of Our Community Pty Ltd, the Chair of the Royal Women's Hospital, the Chair of the National People with Disability and Carers Council, and Principal Board Member (chair) of the Independent Advisory Council for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). Dr Galbally was inducted to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2005 and in 2012 received the Prime Minister's Outstanding Achievement Award at the National Disability Awards. In 2019 Rhonda was appointed a Companion (AC) of the Order of Australia for eminent service to the advancement of social equity, particularly to the health and welfare of people with a disability, and to the community. In April Rhonda was appointed to serve as a commissioner on the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.



Peter Allen

Peter is currently based at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), where he was Deputy Dean between 2009 and 2015. Previously he had more than 20 years in the Victorian Public Service, with senior positions including Secretary of the Department of Education and Training, Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Sport and the Commonwealth Games, Under Secretary in the Department of Human Services, and Deputy Secretary, Community Services. Previously he was Director of Social Policy and Research at the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Mr Allen has also served as Founding Chair of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority and as a distinguished member of a number of councils and boards.

The Panel acknowledges Paul Robertson from INCITE information for his high quality support in developing this report.

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ACRONYM LIST

ACAS	Aged Care Assessment Services
ACCHO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
ADEC	Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities
AHAAB	Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board
ASU	Australian Services Union
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Program
DIHP	Deeble Institute for Health Policy
DII	Digital Inclusion Initiative
HACC	Home and Community Care
HACC PYP	Home and Community Care Program for Younger People
HCP	Home Care Package
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia
ISC	Information Steering Committee
LGBTIQ	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer
MAC	My Aged Care
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
NCP	National Competition Policy
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSA	National Seniors Australia
PPN	Principal Pedestrian Network
PRACE	Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education
RAS	Regional Assessment Service
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SRS	Supported Residential Service
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
U3A	The University of the Third Age
VACCHO	Victoria's Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Darebin: Becoming an Age Friendly City

In February 2017, Darebin City Council (DCC) signed the Age Friendly Victoria declaration, confirming its commitment to creating an Age Friendly City by empowering older people, and addressing issues of:

- social inclusion and respect;
- community support and health services;
- social participation and employment;
- housing; and
- transport and the built environment.

More than a sixth of Darebin's population is aged over sixty. This age group faces sweeping changes to community based aged care due to the Australian Government's reform to the aged care sector. Apart from the implications of the changes to home care services, local government continues to remain responsible for much of the community infrastructure and services that should support safe and fulfilling lives for all older residents.

DCC has commissioned this review to inform its decisions on how to best support older residents to live in an Age Friendly City which values, supports and empowers older people so that they can live well, be healthy, be socially connected, and live as independently as possible within their community.

Public consultation formed a significant component of the review. Consultation was guided by the review Terms of Reference and the intentions of the Panel, and was designed to offer:

- sufficient time for individuals, groups, organisations, staff and other stakeholders to consider, respond and provide ideas; and
- a broad range of locations, formats, languages and possible means for clients and community members to understand the purpose of the review and to contribute their thoughts.

The recommendations of this review are framed from the perspective that DCC is well placed to support older residents to lead good, quality lives, including older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and other vulnerable groups at risk of being socially isolated.



DCC delivery of aged care services

DCC, like the rest of the aged care sector, has been dealing with fundamental changes due to the Australian Government's Living Longer, Living Better reforms.

For more than 30 years, DCC, with assistance of funding from the Australian and Victorian governments, has provided services to older residents to support them to continue living independently in their own homes. However, in 2016 responsibility for all aged care services transferred to the Australian Government.

Australian Government reforms include the introduction of a single-entry point: My Aged Care (MAC), the discontinuation of the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program and the introduction of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

As part of CHSP, DCC has received a grant to provide an agreed level of aged care services. This arrangement, known as block funding, will continue until at least June 2022. Darebin Council has resolved to continue its existing aged care services while block funding is in place. DCC has been advocating for a future extension of block funding beyond 2022.¹

Also, as part of My Aged Care, federal funding for DCC's Regional Assessment Service outlet will continue until 30 June 2020. The Commonwealth Government has committed to implement changes to consumer assessments for all aged care services to be delivered by a new national assessment workforce from July 2020. The Commonwealth is expected to provide detail about the final model and implementation in the second half of 2019 and has indicated it is on track to have the new model in place by 1 July 2020.

The extension of CHSP until 2022 does not impact streamlined assessment being implemented – a streamlined model allows for the assessment organisation to make the determination of level of assessment.

The national introduction of a streamlined model, if it proceeds, means current arrangements for assessment of aged care services at the local level in Victoria will end and a new national assessment model and workforce will be established.

¹ Australian Government Department of Health Provider update 3/4/2019

Future service delivery

DCC has resolved to continue all existing aged care services while block funding is in place.

This review identifies a range of opportunities to improve the effectiveness and impact of the services that DCC currently provides and particularly recommends involving older people in redesign to promote greater flexibility to respond to client needs and the maintenance of independent living skills.

This review has also proposed new services to assist older people to live well, be healthy, be socially connected, and live as independently as possible within their community.

This includes using existing staff expertise to actively support residents struggling to navigate the service system, and those at risk of isolation within their community. It is also recommended that DCC commits resources to actively support clients in transition, and in their decision-making around alternative, carefully selected, vetted and monitored provider/s. (Recommendations 21 – 24)

Age Friendly Darebin: more than aged care services

In addition to considering DCC's role in the delivery of community-based aged care, the review heard about a range of issues identified by Darebin residents. In response to the community's voices, the review identifies a range of initiatives that DCC can undertake towards the goal of becoming an Age Friendly City: enhancing the quality of life at home and in the community for older citizens.





Somewhere to call home

We heard from the community that central to an Age Friendly Darebin is the need for safe, affordable housing for older residents. Unfortunately, such housing is not available to some older people, and the review provides recommendations to improve public housing and affordability. (Recommendations 25 – 27)

In addition, the community told us that access to their home, and the homes of neighbours and friends, is an additional challenge for a growing number of older residents. As the community ages, accessibility is likely to become an even more significant issue, best addressed through revised building codes and regulations. Enhancing DCC's own building and development requirements combined with advocacy to both State and Federal Governments for changes to regulation and building code reviews are actions that are recommended.

(Recommendations 28 – 29)

For ageing residents to continue to live safely at home, mobility aids and appliances can be a key to proactive injury prevention. The review recommends that DCC explores several initiatives, including establishing a mobility equipment loans scheme and a home modification social enterprise connected to a Men's Shed and/or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and supported by local businesses. (Recommendations 30 – 32)

We heard from the community that safety was an issue for older people.

To enhance safety from crime at home the review recommends DCC establish a program with local police to improve older people's awareness of common at-home risks, as well as re-invigorating neighbourhood watch with a specific focus on older residents. (Recommendations 35 – 36)

In response to community opinions, other recommendations to support older people at home include addressing squalor and hoarding, monitoring heat and cold risk; Darebin Home Share and Co-housing programs; and a 'home phone contact scheme'. (Recommendations 33 – 34 and Recommendations 37 – 39)

Age Friendly outdoors

We heard from the community about the value and importance for older people to be able to participate safely outside the home. This can include walking for exercise and enjoyment or walking to a specific destination, such as parks, shopping centres, and business, health and recreation appointments.

In response to community opinion, many of these recommendations pay particular attention to footpaths, toilets, street seats, water fountains, street lighting and parks and gardens. Whether in transit or at their destination, all the infrastructure should be designed and/or upgraded with older people in mind: recognising that Age Friendly is friendly for everyone. (Recommendations 40 – 58)

When walking is not possible the review proposes ways to make it easier for older people to drive, park, use community transport and use free public transport in off peak times. (Recommendations 59 – 65)

Importantly, a fundamental principle for Age Friendliness is that older people should be actively involved in the development, monitoring and improvement of services and infrastructure that affects them. Throughout the report there are specific recommendations for opportunities for older people to become the auditors, designers and informers to make Darebin Age Friendly.

(Recommendations 41, 53, 67, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 88, 94, 96)

Information and digital empowerment

In response to community input, high quality, relevant information is highlighted by the review as vitally important for older people to be able to age in place and engage in their community. However, we also heard from the community that information must be up-to-date and about areas and issues that older people identify as important.

The review therefore recommends that DCC establish an ongoing older peoples' participatory information project where older people are the information decision makers on the What, the How, and the When of their information needs. (Recommendations 66 – 67)

As far as the digital world goes, the review highlights the valuable support that can be gained by older people if they are able to access and use digital equipment. In response to community opinion, the review therefore recommends ways to make equipment and training available to older people in the use of digital equipment and apps, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable and isolated who are most likely to be excluded from the digital age and all of its particular benefits for older people. (Recommendations 68 – 69)

Social participation

In response to community opinion, health and wellbeing benefits of social participation are emphasised throughout the review and recommendations. Local government is in a particularly strong position to provide opportunities for older people to join in with groups and activities that not only add to their lives, but also contribute to the local community. DCC in particular, with its strong commitment to social justice is able to make sure that vulnerable, isolated older people are included with monitoring and outreach as a top priority.

The review heard from members of senior citizens clubs and therefore analyses the clubs from the perspective of fairness, outreach to vulnerable members of communities, inclusion, stability and support for their voluntary effort.

The review proposes a number of ways to support and strengthen the rich and diverse network of older peoples' groups. Recommendations are made to encourage stronger seniors' community organisations, such as co-location and targeted grants to improve weaker areas like governance, promoting outreach to vulnerable older people, refreshing and expanding membership and enhancing responsiveness to new needs and under-represented communities. (Recommendations 71 - 74)

In response to community opinion, the review also makes recommendations to ensure that older people are included and welcomed in the widest range of activities, including recommending targeted grants to encourage inclusion.

(Recommendation 70 and Recommendations 75 - 91)

We heard that libraries also offer a wealth of opportunities for Darebin's older residents, and the review makes numbers of recommendations for libraries to enhance their services, particularly for isolated, vulnerable older people. (Recommendations 92 - 93)

The review highlights the value of volunteers, most particularly drawing on skills, experience and capacity of older people as volunteers. We heard from older people that they want their skills and knowledge to continue to be used and in retirement they want the opportunity to give back to others. It is therefore recommended that a significant volunteer program be developed to expand opportunities for older people and people of all ages to contribute to others in the community. The review makes it absolutely clear that volunteers are not to replace paid workers, rather to enhance, deepen with time and peer support and utilise the skills from the Darebin community. (Recommendations 94 & 95)



Next steps towards an Age Friendly Darebin

In many ways the development of an Age Friendly Darebin builds on DCC's commitment to a bolder, more connected city, and DCC's mission to preserve and improve the physical, social, cultural and economic health of all neighbourhoods while ensuring quality of life for current and future generations.

Following Council's consideration of this report, it is expected Council will respond to the final report's recommendations and set a direction for the development of an Age Friendly Darebin.

It is expected that implementation of agreed recommendations of this report will require Council to make decisions in regard to prioritising activities and allocating resources, including redirecting existing resources or allocating new or additional resources.

The review recommends that a Cross Organisational Project Control Group, chaired by a DCC General Manager, should support and closely monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations. The Project Control Group would seek regular consultation and advice from DCC's Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board and the other older people's advisory groups recommended by the review (Recommendation 96). The Project Control Group would report twice a year to Council on the progress and any challenges in delivering agreed recommendations from the review. (Recommendation 97 and 98)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



It is recommended that...

Local intelligence for monitoring and advocacy about My Aged Care (MAC)

1. While the Australian Government continues to provide block funding for CHSP services to DCC, and until the full extent of new arrangements for Assessment Services is made clear, DCC should continue to provide Regional Assessment Services (RAS).
2. Until, and possibly beyond, the time when the full extent of new arrangements under the Australian Government reforms are made clear, DCC should gather intelligence and case studies highlighting both strengths and weakness of existing practice to inform baseline performance requirements of the new arrangements.
3. DCC monitors:
 - a. demand and supply trends for MAC across a broader catchment area than just the Darebin LGA;
 - b. the impact of MAC processes on clients, for example, time from referral to response by a provider, or if clients are left without a response.

Older CALD residents

4. DCC works closely with CALD communities, seniors' groups and providers to build their capacity to effectively support older people from their communities.
5. DCC sets performance targets for the number of people from specific CALD communities participating in programs, including MAC, for older people.

Older residents from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

6. DCC conduct targeted work aimed at improving the current rates at which eligible residents from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are engaged in assessment and connected to recommended aged care services. This should include targeted and culturally appropriate information, navigation and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and older people to assist them access the aged care services that are available to them. Alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services, mainstream services must be encouraged to provide culturally informed services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.

7. In consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, DCC identifies both good and bad practice in responding to the needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communicates this to the Australian Government to improve practice guidelines for MAC, specifically in delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Darebin.
8. DCC should consider providing support, such as respite trips or retreats, for community elders who are carers, while providing support for the people they care for.
9. Given that Darebin is a hub for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it is important there is a dedicated meeting space within the municipality. It is recommended that Council, in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, investigates creating such a space that services could provide outreach to.

DCC to continue and optimise delivery of CHSP services

10. DCC commits to continual improvement of service effectiveness and impact including maximising independence, socialisation and inclusion, through ongoing consultation and co-design with older people

Domestic Assistance

11. DCC focuses domestic assistance on building the older person's confidence and capability to perform everyday tasks, with workers undertaking tasks that are beyond the capacity of clients.

Personal Care

12. DCC considers providing personal support services on weekends.

Flexible Respite

13. DCC closely monitors demand for respite with a view to phasing out delivery of respite funded through the CHSP while either (i) considering offering respite through HCPs beyond 2022 or (ii) confirming that other providers are available to respond in a quality and timely way.

Delivered Meals

14. DCC's meals service is re-designed to:
 - a. further emphasise assisting older residents to prepare their own meals and to share meals;
 - b. provide meals that better match the dietary and cultural preferences of residents;
 - c. consider the addition of alternative providers, including the recent growth of home delivery services from a wide range of culturally appropriate local food retailers; and
 - d. increase the numbers of residents attending meals outside their home, possibly with expanded use of volunteers supplied by the proposed volunteer service.



It is recommended that...

Social Support

15. DCC promotes Yanada House as an outstanding and unique social support program for older people with dementia and tries to build up client numbers.

Failing this, DCC ascertains the interest of other providers of social support groups in establishing a dementia group for the Yanada House clients.

Community Transport

16. DCC focuses on ensuring community bus availability is more fully utilised by:
- building up demand;
 - increasing flexibility in routes;
 - exploring the possibility of using newly available digital network tools to enhance door to door responsiveness and availability.

Home Maintenance

17. In addition to its own provision of home maintenance services, DCC investigates establishing a panel of local trades people who would be willing to undertake more extensive work than DCC provides.

Gardening

18. DCC provides a gardening service which includes mowing plus a focus on DCC staff working alongside older people to garden.
19. DCC provides nature strip mowing and a trimming service for overhanging trees and bushes as these can be risk hazards for older people walking and wheeling on footpaths.

DCC to examine the feasibility of expanding into the delivery of Home Care Packages (HCP) to enhance service spectrum and continuity of care of clients

20. While the block funding continues from the Australian Government for CHSP, DCC investigates the feasibility of providing HCP Levels 1-4 by DCC developing a detailed business case and operating model for a HCP service. Reputational risk associated with DCC applying high client fees and service costs should be explicitly addressed in the business case.
21. DCC to pilot a social inclusion program while addressing older people's system-related risks.

22. It is recommended that DCC commences a trial of social inclusion service when resource availability permits, while addressing older people's system-related risks by redirecting its own source revenue and re-developing roles and responsibilities to utilise assessment officers and community support workers in the piloting of the social inclusion service.
23. DCC provides a volunteer service to support the social inclusion service with more intense engagement where needed:
 - a. the volunteers would not replace paid workers, rather social inclusion workers would work hand-in-hand with the volunteer service and call volunteers in to provide more hours of contact;
 - b. the volunteer service would include older people as volunteers for isolated older people.
24. Alongside the Social Inclusion Service, DCC continues to provide its own directly funded services where there is a risk that vulnerable CHSP clients may not be able to access necessary services due to 'service holes' or 'thin markets' for example: delivered meals and home maintenance (including gardening).

SOMEWHERE TO CALL HOME

Home affordability

25. DCC examines schemes that give private landlords rate concessions for charging moderate rents to low income older people.
26. DCC considers purchase of additional land or alternative use of its own land to partner with potential social housing providers or with the Office of Housing to expand the volume of fully accessible public and community housing stock to be offered to older people who are homeless and/or older people living in Supported Residential Services (SRS) or rooming houses.
27. DCC renews its efforts to advocate hard for a minimum regulation for private dwelling accessibility so that there is more accessible rental stock for frail older people.

Home accessibility

28. DCC updates its approach to access in its planning requirements by:
 - a. reviewing existing tools/levers in the planning scheme that could be used to encourage/require accessible features in housing;
 - b. developing additional tools and resources to support developers; and
 - c. implementing liveable housing guidelines similar to Banyule City Council.



It is recommended that...

Advocacy for affordability and access

- 29.** DCC adopts a policy position and advocacy commitments similar to the City of Whittlesea:
- “That every person has a right to affordable, adequate and appropriate housing to enable their participation and sense of belonging in community life.”
 - Commitment 1: State-wide planning measures should be adopted that mandate and incentivise Social and Affordable Housing (Victorian Government).
 - Commitment 2: All new social housing dwellings should be required to comply with the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines Housing (Victorian Government).
 - Commitment 3: Take action to break the cycle of homelessness by adequately investing in the housing and homelessness sector to assist people across all life-stages (Victorian and Australian Government).
 - Commitment 4: The National Rental Affordability Scheme should be reinstated (Australian Government).

Mobility aids and appliances

- 30.** DCC establishes a Mobility Equipment Loans Scheme (similar to a Toy Library), in partnership with a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) expert in disability equipment.
- 31.** DCC explores the possibility of donated and recovered mobility equipment being restored by using a volunteer program established with a Men’s Shed, also including older people.

Home modifications

- 32.** DCC examines the opportunity for facilitation of a start-up home modification social enterprise, connected to a Men’s Shed and/or TAFE and supported by local businesses in a community business partnership.

Squalor and hoarding services

- 33.** DCC considers the extent of services for people living in squalor, particularly considering older people living in rentals and boarding and rooming houses, as well as home-owners, and develops a comprehensive approach with NGOs that currently provide services to people with hoarding issues and people living in squalor.

Cold and heat

34. DCC adds to its monitoring of CHSP clients during heatwaves by also monitoring those at risk on extreme cold days, especially focusing on homeless older people.

Safe from crime at home

35. DCC formalises a program to collaborate with local police to improve older peoples' awareness of common at-home risks.
36. DCC partners with Victoria Police to reinvigorate Neighbourhood Watch to have a particular focus on older people.

Home Share

37. DCC facilitates a Darebin Home Share and co-housing program in partnership with an NGO with established home share systems and processes.
38. DCC markets and promotes Home Share and co-housing to older people via social inclusion workers and community organisations.

Home Phone Engagement Scheme

39. DCC explores further the opportunity to facilitate a home phone contact scheme with a NGO partner.

AGE FRIENDLY OUTDOORS

A local network for walking and wheeling

40. DCC develops a walking (and wheeling) group program to facilitate groups of older people, including older people in public housing, boarding and rooming houses as well as those using walking frames and wheelchairs.

Older Peoples' Open Space Audit Advisory Team

41. DCC establishes the Older Persons Open Space Audit Advisory Team made up of older volunteers who would be willing to participate in regular audits with DCC staff to consider footpaths, seating, toilets, bus and tram shelters and lighting.

Walking definition includes older people

42. DCC adds the word 'wheeling' and the disability symbol into all of its walking policies, strategies and projects in order to normalise 'walking' with a walking frame, in a wheelchair or on a mobility scooter, and ensure that people who use mobility equipment are included in walking strategies.



It is recommended that...

Footpaths and kerbs

- 43.** DCC introduces an additional footpath category into the Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) that addresses access for older people. This additional category should:
- be based on the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access activity and recreation centres, health and community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping;
 - have a higher inspection frequency than the current 'Other' category (i.e. 12 months);
 - provide a mechanism to allocate targeted funding to address priority renewals (i.e. additional to the footpath renewal budget); and
 - identify footpaths and roads to be prioritised for renewal in order to construct appropriate ramps across kerbs and gutters (i.e. pram crossings).

Public toilets

- 44.** DCC ensures that the location of new toilet facilities (which should all be fully accessible to people in wheelchairs) is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access activity and recreation centres, health and community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping. In particular, the location of new toilets should be integrated with the proposed new Older Person category of PPN discussed above.
- 45.** DCC ensures that public toilets, including accessible toilets be open, at a minimum, for use during daytime.

Pedestrian crossings

- 46.** DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings be well signed, clearly marked, plentiful and well positioned to prevent older people from taking risks crossing roads, most particularly in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin.
- 47.** DCC ensures that traffic lights be positioned in high traffic areas and have mechanisms to slow them down so that older people can walk across the street safely.
- 48.** DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings are brought into alignment with the new Older Person category of PPN to create a seamless safe walking network.

Water fountains

- 49.** DCC ensures that water fountains be available and easy to use in all open spaces and along walking paths.

Street and open space seats

50. DCC ensures that street seats are sufficient in number and are well- positioned on walking routes for older people to be required to walk for no more than 0.5 km before being able to have a seat.
51. DCC ensures that in parks and gardens and other recreation spaces, seats are plentiful and grouped to encourage conversation and exchange.
52. Street seats have backs rather than benches.

Street lighting

53. DCC refers street lighting, particularly in relation to risk of falls and personal injury, to an Older Person Open Space Audit Advisory Team.

Outdoor plazas, parks, gardens and nature reserves

54. A specific section of Darebin's Open Space Strategy be developed with the aim of increasing older peoples' usage. The development of this strategy should involve older people as the lead advisors.
55. DCC explores the possibility of permanent games and exercise equipment for older people as part of this targeted strategy aimed at older people.
56. Open space planning is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access to activity and recreation centres, health & community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping.

Dogs in parks

57. DCC takes into account risks and benefits to older people in any future reviews about the rules relating to dogs in open spaces.

Accessible community facilities

58. DCC's next infrastructure audit:
 - a. undertakes a comprehensive access audit of all Council facilities;
 - b. develops a priority list to address the access issues as identified above;
 - c. allocates adequate recurrent funding for annual minor works that should not be less than \$50,000; and
 - d. considers an appropriate and feasible timeframe to ensure that all DCC facilities are accessible for the current generation of older people.

Public transport

59. DCC undertakes a strategic piece of advocacy in conjunction with other Councils, targeting the State Government's unrealistic timelines for making public transport fully accessible for the current generation of older people.
60. DCC provides public transport familiarity training opportunities for older people.



It is recommended that...

Bus and tram shelters

61. DCC consults with the State Government on the development of an implementation plan to ensure adequate provision of bus and tram shelters.
62. DCC ensures that seating at bus and tram stops is consistent with recommendations in relation to a seamless, safe and accessible walking network for older people.

Cars

63. DCC arranges for regular 'driving brush up' courses for older people to be provided with driving instructors as a way of lowering risk.

Car parking

64. It is recommended that DCC expands the number of non-regulated parking places close to senior citizens centres. It is further recommended that DCC consider a range of more innovative approaches to meet older people's need for parking, for example:
 - a. creating drop-off/pick-up parking zones for older people in front of services older people frequently use; e.g. health services, shopping centres, seniors' clubs, sport and community groups;
 - b. allocating parking for older people at designated times:
 - designated parking for older people could be based on identifying times that older people are likely to need parking in conjunction with lower use times for other residents;
 - this may be used to support DCC's economic development activities: encouraging older people to participate in economic/social activities in the 'down-time' for general business activities;
 - this could be used in conjunction with programs to encourage businesses to offer 'senior discounts' to coincide with these designated times;
 - c. working with business owners/traders' associations to allocate parking for older people at the rear entrance of shops (i.e. where staff park or for non-delivery times). This may also improve disability access at rear entrances to permit clients to go through some shops to access main thoroughfare; (e.g. access to High St Northcote, from car park off Arthurton Rd);
 - d. linking with volunteer driver or develop 'Uber local' for pick-up and drop-off (this could also be considered as possible economic development activity);
 - e. advocating for free public transport for older people in off-peak periods (note that this is the case in other States, for example in Adelaide: the South Australian Seniors Card also serves as a Seniors Metrocard, providing card holder's public transport fare concessions, and free travel on all Adelaide Metro public transport services Monday to Friday 7.00pm to 7.00am (i.e. through the night) and 9.00am to 3.00pm);
 - f. including drop-off/pick-up drive throughs as a requirement in the design of new developments or re-developments.

Community transport

65. DCC encourages the use of community transport by older people living in boarding and rooming houses, public housing and from other vulnerable groups and also in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin, to broaden the group of older people who know of its availability and how to access it.

INFORMATION AND DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

Participatory approach to information

66. DCC establishes an ongoing Older Peoples' Participatory Information Project.

Information Advisory Group

67. DCC establishes an Information Advisory Group of older people, including representatives from all vulnerable groups.

Help and support to access information

68. DCC considers using volunteers from the proposed volunteer service at libraries, to assist older people to fill in online and paper forms and applications – regular weekly sessions could be trialled.
69. DCC takes a systematic approach to ensuring that digital opportunities are extended to vulnerable older citizens who are currently excluded. This may include:
- supply of basic equipment such as iPads;
 - supporting Neighbourhood Houses to develop mobile training and equipment for house-bound older people;
 - developing robust outreach programs to encourage those who are able to attend to come into a wide range of community groups for flexibly timetabled digital learning opportunities; and
 - courses to be provided in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin and tailored for diverse needs that may include social media, communication such as Skype or email or for those who want to find information online.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Locational disadvantage

70. DCC pilots a model in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin that enables a council worker to run social activity programs for older people, with the aim of developing local ownership and governance, so that ultimately the program turns into a senior's group with its own local ownership, control and governance rather than remaining as a service offering.



It is recommended that...

A network of local community and seniors' groups

71. DCC develops and facilitates an Older Persons Community Group Network of all older peoples' community groups for learning and knowledge exchange, with participation by all Presidents of older peoples' community groups.
72. DCC considers adding to the space available for older peoples' groups that would benefit from a permanent venue by:
 - a. identifying one larger DCC owned space that is little or unused and two smaller DCC owned spaces - with at least one of these being located in a more disadvantaged part of Darebin;
 - b. refurbishing the three spaces into numbers of offices/desks (sharing photocopiers etc.) and numbers of large meeting and activity spaces - enough so that groups can schedule many more activities;
 - c. some of the larger community organisations such as University of the Third Age (U3A) could have branches in the co-shared spaces;
 - d. a lead organisation such as U3A or a Neighbourhood House should be identified and funded to manage the space as well as support the other co-tenant groups.

Grant to include older people in general community groups and activities

73. DCC provides targeted grants for general community groups who are planning to include more older people by providing grants for:
 - a. adapted equipment for sports and recreation;
 - b. outreach to attract older people;
 - c. development of creative works with older people as lead participants.
74. DCC makes small grants available to support new groups and activities, as well as to assist established community groups to adapt and include older people. These grants should focus particularly on assisting community activities and groups in geographically disadvantaged areas of Darebin and groups, such as Matrix, that have not received funding to date.

Older Peoples' one-off events and festivals

75. DCC supports older peoples' events that encourage older people to lead festivals and event initiatives.
76. DCC develops a robust outreach strategy for festivals and events focused on including disadvantaged older people and ensuring that participation in the event is not limited to those 'in the know'.
77. DCC provides certainty for multiyear funding for events to increase participation rates by allowing the knowledge to be disseminated that the events will be annual.

Senior citizen's clubs

- 78.** DCC develops a new model for funding senior citizens clubs, which should include consideration of:
- ceasing funding based on per capita membership;
 - providing a base amount to all groups for the running cost for the group - meetings, governance;
 - continuing to provide in-kind financial auditing and public liability insurance for all groups;
 - providing in-kind venues (and where requested office/desk);
 - directly subsidising bus trips, including procuring a bus charter;
 - ensuring that older people from vulnerable groups are included in club activities with targeted funding for specific activities;
 - separately funding (through an application process) specific outreach activities and Darebin area focused membership drives;
 - separately funding (through an application process) activities in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin;
 - looking for three locations to establish co-location spaces for interested senior citizens groups to be able to have office/desk space to establish as headquarters;
 - funding a lead organisation to undertake venue management, support, facilitation, mediation;
 - establishing clear expectations and outcome measures regarding outreach and inclusion of older people who are vulnerable (e.g. frail, low socioeconomic, etc.).

U3A

- 79.** DCC supports U3A with an annual DCC grant of a minimum of \$4,000.
- 80.** DCC provides targeted funding to U3A to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about U3A and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation.
- 81.** DCC considers U3A as a possible lead organisation in the recommended co-located space for older peoples' community groups.

Men's Shed

- 82.** DCC provides community transport assistance to allow more men to attend a Darebin Men's Shed.
- 83.** DCC considers establishing a new Men's Shed in Darebin, to promote geographic access, either co-located with a Neighbourhood House or at the proposed new co-located community hub (refer to Recommendation 72).

Probus

- 84.** DCC considers offering targeted funding to Probus Clubs to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about Probus and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation.



It is recommended that...

Carers' groups

85. DCC considers commissioning Carers Victoria to partner with DCC in supporting the development of new Carers' groups for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ), CALD and in other locations and communities that do not have carers groups.

Grief Groups

86. DCC considers commissioning Compassionate Friends to partner with DCC to explore the benefits of trialing grief groups.

Neighbourhood Houses

87. DCC works with Neighbourhood Houses and older people to develop a list and best method for information dissemination (dynamic – with in-built update mechanism) of low-cost and free programs, services and events that Darebin Neighbourhood Houses run for older people.
88. DCC works with Neighbourhood Houses and older people to identify best methods for outreach to older people who currently do not participate in Neighbourhood House programs and to assign shared responsibility for outreach.
89. In annual reports provided by Neighbourhood Houses there is a request for information regarding specific activities and numbers of older people participating, and generic activities and numbers of older people participating.

Online community groups and activities

90. DCC adopts the goal of enabling and encouraging older people from all income levels and backgrounds to bridge the digital divide and join online community groups and activities.
91. DCC develops an online community strategy, including an implementation timeline.

Libraries

92. DCC funds the visiting library service to expand its support of homebound residents.
93. DCC develops its new library strategy, the needs of older people are strongly considered, particularly in terms of their residential location.

Volunteers

94. DCC establishes a Volunteer Program to provide the opportunity for older people and people of all ages to contribute to others in the community.
95. DCC's Volunteer Program undertakes identifying, recruiting, informing, as well as training and support for volunteers, including older volunteers.

NEXT STEPS

Implementation, Monitoring and reporting

96. DCC establishes a Cross-Organisational Project Control Group, to be charged with responsibility for implementation.
The Project Control Group to:
 - a. be chaired by a General Manager from DCC's Executive Leadership Team and comprised of officers from across DCC with appropriate experience, information and authority to oversee the development of an Age Friendly Darebin;
 - b. consider and provide advice for Council regarding prioritisation, resourcing and implementation of Age Friendly Darebin initiatives and activities; and
 - c. conduct regular consultation and seek advice from DCC's:
 - Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board
 - Older Persons Community Group Network
 - Information Advisory Group
 - Older Person Open Space Audit Advisory Team
97. The Cross-Organisational Project Control Group reports to Council on progress towards agreed commitments to develop an Age Friendly Darebin annually as part of the monitoring achievement towards Council's 2017- 2021 Goals, particularly:
 - a. Goal 2: improving the wellbeing of people in our community by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well;
 - b. Goal 3: ensuring our planning system facilitates high-quality and sustainable development that extracts social, environmental and economic benefits for our community; and
 - c. Goal 5: leading on equity and recognizing our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges.
98. When reporting against these goals the Committee should provide advice to Council on:
 - a. progress and challenges in ensuring an Age Friendly Darebin; and
 - b. appropriate action to address emerging issues that may impact on DCC's ability to deliver its Age Friendly Darebin commitments.

1 TOWARDS AN AGE FRIENDLY DAREBIN

Darebin City Council (DCC) is committed to an Age Friendly City which values, supports and empowers older people – so that older people can live well, be healthy, be socially connected, and live independently within their community.

"No matter what age - we want to be included and recognised in 'community'". (Consultation feedback)

Age Friendliness is a broad term that brings together evidence, strategy and programs to ensure that older peoples' daily lives are well supported and well connected to their community.

Initiated by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Age Friendliness has been taken up as a goal by countries and cities around the world. Age Friendliness builds on the idea of "active ageing" and is meant to convey a more inclusive message than simply healthy ageing.

"The word "active" refers to continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force."²

Like many WHO policies, Age Friendliness risks remaining at an abstract level where cities sign on but little changes. The challenge for local governments is to distil thinking about Age Friendliness for application to the particular circumstances of their communities and to identify how they can best contribute to making their city 'Age Friendly' for their ageing residents.

DCC has already shown its leadership in Age Friendliness by providing an outstanding model of Home and Community Care (HACC) to support and care for its disabled and ageing residents.

DCC also contributes to the well-being of its older residents with a range of programs, grants and infrastructure, guided by its Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy 2011-21:

"...the Darebin community in 2021 is one that fully embraces older citizens and values their wisdom and contribution. The community is vibrant, happy, caring, compassionate and inclusive of all ages, cultures, abilities, backgrounds and lifestyles. We collectively meet the challenges of an ageing population with a generous spirit and we see older people as part of the solution not as the problem"³

Older people as a group are growing in number and have the potential to become the population group with the diversity, time and knowledge to develop Darebin into a highly interactive, interdependent, community-connected city.

² WHO, 2002, *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework* p.12

³ *Darebin Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy 2011-2021* p.10

This requires a view of older people as active and committed to maximising engagement and contribution to community, rather than dependent, burdensome and without the capacity to contribute.

1.1 Changes to Aged Care

The aged care sector has been fundamentally changed by the Australian Governments "Living Longer, Living Better" reforms. Because of this major new approach driven by the Australian Government, DCC has the opportunity to rethink its approach to its older residents, to consider its distinctive strengths as a local government authority, and to take a whole of local government approach to ensuring that the City of Darebin becomes the Age Friendly place of choice for older people.

In 2011, in response to the demographic shift towards an ageing population and a major review of aged care in Australia by the Productivity Commission, the Australian Government decided to develop a nationally equitable model for the delivery of aged care services. The Australian Government now has responsibility for a national system covering the full continuum of care across all levels of aged care service delivery from entry level to higher care packages up to residential care.

The Australian Government's Living Longer Living Better reforms have significantly changed the entire aged care system, including the introduction of a single entry point: My Aged Care (MAC), consumers selecting a provider of choice, the discontinuation of the HACC program and the introduction of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), amongst a range of other fundamental changes.

1.2 Problems with the Australian Government's Aged Care reforms

Research undertaken by National Seniors Australia (NSA) in 2018 indicates that most older Australians are ambivalent about the benefits of consumer directed care.⁴ More than half the respondents to an NSA survey either had no confidence or were unsure of their ability to choose an aged care service provider that meet their needs. These findings are consistent with community comments to the review. The NSA report also highlighted that Australians have a consistent preference for high levels of human contact and communication.⁵

"With this new system, putting all the responsibility on the recipient is a recipe for disaster. When it comes to choosing a provider - Oh my God, who do you choose? I can do the groundwork for Mum, it's hard enough for me, but she couldn't do it herself." (Consultation feedback)

⁴ Rees, K., et al. 2018,

You don't know what you don't know: The current state of Australian aged care service literacy

⁵ Ibid.

Additionally, a 2018 literature review of choice and quality in community care completed by Latrobe University identified eight key themes around consumer choice and perceptions of quality in home and community care.⁶ Themes highlighted by the study were:

- **Control:** most consumers want to actively participate in the decision making for their care services and have the freedom to choose services based on their physical and mental needs;
- **Interpersonal interaction:** consumers want to receive services from someone they know, and enough continuity to build rapport and a genuine relationship;
- **Flexibility:** consumers want the delivery of their care to be flexible, in terms of choice of service provider, choice of daily activities, people employed to assist and adjustments over time according to their changing physical and mental needs;
- **Local residence:** consumers want to receive high quality care at home and not have to move away from friends and neighbours;
- **Affordability:** consumers want their services to be affordable and subsidised where possible;
- **Administrative and financial literacy:** consumers would benefit from information on and assistance in understanding their care service entitlements, and receiving support with the financial planning and management of their services;
- **Safety:** consumers want to feel protected in their homes and local communities, and to know that both general and emergency assistance is readily available; and
- **Timeliness of service care provision:** consumers prefer to receive information, their care entitlements and services in a timely manner.⁷

The Deeble Institute for Health Policy (DIHP)⁸ has identified three dimensions of the current reform that require further research:

- **Cost effectiveness:** the cost effectiveness of consumer-directed models has yet to be fully determined;
- **Cultural considerations:** the objective of facilitating individual rather than communal control conflicts with the cultural values of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people;
- **Capacity to participate:** there is limited research on how services are best designed and delivered to older people with cognitive impairments.⁹

The DIHP notes that while the principles of choice and control are important in health and wellbeing there are differences in people's abilities to exercise this choice and control. It notes that making informed choices about aged care can be impacted by cognitive ability, literacy levels, availability of a carer and level of education. As the DIHP notes: "many of those surveyed as part of the My Aged Care evaluations were not even sure they were in receipt of a Home Care Package (HCP)".¹⁰

⁶ Wells, Y., et al. 2018, *Literature review on choice and quality in home-based and community-based aged care. Report for the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency*

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jorgensen, M., et al. 2018, *The impact of the home care reforms on the older person, the aged care workforce and the wider Health System*

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Additionally, publicly available information for consumers to compare the quality of home care service providers remains extremely limited. The DIHP concludes that: "there is little doubt that a market-based system has the potential to exacerbate inequalities for those who do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to navigate the process."¹¹

*"Privatisation can be exploitative and not always cost effective – a big concern as these businesses are only after a profit and CARING for the elderly or disabled doesn't turn a profit."
(Consultation feedback)*

1.3 Age Friendly Darebin: beyond the Australian Government's reform agenda

In considering how Darebin prepares itself for its own demographic shift, with its ageing population, it is important to focus on the reality of the Australian Government's dominant position in setting the agenda for aged care service delivery, and its preference for a competitive model of service provision. Within this model how could DCC best complement and/or compete?

"I want to stay in my lovely diverse and inclusive community and my beautiful house and garden but will eventually find it too big to manage as I and my partner get older." (Consultation feedback)

This involves stepping back and considering what Darebin, with its strong commitment to equity and social justice, could provide for its older residents in conjunction with the Australian Government's funding and oversight of service delivery across the entire service spectrum and for the whole country.

It also involves analysing the weaknesses inherent in the new operating environment for aged care services with the aim of considering ways in which DCC could mitigate some of the problems: especially in the area of lack of knowledge, confusion, fear and general disempowerment of older people.

¹¹ Ibid.

DCC is in a very strong position to support older residents in the new aged care environment, especially the more vulnerable. For example, DCC could have a critical role in helping older people overcome a number of significant risks such as:

- inappropriate services or exploitation of older people who do not have appropriate information or the ability to use that information effectively to make good choices about a service provider;
- information not being accurate and therefore not useful to support choice at a local level;
- difficulties for some older people to access telephone and on-line services due to hearing impediments, digital illiteracy, or reversion to language other than English; and
- vulnerable people falling through cracks, especially those who have difficulty accessing services through MAC.

1.4 Age Friendly Darebin: a life course approach to living well

Apart from home support services, what else could DCC undertake as part of an organisation wide strategy with the strong governance needed to make every department work to make Darebin an exemplar Age Friendly City?

The context is that despite individual differences and at all stages of ageing, older people do best in their health and wellbeing when they have:

- somewhere to live that is of an adequate standard to enable them to remain safe, connected to community and as independent as possible for as long as possible;
- help to continue using and/or recover skills for daily living;
- regular interactions with others on a day to day basis, including informal unpaid networks;
- participation with others in community activities; and
- opportunities to keep up skills, learn new ones and to make a contribution to the community.

An Age Friendly Darebin would systematically ensure that all older people are supported in all these ways to age in place in Darebin, by being as independent as possible and connected to informal networks and community groups. In the final analysis - as the community told us - the health and well-being benefit from developing an Age Friendly Darebin is huge for the community as well as for individual older people.

"I slightly resent the current community discourse that there are too many of us, we are a burden, we cost too much, we live too long." (Consultation feedback)

Darebin gains by:

- harnessing participation of the growing pool of older people, in the interests and activities of local communities;
- many of the actions taken to make Darebin Age Friendly will also be valuable for other age groups; e.g. parents with prams and people with a disability will gain from a more accessible built environment; and
- research evidence shows that older people gain by remaining as healthy as possible with lower rates of injury, heart disease, stroke, diabetes type 2, dementia, depression and anxiety.¹²

As the level of government closest to the community, DCC could strategically contribute to achieving Age Friendliness by:

- identifying, monitoring and supporting older members of the Darebin community to access and experience good quality services, particularly for the most vulnerable members of its ageing community;
- promoting safe independent life-styles and the maintenance and use of skills and knowledge, not only for the enhanced daily living of individual older people, but also for the benefit of the wider Darebin community; and
- tackling social isolation with a strategic approach to social connection and community inclusion that includes attention to the outdoor and built environment.

1.5 Age Friendly Darebin: beyond the individual focus of My Aged Care

Identifying what local government is best at is essential for a genuine approach to Age Friendliness. A holistic, local approach is necessary because the new single point of entry to the aged care system, My Aged Care (MAC), is primarily focused on individuals in isolation from their local communities and environments.

"I have found the My Aged Care system to be very complicated and exhausting. I'm 71 and it's all up to me to research providers."
(Consultation feedback)

The review heard from the community that it is not enough for older people to be assisted to age in their home if they:

- lose the capacity to contribute what they can to their own self-care;
- see no one except paid workers;
- lose touch with neighbours;
- cannot get out to enjoy the local area;
- cannot participate in community groups; and
- lose their skills and knowledge because no one has provided them with opportunities to use them.

¹² Holt-Lunstad J., et al. 2010 'Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review' PLoS Medicine Vol. 7 no. 7

MAC has many flaws but most of all it is only one part of the puzzle. With its focus on the individual, it does not include attention to:

- the built environment including transport and housing;
- the communication and information environment; or
- the social environment – community development and inclusion and making a contribution.

This report has been developed to inform future decision making by Council in response to the changing roles and responsibilities of different levels of government, and the reaffirmation by DCC of its commitment to ensure an Age Friendly City.

For background information that has assisted in informing and shaping this report, refer to following appendices:

- **Appendix 1:** Review's Terms of Reference
- **Appendix 2:** The Project Methodology
- **Appendix 3:** Banyule City Council Summary of Liveable Housing Guidelines
- **Appendix 4:** Data & Information Tables
- **Appendix 5:** Community Consultation Report.

2 CONTEXT: COMMUNITY BASED AGED CARE SERVICES

2.1 The Home and Community Care program (HACC) in Victoria

Since its creation, through the Victorian Government's 1994 local government amalgamations, Darebin City Council (DCC) has part-funded and delivered a range of services to older residents who need assistance to keep living independently at home and in the community.

"I trust Council, I trust the workers through my home; that is a big thing for older people." (Consultation feedback)

Service recipients commonly need help with everyday tasks such as housework, meal preparation, showering and getting dressed.

Originally badged the Home and Community Care Program (HACC), services in Victoria were funded by all three levels of government, including local government, and were delivered by local government with small, income related contributions from service recipients.

Local governments' role and responsibilities for services for older residents reflected local government being well placed to deliver responsive and tailored services to local residents due to the proximity, accessibility and accountability of council staff; and the limited availability of other organisations to provide required service levels at that time.

However, as part of the transfer of the entire aged care system to the Australian Government, in 2015 the Victorian and Australian Governments agreed to transition overall responsibility for Victorian HACC services to the Australian Government.

2.2 The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) replaces HACC

From July 2016, Victorian HACC services for people aged 65 years and over (50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) have been funded and managed through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

The Victorian Government continues to fund services for people aged under 65 years (under 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) who were receiving HACC but are not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) through the HACC Program for Younger People (HACC PYP).

It is important to note that this review only considered services to older people: it did not consider the NDIS nor HACC PYP. CHSP block funding agreements for services to older people will continue to be offered until 30 June 2022 to all Victorian CHSP providers, including DCC. The Australian Governments' decision to maintain existing funding arrangements until 2022 was announced as part of the 2019 Australian Government Budget in April 2019.¹³

While the Victorian Government has transitioned full responsibility for the previous HACC, now CHSP, services for older Victorians to the Australian Government, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), individual local governments and other bodies have committed to advocate continuation of the role of local government in delivering aged care services to older Victorians.

2.3 Access to the CHSP

CHSP services are available for older people who are assessed as needing entry level help to continue living at home in the community. Service recipients commonly have difficulty with everyday tasks, such as showering, getting dressed or doing housework.

The Australian Government has full responsibility to assess eligibility for the publicly funded aged care services: assessment for CHSP services is through a Regional Assessment Service (RAS). The Australian Government directly engages 14 RAS organisations to operate the RAS in Aged Care Planning Regions across Australia. These organisations are responsible for the provision of Home Support Assessment. The RAS may deliver Home Support Assessments through subcontracting arrangements subject to approval from the Department.

In addition to RAS, the Australian Government funds the States and Territories to administer the Aged Care Assessment Program. Assessments under this program are conducted by an Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS; called Aged Care Assessment Teams ACAT in all other States than Victoria). Assessment for HCPs and residential care must be conducted by an ACAS.

DCC provides RAS but not ACAS assessments. The table below provides summary information on Assessment services provided by DCC.

¹³ Australian Government Department of Health Provider update 3/4/2019

DCC Assessment Service summary

Scope	<p>Home Support Assessment builds on the information collected in contact centre registration and screening, with a further level of detail to determine a client's eligibility to receive CHSP services. Home Support Assessments are generally conducted face-to-face in the client's usual accommodation setting.</p> <p>During the assessment, the assessor and client work together to establish a support plan that reflects the client's strengths and abilities, areas of difficulty, and the support that will best meet their needs and goals. This will include the consideration of formal and informal services as well as reablement pathways where appropriate.</p> <p>Significant effort is taken to (i) use interpreters where indicated, (ii) follow up all clients and issues and (iii) involve relevant others if client requests.</p>
Service hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am-5.00pm
Client fees	No fee charged
Active clients	2,562 (Number of individuals assisted at least once in 2017-18)
Outputs in 2017/18 (hours)	8,357

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Total Council contribution
\$751,096	\$1,577,778	\$826,682

Unit price	Unit cost	Council contribution per unit
\$92.01	\$188.80	\$98.92

* Note: (i) financial data excludes corporate overheads; and (ii) Council contribution and Council contribution per unit is based on the difference between revenue and program cost.

Position	Headcount	EFT
Senior team leaders	1	1
Home support assessors	10 (plus casuals)	7.8
Intake assessment officers	2	2
Total	13	10.8

All requests for CHSP services are channelled through the My Aged Care (MAC) screening and registration contact centre or web portal. MAC, in turn, processes the referral through to the local RAS or, if the client has more complex needs, they are triaged to an ACAS. Within Darebin, this assessment can be undertaken by DCC assessment officers (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are offered the choice to be assessed by the Aboriginal Advancement League assessment officers or DCC assessment officers).

If the person has specific vulnerabilities, such as mental illness or risk of homelessness, they are commonly referred to programs offering additional support to access appropriate services. Additional supports can include short term case management and coordination, assistance with care and housing, and support to access services.

A home support plan is developed by the assessor and the older resident, to broadly address the older person's needs and – within the limitations of the CHSP offerings – maximise the older person's independence and quality of life. The plan could include advice and referrals about meals and food preparation, and low-cost equipment, such as walkers and rails, to help the client remain independent and as safe in their home as the limited equipment and home modifications allow.

*"The people that got back to me sent some papers, but I got completely confused, so just threw it out. It was great when I could ring council and they would do what I wanted."
(Consultation feedback)*

Following a positive assessment, residents are able to select a provider of CHSP, one of which is Darebin Council.

The Australian Government is currently undertaking design of a new 'framework for streamlined consumer assessments' from 2020. Under this plan assessments will be delivered by a new national assessment workforce.

It is recommended that while the Australian Government continues to provide block funding for CHSP services to DCC, and until the full extent of new arrangements for Assessment Services is made clear, DCC should continue to provide RAS Assessment Services. (Recommendation 1)

2.4 Transition from CHSP to Home Care Packages (HCPs)

If an older person's care needs increase or become more complex, they may need new services or a different type of aged care. A further assessment determines changing needs and the services best suited to meeting them. This could include new services or a different type of care, such as a Home Care Package (HCP).

Older people assessed as requiring services beyond basic or entry level CHSP are awarded a package of care with an assigned level of government subsidy. Current packages range in value from \$8000 p.a. for 'Level 1 basic care' to \$49,500 p.a. for 'Level 4 high level care'.

(i) People waiting for HCPs

Implementation of the reforms to aged care services has not been without widely acknowledged challenges. In many cases these flow directly from the strong demand for HCPs and the requirement to grow supply.

New services through HCPs are unlikely to be available immediately, with long wait times for initial delivery of HCP services. Currently, in part because of the wait times and cost of HCPs, CHSP remains an attractive option with little or no waiting time and low client costs relative to HCPs.

Many older residents currently receiving CHSP support have been assessed as eligible for a HCP. Access to HCPs can involve a wait between a positive assessment and service provision of more than 12 months and can be up to 2 years. The average wait time for lower level care is 3-9 months and for higher level care is 12+ months.¹⁴

*"My dad passed away a few months ago waiting for a level 4 package. The waiting times are too long, people are dying."
(Consultation feedback)*

In these circumstances CHSP services may be used to provide services while the older person waits for availability of the assessed level of HCP. At the end of March 2018, more than 108,000 older Australians were in the queue for various levels of aged care packages.

*"Older Darebin residents, like my 90 year old mother, are waiting extended periods of time, over a year, to get aged care packages. In fact, my mum died before ever getting an aged care package."
(Consultation feedback)*

¹⁴ Department of Health, March 2018, *Home Care Packages Program, Data Report 3rd Quarter 2017-18* p.11

HCPs are periodically released to be assigned directly to consumers by the Department of Health through the National Prioritisation System within My Aged Care. HCPs are assigned to those consumers who have reached the top of the National Prioritisation Queue according to time on a waiting list and urgency of need. The number of packages at each funding level is capped in line with the available budget and a target ratio of 45 HCPs per 1,000 people aged 70 + years (the Australian Government has made a commitment to reach the target ratio by 2021).

(ii) HCP costs and client fees

We heard from the community that an additional factor influencing the transition from CHSP to HCP is the different ways CHSP and HCPs operate, and the different levels of funding and costs facing the older person in accessing each level in the My Aged Care program.

The level of funding available to HCP clients to purchase direct care available is affected by the deduction of costs for care coordination and administration.

Additionally, HCP clients are required to contribute to the cost of their care by paying a means-tested care fee determined by the Australian Government. HCP fees are generally significantly higher than DCC's CHSP client fees.

(iii) Quality issues

Because demand for Home Care Packages (HCPs) has substantially exceeded supply, ensuring service quality remains an additional on-going challenge. In response to wide-ranging concerns about quality assurance, from 1 January 2020 aged care approval and compliance functions will transfer from the Department of Health to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

(iv) Information gaps

There are also substantial gaps in information about accessing HCPs. Research by the Commonwealth Department of Health in 2017, for example, reported that 44 per cent of people who had recently been assigned an HCP did not understand what they needed to do next. Unfortunately, a frequent answer appears to be "Wait...extremely patiently."

"I have been accepted for an age care package level one and awaiting level two and all I have done the past few months is try and find a provider, something I know nothing about . All I hear is money figures and numbers which make no sense to me ...I am told I need a case manager to tell me if I am happy with my domestic cleaner and I have to pay her x amount of dollars a year from my package. Why can't this money be put to better use? I want to stay in my home and access services, but I am so overwhelmed with all these changes and it all seems so glorified." (Consultation feedback)

2.5 Advocacy: the need for local intelligence

There remains an urgent need for local intelligence gathering about who in Darebin is having difficulty navigating the new system, and how to improve overall performance.

"We should get better information about services, but also how to access retirement homes. A lot of organisations take advantage of you, they take a lot from you. Government and Council should work together to protect older people in situations where profit making organisations exploit seniors. In the last days of our lives we should be comfortable. We have worked and paid our taxes all our lives." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that until, and possibly beyond, the time when the full extent of new arrangements under the Australian Government reforms are made clear, DCC should gather intelligence and case studies highlighting both strengths and weakness of existing practice to inform baseline performance requirements of the new arrangements. (Recommendation 2)

Such information collected systematically will inform and guide the advocacy necessary to assist more disadvantaged residents access the services they need.

In terms of identifying and pursuing emerging opportunities to improve MAC:

It is recommended that DCC monitors:

- a. demand and supply trends for MAC across the broader catchment area than just the Darebin LGA;
- b. the impact of MAC processes on clients, for example, time from referral to response by a provider, or if clients are left without a response. (Recommendation 3)

2.6 Local government's challenge to be a price competitive CHSP provider

While the Australian Government has announced an extension of CHSP block funding to the end of June 2022, if CHSP services then move to a different funding model local government will be required to offer services at a price that is competitive with other providers. This will be difficult because local governments' service delivery costs are generally significantly higher than alternative not-for-profit or for-profit private sector providers.

2.7 Australian and Victorian Government constraints on Councils' decision-making

(i) Competitive neutrality

Local governments across Victoria may be required to implement measures to be competitively neutral due to the Australian Government's interest in encouraging a growing competitive market for aged care services.

In 1994, Australian and State/Territory Governments committed to the Competition Principles Agreement as part of application of National Competition Policy (NCP). Under NCP, the Victorian Government was obliged to introduce and apply competitive neutrality policy and principles to local government.

The principles of competitive neutrality aim to ensure that any significant business activities of government (whether local or other levels of government), do not have any competitive advantage over alternative service providers simply as a result of their public-sector ownership. In other words, it aims to create a 'level playing field', between the public sector and alternative providers.

Independent legal advice to DCC has indicated that it is likely that DCC's CHSP services would be characterised as a significant business activity; the possible subsequent application of NCP would restrict continued provision of subsidised CHSP services once block funding is withdrawn. DCC would then have to consider implementing measures to be competitively neutral.

These measures include:

- setting client fees that fully reflect costs (i.e. not subsidising the cost of services to reduce client fees);
- establishing a separate legal entity to provide services (i.e. corporatisation); and
- establishing a separate business unit to provide the services on a commercial basis without going to the extent of establishing a separate legal entity (commercialisation).

That said, the Victorian Government is able to exempt application of NCP through use of a public interest test, and Darebin Council has made strong, but to date unsuccessful, representations for such an exemption to be granted.

(ii) Local government rates cap

The suggestion has been made that DCC could increase rates to continue delivering CHSP if the Australian Government ceases to provide the block funding for CHSP. However, rate increases for all Victorian local government authorities are capped each year by the Victorian Minister for Local Government. This decision constrains the capacity of all Victorian Councils to significantly increase direct expenditure in a single area of responsibility without a commensurate reduction in expenditure in another area.

2.8 Other Council's decisions regarding delivery of CHSP services

In the context of a 30-year history of delivering home care services to older residents, several Victorian Councils are considering how they might best contribute to supporting older residents to remain well supported and engaged in their local community after June 2022.

"Local and State governments cannot abdicate their responsibilities to older citizens just because there is now a national aged care system." (Consultation feedback)

Councils have varied in their decisions on their future role in the delivery of CHSP services: some have decided to continue service delivery; some to discontinue service delivery; and many have not as yet conducted a process to inform their decision-making.

In its response to aged care reforms the MAV has highlighted the distinctive and valued role and contributions local governments have made to the delivery of services to aged residents. This distinctive contribution of Victorian local government service provision for the benefit of older residents has also been acknowledged by the Australian Government.

3 COMMUNITY BASED AGED CARE IN DAREBIN

3.1 DCC's provision of CHSP

DCC currently provides a range of services funded through the CHSP program. These range from delivered meals, to domestic assistance, to home maintenance, and personal care.

"We feel we trust her (the worker) because she works through the council. We feel if it goes private it will become very expensive and it will be difficult to know if we can trust these people. It is an important service which needs to be overlooked by council to maintain its integrity and trust to the people." (Consultation feedback)

In addition, there are a number of CHSP services that DCC does not and has never provided. These include equipment and assistive technology, nursing, and other allied health and therapy services. Within the municipality many of these services are provided by other agencies such as Your Community Health (formerly the Darebin Community Health Centre).

In 2017-18 Darebin Council provided CHSP services to more than 2000 residents. Services provided to residents included assessment, domestic assistance, personal care and delivered meals.

Currently Council employs 234 staff (150.8 EFT) in the aged care assessment and service delivery units, including office-based staff: the median age of all aged care staff is 52, nearly 90 per cent of staff are female; and about a third of the workforce live in Darebin, with most of the rest residing in nearby northern suburbs.

In response to the Australian Government's aged care reforms, DCC is actively supporting staff in ongoing training. This includes a range of roles designed to support older residents in accessing aged care services.

Employment opportunities are also likely to continue growing in the rapidly expanding 'age-care industry', particularly for the well-trained and experienced staff employed by Council, although terms and conditions would in many cases be likely to be lower for the same role.

However, as the Australian Government's aged care reforms have been progressively implemented over recent years, demand for DCC's CHSP services has declined (see section 3.2 below). One consequence is that the average hours available to DCC's community support workers have also declined, along with average weekly earnings.

3.2 Decline in demand for Home Support Services provided by Darebin Council

Demand for home support services from DCC has been declining since 2009/10. The rate of decline increased since the introduction of My Aged Care in 2016, although in the last 12 months the decline in demand has plateaued for some of the services.

Several factors appear to have contributed to this change, including:

- services only being provided to people aged 65+ following the introduction of the NDIS and HACC PYP programs;
- changes in residents' needs and aspirations and a shift in demand away from traditional service models;
- increased availability of Home Care Packages (HCP) resulting in new entrants with higher needs being allocated a HCP or existing CHSP clients with higher needs moving to other service providers;
- changes in the amount of service available under CHSP resulting in people seeking HCPs; and
- more service providers, and more alternatives, from which residents can choose.

3.3 CHSP: Clients' needs and expectations

CHSP client needs vary significantly, ranging from:

- older people with chronic conditions that require ongoing support;
- older people with chronic conditions with increasing service needs over time;
- older people requiring short to medium term support to build capacity with declining service needs over time; and
- older people with short-term support needs until fully functional (e.g. following hospital discharge).

Yet, the current community expectation appears to be that DCC clients will continue to receive a CHSP service at current or increasing service intensity indefinitely, rather than a reablement approach that may result in lower service levels but improved health and well-being outcomes, or a transition to HCPs.

While the low intensity support provided to older people by CHSP for the majority aims to help them maintain their independence at home and in the community, assessing the degree to which CHSP is actually assisting older people to maintain and/or regain independence would be extremely valuable to monitor.

3.4 Vulnerable groups and access to CHSP services in DCC

We heard from the community that especially disadvantaged groups of Darebin's older residents are less likely to be aware of, and less likely to receive CHSP support. Groups who are particularly vulnerable include short-term residents of boarding houses, homeless and mentally ill residents, and many who move regularly within various types of low-cost rental accommodation as well as those from a CALD background and those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

More broadly, the Aged Care Act 1997 identifies people with special needs as those who identify with or belong to one or more of the following groups:

- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- people who are financially or socially disadvantaged;
- people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex;
- veterans;
- people who are carers; and
- parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal.

"Some women are fearful of workers coming in to the homes, very lonely and isolated, older lesbians need non-discriminatory service delivery." (Consultation feedback)

Consistent with the recognition of specific groups as vulnerable, the CHSP Assistance with Care and Housing sub-program aims to provide support to people aged from age 50 (and 45 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) who are on a low income and who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to enable them to remain in the community through linking them to sustainable housing, community care, and other support services.

DCC is not currently funded through this sub-program, but other local organisations receive funding and deliver this service. This is not to suggest that DCC should seek funding for this sub-program as it is likely that CHSP Assistance with Care and Housing funding to Non-Government Organisation (NGO's) that currently provide this service would be reduced if DCC was successful. Loss of this funding stream may significantly compromise the operation of these NGO's, as they rely on multiple funding sources to maintain organizational viability.

On the basis of DCC's ongoing experience over many years to address poverty and discrimination, key factors and groups have been identified by DCC and targeted in its work to facilitate increasing equity and inclusion, this includes:

'Older people, with attention to those who are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and/or from CALD backgrounds, and to older people living in public housing, living alone or in neighbourhoods with limited infrastructure.¹⁵

¹⁵ Darebin Equity and Inclusion Policy 2012-2015 p.13

(i) Access to CHSP by culturally and linguistically diverse citizens

Darebin has a culturally and linguistically diverse community:

- one in four Darebin residents was born in a non-English speaking country;
- over one third of Darebin's residents speak a language other than English at home; and
- of those born in non-English speaking countries, one in four doesn't speak English well, or at all.¹⁶

DCC's Equity and Inclusion Policy recognises a range of elements to build an inclusive and empowered Darebin community, including:

- people have access to and use services that are responsive to their needs and rights;
- people and communities are encouraged, supported and provided with opportunities to participate in decisions that impact on their lives individually and as communities;
- initiatives are developed which promote community relationships across diversity; and
- people and communities understand and express their rights and act in collaboration with others.¹⁷

"Darebin Council are very good in terms of helping the people who are from non-English background, you are the only city Council I know to set up the time to help senior groups for filling out the forms and reports." (Consultation feedback)

The review heard that there is a significant variation in levels of participation in using CHSP services between different CALD communities: some communities were not even aware that aged care services were available or did not know how to access services; for other communities there may be a cultural barrier to seeking government support, particularly for older people; other communities may be high service users but may misunderstand program objectives (e.g. seeing the service as an entitlement upon reaching 65 years rather than as a mechanism to remain independent at home).

"Many of these people have poor English so maybe they don't know how to ask for help." (Consultation feedback)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Darebin Council needs to be responsive to the differing attitudes and moray to DCC's home support services by different CALD communities, and older people preference to be supported by people from their own cultural and linguistic background. This may be particularly exacerbated as people revert to their primary language as they get older. It is therefore important for DCC to build the capacity of CALD communities, senior's groups and providers to enable them to more effectively support older people from their communities.

It is also important, however, to recognise that Council has a lengthy history of being at the forefront of communication and engagement practice with CALD communities.

Effective communication practices support Council's goals to involve all sectors of the community in the services, projects and decisions of Council, for example:

- DCC has published an Older and Active in Darebin brochure and distributes My Aged Care brochures in Italian, Greek, Macedonian, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
- DCC provides an interpreting service and staff able to assist older residents understand services available to support and assist them in everyday living.

"Many people do not speak English, need help. Such as answering the phone, call someone, read a letter or search for information..." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC works closely with CALD communities, seniors' groups and providers to build their capacity to effectively support older people from their communities. (Recommendation 4)

It is further recommended that DCC sets performance targets for the number of people from specific CALD communities participating in programs, including MAC, for older people. (Recommendation 5)

(ii) Access to CHSP by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Darebin continue to experience significant disadvantage, with lower levels of home ownership and higher levels of homelessness than the non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. This is recognised by the earlier ages at which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to access home and community care services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians can access CHSP services from age 50 (or 45 if they are on a low income or homeless) rather than the age 65 entry point for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged residents.

"Priorities (for our elders) are putting food on the table, a roof over their heads, taking care of our health, not to come here today, not to come to Seniors month – not aged friendly or reablement." (Consultation feedback)

As a special needs group with multiple complex needs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Darebin generally face systemic barriers to accessing aged care services, including initial and subsequent interaction with program assessment staff and service providers.

While detailed data on take-up of CHSP services by eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Darebin is not available, Victoria's state-wide evidence indicates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people access both aged care assessment and support services at lower rates than the non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

The barriers facing older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in accessing My Aged Care and gaining quality outcomes are widely acknowledged. Central to the challenge of equitable access is the reality that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians commonly have multiple needs that are not easily addressed by consumer directed care.

In addition, design of the MAC system encourages competition rather than collaboration between service providers and any tendency to 'cherry pick' will likely act as a barrier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Barriers are often compounded by the inherent difficulties with the MAC system. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often need support, including advocacy, to be able to direct their own care and this is often lacking.

"I advocate for Aboriginal trained workers or culturally trained workers to help." (Consultation feedback)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders informed the 2017 Legislated Review of Aged Care that consumer directed care and individualised budgets do not meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.¹⁸ Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other experts in aged care have argued persuasively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific aged care services as a choice and option for community members, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services that offer an appropriate model of care, underpinned by an understanding and respect for culture.

¹⁸ Tune, D., 2017, *Legislated Review of Aged Care*

Victoria's Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) has identified the following practices for ensuring culturally appropriate service provision:

- compulsory core cultural safety training for My Aged Care assessors and RAS;
- recognition of cultural competence as good practice;
- employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander assessment staff'
- a dedicated call centre line with a mix of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who are culturally competent;
- availability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters;
- assessment outreach services based in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs); and
- continued support and training for specialist ACCHO providers to ensure up-skilling as necessary.¹⁹

It is important that DCC maintains active support for these practices in its own work, while also lending its' support to VACCHO's advocacy to the Australian Government.

Alongside the significant disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, DCC has active and effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and agencies.

Community support work by these groups is already supported by DCC, although more can and should be done to support these groups in their outreach and support for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.

Given its significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population:

It is recommended that DCC conduct targeted work aimed at improving the current rates at which eligible residents from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are engaged in assessment and connected to recommended aged care services. This should include targeted and culturally appropriate information, navigation and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and older people to assist them access the aged care services that are available to them. Alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services, mainstream services must be encouraged to provide culturally informed services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents. (Recommendation 6)

In consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations:

It is recommended that DCC identifies both good and bad practice in responding to the needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communicates this to the Australian Government to improve practice guidelines for MAC, specifically in delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Darebin. (Recommendation 7)

¹⁹ VACCHO response to Commonwealth discussion paper: 'Commonwealth Home Support Programs Good Practice Guide for Restorative Care Approaches'

An important guide to the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations was provided by the Human Rights Commission recommendation that 'culturally appropriate care is essential for aged care services delivered to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people'.²⁰

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations within Darebin:

Monitoring of on-going access will be important. Data specifically relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will provide vital information on the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in aged care programs and help to ensure any gaps or shortcomings in service access and delivery are addressed.

DCC should also consider providing support, such as respite trips or retreats for community elders who are carers, while providing support for the people they care for. (Recommendation 8)

Given that Darebin is a hub for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it is important that there is a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander meeting space within the municipality. It is recommended that DCC, in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait elders, investigates creating such a space that services could provide outreach to. (Recommendation 9)

3.5 Client satisfaction with DCC's services

Information available to the review indicates that DCC's CHSP services are generally of high quality and well regarded by residents. Individual service plans are based on what the older resident actually needs. In addition, Darebin staff are commonly reported as investing significant effort in establishing rapport with elderly clients and do not approach service delivery as a purely transactional arrangement.

However, despite being well-regarded there are opportunities for improvement, particularly in relation to:

- greater responsiveness and flexibility to meet client need;
- increasing client choice and direction;
- more emphasis on reablement; and
- communication and information about services.

²⁰ The Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012 *Respect and Choice: a human rights approach for ageing and health*

3.6 Gaps and limits to DCC's services

Meetings with residents and submissions to this review identified several limitations on current services delivered to aged residents by DCC.

A general concern is that DCC's home care workers are discouraged from responding to client requests for assistance if the request is considered to be outside the 'scope of service'. While this is understandable on many grounds, DCC's workers should be supported to strike a balance between a 'we will help wherever we can' approach to their job, and an understanding of any significant occupational health and safety concerns, alongside any specific program limitations.

"I receive council services and the standard of cleaning is not good. The emphasis seems to be more on what they can't do rather than what they can do." (Consultation feedback)

The Panel was also told of an expectation that home care workers clean while being supervised by the client; i.e. clients did not consider that they had an ongoing contribution to make to cleaning. Where appropriate, co-production of household services such as cleaning and cooking should be explored as a re-framing of DCC CHSP services towards the goal of maintaining independence. In many cases, working alongside a DCC worker could help restore an older resident's confidence and sense of personal capability. In addition, the Panel was also told that working alongside DCC's workers on many household tasks could provide opportunities for older residents to learn new skills, or 'better ways of getting things done.'

Additional suggestions to this review about how older residents could be supported in their homes included exercising a pet dog with or without its owner; and enhancing consumer control of service providers. For example, one contribution to this review was from a resident who illustrated the rigidity of the service by telling the Panel that against her wishes she had her bed sheets ironed every fortnight even though she had never ironed her bed sheets in her life and did not consider it a priority.

Gardening was another area brought to the Panel's attention as an opportunity to both address older residents' requirements for a well maintained and safe garden. This provides an opportunity to enlist the older person as a co-worker in the garden. While workers should be briefed on occupational health and safety risks, and steps to minimise risks, DCC's services should aim to utilise opportunities where appropriate, to engage clients in co-working in areas that are important to them.

Several submissions highlighted the absence of service delivery on Saturdays and Sundays. This is especially problematic with personal services for showering and dressing.

Other gaps in care provision were identified through community consultation, including care planning and coordination issues, the need for greater communication from Council workers.

Issues were also raised about the need for more dementia care. However, dementia care and the associated need for respite and support are also likely to reflect higher levels of need than that provided through CHSP funded services.

3.7 Accountability and continuous improvement

The range of evidence to this review indicates delivery of services to Darebin residents should be guided by a commitment to continuous improvement.

This would involve recognition that:

- quality should be defined by client's requirements;
- DCC managers have direct responsibility for quality improvement;
- increased quality results from systematic analysis and improvement of work processes; and
- quality improvement is a continuous effort conducted throughout the entire service assessment and delivery process.

Transparent and effective accountability is a critical element of quality and continuous improvement. An important dimension of current accountability arrangements is the close proximity of residents and clients to local government, with a relatively straightforward process for residents to raise any concerns regarding CHSP services directly with DCC staff and members of Council. However, there is the opportunity for DCC to further enhance strong accountability mechanisms and measures to address DCC's own services.

"Good governance, for me, includes the provision of best quality services which even the poorest citizens can access with confidence. This is part of what it means to me to live in a Democracy." (Consultation feedback)

From the perspective of this review, accountability for quality assurance is likely to be more difficult to establish under arrangements when the Australian Government contracts service from a range of not-for-profit and private providers.

4 CHOICES AND CHALLENGES: OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Specific overall recommendations considered by this review as potential directions for council, while block funding continues, include:

DCC to continue and optimise delivery of CHSP services

DCC to continue CHSP and consider the feasibility of expansion into the delivery of HCP services to enhance continuity of care of clients

DCC to pilot a social inclusion program while addressing older people's navigation and utilisation of aged care system-related risks.

4.1 DCC to continue and optimise delivery of CHSP services

At its 3 September 2018 meeting Darebin Council agreed the following resolution regarding continuation of the current block grant:

"...Continues to provide Commonwealth Home Support Program services while in receipt of any block funding from the Commonwealth Government."²¹

In effect, this now means that with the block grant for CHSP continuing until 2022, DCC will continue delivery of CHSP services for at least that period.

"It would be a sad day if we did not have Darebin Council. The services supplied to the aged are fantastic." (Consultation feedback)

However, within this option, DCC can reassess the impact, reach and outcomes from services. This will deliver more effective provision of certain services, and enable DCC to be best placed for the longer term future.

²¹ Darebin City Council, 2018, *Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 3 September 2018*

It is proposed that the lens to assess the effectiveness of DCC's delivery of CHSP services includes questions such as:

- Are CHSP services reaching vulnerable groups?
- Are CHSP services supporting, where appropriate, independence and adaptation?
- Are CHSP services breaking down social isolation?
- Are older people who are declining beyond CHSP being assisted to access home care packages?

The answer to none of these questions is an unqualified 'yes' and in many cases it is clearly 'no'.

Potential areas for focus and redevelopment are considered by service type below opportunities have been identified to improve services by:

- focusing more explicitly on the needs of the older person with greater flexibility to respond to their needs;
- promoting alignment between service delivery and client expectations and needs;
- improving client health and well-being by promoting 'co-production' between clients and home care workers to build or re-build client capability; and
- increasing capacity through more efficient use of available resources.

"Also home cleaning support should be more flexible in listening to what the aged care person wants, not just the same service every week." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC commits to continual improvement of service effectiveness and impact including maximising independence, socialisation and inclusion, through ongoing consultation and co-design with older people. (Recommendation 10)

Domestic Assistance

Domestic Assistance provides frail older people with assistance with domestic chores to maintain their capacity to manage everyday activities in a safe, secure and healthy home environment, for example dishwashing, house cleaning, clothes washing, ironing etc.

DCC Domestic Assistance summary

Scope	All Domestic Assistance activity types except collection of firewood. Escorted shopping is out of scope for Domestic Assistance, however DCC provides Escorted Shopping to clients from Domestic Assistance activity hours. Standard length of time is 1.5 hours a fortnight. Exceptions to this are decided via the Service Review Panel, however generally a maximum of 2 hours per fortnight Service restrictions in relation to: OH&S and Risk, frequency and time allocated specified and in line with 'Entry level'
Service hours	Mon to Fri. Not Public holidays. 7.30am-7.30pm primarily am to suit client preference
Client fees	2018/19 Low Level Fees =\$6.60 per hour (all Low level)
Active clients	2,361 (Number of individuals assisted at least once in 2017-18)

Outputs (unit: hours)

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	13/14 - 17/18 No.	13/14 - 17/18 %
88,743	88,257	84,908	68,537	66,245	-22,498	-25%

Data prior to 15/16 is inclusive of all age groups

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Council contribution adjusted for variation from contracted outputs
\$3,152,626	\$5,530,594	\$2,377,968

Unit price	Unit cost	Council contribution per unit
\$48.08	\$83.49	\$35.90

* Note: (i) Financial data excludes corporate overheads; and (ii) Council contribution and Council contribution per unit is based on the difference between revenue and program cost, and includes an estimated adjustment to revenue to reflect the variation between target and actual outputs (i.e. reflecting potential 'claw-back' for under-delivery of agreed outputs).

Staffing

Position	Headcount	EFT	Note:
Community support workers	132 (plus casuals)	71	Domestic Assistance/ Personal Care/Respite Care considered together due to same workforce and infrastructure. Estimated distribution of work by service type in 2017-18: Domestic Assistance (70%), Personal Care (22%) and Flexible Respite (8%)
Peer support	3	1.3	
Service facilitators	6	6	
Team leaders	4	4	
Community response	5	4	
Service planning	4	4	
Transition support	1	1	
Senior team leaders	2	2	
Total	157	93.3	

Since 2013/14, in response to changing demand of DCC services, service provision has dropped by 20 per cent. Therefore, there is a good opportunity to rethink some of the constraints on current service delivery that may be contributing to the decline in demand such as enhanced flexibility and some broadening of tasks. It could also be a good time to refocus on supporting older people to maintain skills and independence.

"We need council to continue with the services, but they can still adapt for the better, like updating or replacing services and employ more older people and train them or have them volunteer to do these services." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC focuses Domestic Assistance on building the older person's confidence and capability to perform everyday tasks, with workers then undertaking tasks that are beyond the capacity of clients. (Recommendation 11)

"The workers complain about my vacuum cleaner and bucket... older people cannot afford to have special equipment...there is no flexibility about cleaning, it's very rigid. My regular worker is J. I am very happy." (Consultation feedback)

That said, it is recognised that any proposed changes with occupational health and safety implications will need to be carefully considered in consultation with the Australian Services Union (ASU).

Personal care

Personal Care provides frail older people with support in activities of daily living that help them maintain appropriate standards of hygiene and grooming.

DCC Personal Care service summary

Scope	<p>Activities can include support with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eating • bathing • toileting • dressing • grooming • getting in and out of bed • moving about the house • assistance with client self-administration of medicine <p>Also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food preparation under the Personal Care activity • interim measures such as sponging – while transitioning to safer arrangements (HCP) <p>Entry level scope is generally considered as 2 x Personal Care shifts per week, however exceptions are made via approval by service review panel.</p> <p>Service restrictions consistent with Domestic Assistance.</p>
Service hours	<p>Core business hours Monday to Friday 7.30am–7.30pm. Weekend services are by exception and approved by Service Review Panel.</p> <p>Public holidays shifts are available.</p>
Client fees	2018/19 Low Level Fees: \$4.80 per hour
Active clients	583 (Number of individuals assisted at least once in 2017–18)

Outputs (unit: hours)

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	13/14 -17/18 No.	13/14 -17/18 %
39,781	41,722	38,400	23,433	20,678	-19,103	-48%

Data prior to 15/16 is inclusive of all age groups

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Council contribution adjusted for variation from contracted outputs
\$1,501,454	\$1,942,046	\$853,419

Unit price	Unit cost	Council contribution per unit
\$48.07	\$93.92	\$41.27

* Note: (i) Financial data excludes corporate overheads; and (ii) Council contribution and Council contribution per unit is based on the difference between revenue and program cost, and includes an estimated adjustment to revenue to reflect the variation between target and actual outputs (i.e. reflecting potential 'claw-back' for under-delivery of agreed outputs).

Staffing

Refer to Domestic Assistance: Domestic Assistance/Personal Care/Respite Care considered together because same workforce and infrastructure.

The volume of personal care services delivered by Darebin Council staff has almost halved since 2014/15, contemporaneous with the roll out of My Aged Care reforms. While demand is likely to continue declining, this service meets an important need, particularly while residents are waiting to receive HCPs and should continue to be available on an as needs basis, including on weekends.

"I don't like missing out on a shower and with no one to speak to for a whole weekend." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC considers providing personal support services on weekends. (Recommendation 12)

Flexible Respite

Flexible Respite supports and maintains care relationships between informal family carers and clients, through providing good quality respite care for frail older people so that carers can take a break. Flexible Respite is a distinct service type which is different than Centre-Based Respite and Cottage Respite.

DCC Flexible Respite Service summary

Scope DCC provides:

- in-home day respite: daytime support service for carers of clients needing assisted support in the carer's or the client's home
- community access-individual: one-on-one structured activities to give clients a social experience to develop, maintain or support independent living and social interaction and offer respite to their carer

Scope	<p>DCC provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-home day respite: daytime support service for carers of clients needing assisted support in the carer's or the client's home • community access–individual: one-on-one structured activities to give clients a social experience to develop, maintain or support independent living and social interaction and offer respite to their carer <p>DCC does not provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • host family day respite • host family overnight respite • mobile respite <p>Maximum service scope is typically 4 hours a fortnight depending on the balance of other CHSP services that the client accesses.</p>
Service hours	<p>Core business hours Monday to Friday 7.30am–7.30pm. Weekend/night shifts are generally by exception and approved by Service Review Panel.</p> <p>Public holidays not available.</p>
Client fees	2018/19 Low Level fees = \$3.90 per hour (All Low level)
Active clients	138 (2017/18)

Outputs (unit: hours)

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	13/14 -17/18 No.	13/14 -17/18 %
12,390	14,651	15,305	6,376	4,396	-7,994	-65%

Data prior to 15/16 is inclusive of all age groups

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Council contribution adjusted for variation from contracted outputs
\$374,381	\$344,366	\$120,146

Unit price	Unit cost	Council contribution per unit
\$48.08	\$78.33	\$27.33

* Note: (i) Financial data excludes corporate overheads; and (ii) Council contribution and Council contribution per unit is based on the difference between revenue and program cost, and includes an estimated adjustment to revenue to reflect the variation between target and actual outputs (i.e. reflecting potential 'claw-back' for under-delivery of agreed outputs).

Staffing

Refer to Domestic Assistance: Domestic Assistance/Personal Care/Respite Care (considered together because same workforce and infrastructure).

Demand for flexible respite has also declined significantly since 2015/16, alongside the roll out of My Aged Care. That said, for the nearly 140 active clients in 2017/18 the service provided invaluable support.

"It would be helpful if extra home respite could take place of home cleaning and personal care for mum. We need more than the 2 hours now given for respite. Council would have to take on the full Home Care Package service but this would probably need a whole extra department and an extension of Aged Care Council services to providing higher care to clients or carers."
(Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC closely monitors demand for respite with a view to phasing out delivery of respite funded through the CHSP while either (i) considering offering respite through HCPs beyond 2022 or (ii) confirming that other providers are available to respond in a quality and timely way. (Recommendation 13)

Delivered Meals

Meals delivered to a client's home is intended to provide nutrition to those at risk. Additional benefits include informal monitoring on the client's health and well-being and social interaction when delivering the meal.

DCC Delivered Meals service summary

Scope	<p>Services provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chilled main course with serving of chilled soup and a serve of fruit or dessert. Sandwiches are available as an alternative to the chilled main meal meals driver provides basic monitoring of client welfare <p>Service limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> breakfast meal not provided – the standard meal delivery does not include all daily nutritional requirements does not provide a hot meal. However, the service can assist client by plating and heating a meal. In these instances, the client may be beyond 'entry level' aged care services, and attempts are made to transition the client with interim arrangements, e.g. meal support through Personal Care
Service hours	Delivery times are Monday to Friday between 10.00am-1.00pm. Saturday and Sunday meals are delivered in advance on weekdays.
Client fees	2018/19 Low Level Fees =\$10 per meal (All Low level).
Active clients	412 (No. individuals assisted at least once in 2017/18).

Outputs (unit: meals)

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	13/14 - 17/18 No.	13/14 - 17/18 %
74,329	68,924	59,790	41,734	30,818	-43,511	-59%

Data prior to 15/16 is inclusive of all age groups

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Council contribution adjusted for variation from contracted outputs
\$493,151	\$1,613,839	\$1,194,210

Unit price	Unit cost	Council contribution per unit
\$4.71	\$52.37	\$38.75

* Note: (i) Financial data excludes corporate overheads; and (ii) Council contribution and Council contribution per unit is based on the difference between revenue and program cost, and includes an estimated adjustment to revenue to reflect the variation between target and actual outputs (i.e. reflecting potential 'claw-back' for under-delivery of agreed outputs).

Staffing

Position	Headcount	EFT
Meals drivers	6 plus casuals	2.5
Dispatch	3	2.1
Total	9	4.6

Note: Delivered Meals, Community Transport and Home Maintenance are collectively supported by 1x Senior Team Leader, 1x Team Leader and 1.5 administrative positions.

Delivered Meals are important in maintaining nutritional safety, health and well-being. A range of alternatives to CHSP Delivered Meals are available including pre-cooked meals available and home delivered from supermarkets, and home delivered fast food and restaurant meals (e.g. Uber Eats), however, these alternatives may not be nutritionally balanced nor appropriate to a client's condition (e.g. high sugar or fat content). Additionally, alternative sources do not provide monitoring and may have limited social interaction.

Currently Delivered Meals are not prepared by Darebin but purchased from an outside supplier and then delivered by DCC staff.

It costs approximately \$52 per meal for the preparation and delivery for Darebin's Delivered Meals service with a Council subsidy of \$48 per meal. A significant portion of the current cost is the overhead cost applied by DCC.

The Panel heard numerous complaints about meals, including that they were not culturally relevant, they were not hot, that there was no one on hand to sit and share meals.

"Meals don't look appealing or taste appealing. Maybe sourcing meals elsewhere or better presentation." (Consultation feedback)

As noted in the table above demand for delivered meals has more than halved since 2013/14, most significantly since the roll-out of My Aged Care.

It is recommended that the DCC's meals service is redesigned through consideration of the experience of other Councils to:

- a. further emphasise assisting older residents to prepare their own meals and to share meals;
- b. provide meals that better match the dietary and cultural preferences of residents;
- c. consider the addition of alternative providers, including the recent growth of home delivery services from a wide range of culturally appropriate local food retailers; and
- d. increase the numbers of residents attending meals outside their home, possibly with expanded use of volunteers supplied by the proposed volunteer service. (Recommendation 14)

Social Support Groups

Provides an opportunity for clients to attend and participate in social interactions which are conducted away from the client's home and in, or from, a fixed base facility or community-based settings. It may take the form of group-based activities held in or from a facility/centre; or group excursions conducted by centre staff but held away from the centre. Transport to and from activities is also provided.

DCC Social Support Group service summary

Scope	Including dementia specific and general <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group-based activities held in or from a facility/centre • group excursions conducted by centre staff but held away from the centre • meals provided (hot meals cooked on site) • includes transport support to and from centre
Service hours	Days of operation: Tuesday to Friday
Client fees	2018/19 Low Level Fees = \$13 per hour (most Low level)
Active clients	77 (No. individuals assisted at least once in 2017-18)

Outputs (unit: hours)

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	13/14 - 17/18 No.	13/14 - 17/18 %
Social Support	17,636	18,143	15,553	12,501	10,614	-7,022	-40%
Support for Carers	1,593	1,292	1,421	1,931	547	-1,046	-66%

Data prior to 15/16 is inclusive of all age groups

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Council contribution adjusted for variation from contracted outputs
\$327,768	\$532,413	\$265,255

Unit price	Unit cost	Council contribution per unit
\$19.73	\$50.16	\$24.99

* Note: (i) Financial data excludes corporate overheads; and (ii) Council contribution and Council contribution per unit is based on the difference between revenue and program cost, and includes an estimated adjustment to revenue to reflect the variation between target and actual outputs (i.e. reflecting potential 'claw-back' for under-delivery of agreed outputs).

Staffing

Position	Headcount	EFT
Senior team leader	1	0.9
Program leader	1	0.51
Program staff	6	2.42
Total	8	3.83

Almost all Darebin clients of this social support service have dementia and are therefore likely to be transferring to higher level HCPs.

Consistent with other services, demand for these social support services reduced by more than 40 per cent between 2014/15 and 2017/18. That said, there are 77 aged clients of Yanada House, commonly with dementia.

However, the provision of Yanada House social support group is unique both as DCC's only contribution to the area of dementia and also as a unique service in its own right.

"Yanada House is a life saver for me and my mother. She looks forward to going and I look forward to knowing she is safe and well-cared for and I can have a break." (Consultation feedback)

One possibility is for DCC to promote the Yanada House program and build up client numbers who have needs that are consistent with CHSP scope so that it becomes more viable. Another option is to consider offering the service to HCP recipients.

If this does not work then another option is to liaise with alternative service providers within the municipality such as Your Community Health, Spectrum and Merri Health to ascertain their interest in taking over the Yanada House social support group.

It is recommended that DCC promotes Yanada House as an outstanding and unique social support program for older people with dementia and tries to build up client numbers.

Failing this, it is recommended that DCC ascertain the interest of other providers of social support groups in establishing a dementia group to for the Yanada house clients. (Recommendation 15)

Community Transport

DCC Community Transport service summary

Scope	Not funded by CHSP, fully funded by council: Transport of participants of the Aged & Disability Social Support Groups between their homes and Yanada House. Transport of Community members from their homes or requested pick up points to: set destinations on set days and times of the week (e.g. Northcote Plaza, Preston Market) or requested destinations within the municipality.
Service hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am-4.00am - No Public Holidays
Client fees	2018/19 Fees = \$4.60 per return trip
Active clients	157 (No. individuals assisted at least once in 2017/18)

Outputs (unit: trips)

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	13/14 -17/18 No.	13/14 -17/18 %
2,403	2,412	1,999	1,566	1,650	-753	-31%

Data prior to 15/16 is inclusive of all age groups

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Council contribution adjusted for variation from contracted outputs
\$34,980	\$448,315	\$413,335

Note: Delivered Meals, Community Transport and Home Maintenance services are collectively supported by 1x Senior Team Leader, 1x Team Leader and 1.5 administrative positions.

Darebin Council currently spends more than \$500,000 a year of its own funds on community transport, including direct services delivered by either a Council employee or a volunteer, or indirect services, including trips provided through vouchers.

Services include transport between older residents' homes and Yanada House, and to set destinations on set days, e.g. Senior citizens clubs, Northland, Northcote Plaza and Preston Market. Residents pay \$4.60 for each return trip.

Alongside scheduled services DCC can sometimes accommodate one-off trips to other social activities; that said, availability is dependent on timetabling commitments and is not promoted.

"Some people using the bus need more time at the market to do their shopping. They do not have enough time to finish the shopping. They use walkers and cannot go fast." (Consultation feedback)

Demand is falling, therefore the onus is on Darebin Council to change this trend as per recommendations below. Community transport is important in that it provides support for residents to get out of their homes and into the Darebin community.

It is recommended that DCC focuses on ensuring community bus availability is more fully utilised by:

- a. building up demand;**
- b. increasing flexibility in routes;**
- c. exploring the possibility of using newly available digital network tools to enhance door to door responsiveness and availability. (Recommendation 16)**

However, if the demand continues to fall, a subcontracting arrangement that other councils have taken up should be considered.

Home maintenance

Repairs or maintenance of a resident's home or garden aims to improve safety and independence within the home environment, however CHSP program guidelines limit the range and extent of work that can be conducted:

"Home Maintenance services provided to clients must focus on repairs or maintenance of the home and garden to improve safety, accessibility and independence within the home environment for the client, by minimising environmental health and safety hazards."²²

DCC Home Maintenance service summary

Scope	<p>Not in scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tasks requiring a plumber/any electrical work • tiles on walls or floor more than 1 square metre • installation of electric smoke detectors • fly wire screens which need to be constructed • broken windows/replace roof tiles • floor coverings not level (e.g. carpet)/replace floor boards • fencing –repair or replace posts or over 5 palings • paint concrete steps/paths/remove concrete paths • lawn mowing/cut down trees • remove or repair guttering (gutter voucher program does this) • move heavy furniture <p>DCC is not funded for Home Modifications, but provides the following services under the Home Maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • install handrails supplied with occupational therapist specifications • install premade bannisters up to 3 steps occupational therapist specifications • ramp to 1.5metre treat pine no finishing occupational therapist specifications • ross hinges to doors
Service hours	Monday to Friday only
Client fees	2018/19 Low Level Fees = \$13.20 per hour
Active clients	691 (No. individuals assisted at least once in 2017-18)

²² Department of Health, 2018, *CHSP Program Manual*

Outputs (unit: hours)

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	13/14 -17/18 No.	13/14 -17/18 %
3,862	3,090	1,185	654	1,483	-2,379	-62%

Data prior to 15/16 is inclusive of all age groups

Financials 2017/18 actual

Total revenue	Program cost	Council contribution adjusted for variation from contracted outputs
\$196,961	\$205,573	\$79,577

Unit price	Unit cost	Council contribution per unit
\$49.87	\$136.62	\$53.66

* Note: (i) Financial data excludes corporate overheads; and (ii) Council contribution and Council contribution per unit is based on the difference between revenue and program cost, and includes an estimated adjustment to revenue to reflect the variation between target and actual outputs (i.e. reflecting potential 'claw-back' for under-delivery of agreed outputs).

Staffing

Position	Headcount	EFT
Home Maintenance Officers	2	1.5

Note: Delivered Meals, Community Transport and Home Maintenance services are collectively supported by 1x Senior Team Leader, 1x Team Leader and 1.5 administrative positions.

CHSP eligible clients, both owners and renters, are able to obtain available services; most home maintenance for renters will require permission from the property owner, and often needs to be taken out when renters move on.

While DCC is not funded by the Australian Government to undertake home modifications, DCC provides a range of services including installation of smoke detectors, installation of handrails, bannisters and ramps, installation of weather seals to windows and doors, pruning when shrubs or trees are blocking access paths to front or back doors, installation of hand held showers, repair front and back door locks, and installation of hinges that allow doors to be opened both inwards and outwards.

Nearly 700 residents were assisted at least once during 2017-18, paying just over \$13 an hour for services.

There are significant benefits in Council remaining a provider of these service, however, many older people need more extensive maintenance work than DCC can provide; they are willing to pay but they find it hard to find reliable local trades people.

"I believe older people on pensions need low cost home maintenance options (including gardening) as they often do tasks that are too risky for themselves because private contractors are too expensive." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that in addition to its own provision of home maintenance services, DCC investigates establishing a panel of local trades people who would be willing to undertake more extensive work than DCC provides. (Recommendation 17)

Gardening

Several submissions to this review suggested DCC should provide support to aged residents to maintain their gardens, and more specifically, offer a lawn mowing service.

"Why can't Council have a garden service? Council manages big parks and reserves, why can't you help oldies in their gardens?" (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC provides a gardening service which includes mowing, plus a focus on DCC staff working alongside older people to garden. (Recommendation 18)

It is further recommended that DCC provides nature strip mowing and a trimming service for overhanging trees and bushes as these can be risk hazards for older people walking and wheeling on footpaths. (Recommendation 19)

4.2 DCC to continue CHSP and consider the feasibility of expansion into the delivery of HCP services to enhance continuity of care of clients

DCC could expand its delivery of community based aged care by providing a HCP service in addition to CHSP. DCC is not currently funded to provide HCPs, however, other Victorian local governments do provide HCPs in addition to providing CHSP.

An expansion to HCPs could be based on DCC's current suite of services and expertise, with DCC robustly entering the market to provide HCPs using its existing workforce, with the addition of some specialty staff for higher level packages or by purchasing brokered services.

In effect, improved and efficient CHSP services is the foundation and basis for considerations of expansion into HCPs i.e. DCC continuing to deliver CHSP if block funding continues while investigating and developing improvements to each service type to make services more responsive to client need, more flexible and more efficient.

However, expansion into HCPs would require development of a new operating model to include case management services, new administration systems and a more 'entrepreneurial' culture to be attractive to clients in a more competitive market.

Potential benefits to DCC providing HCPs in addition to CHSP, include:

- providing continuity for existing DCC clients who may require increasing levels of care over time. The Panel has heard how highly valued this would be. It is important that older people feel confident moving onto a HCP for higher levels of need and DCC providing these HCPs could both provide this reassurance and facilitate older people's entry into the HCP arena as higher level of services are required;
- maximising service impact for clients, particularly at Levels 3-4 (i.e. through providing important health services e.g. nursing, allied health), support (e.g. transport to medical appointments, aids & equipment, care coordination etc.) rather than just entry level home care;
- increased attraction to potential clients by offering a full spectrum of service to support older residents to age in place, (note that this may be an important determinant of future viability by attracting future clients in a market-based environment);
- expanding the volume of service hours to maintain or increase paid hours for staff; and potentially off-setting the trend in reduced hours and salaries due to declining demand for CHSP services; and
- supporting the financial sustainability of DCC service delivery if :
 - full cost recovery and through access to higher funding levels, particularly for Levels 3-4; and
 - service generates additional revenue to off-set Councils financial contribution to services to older people.

*"I need more time from council. I only get 1½ hours cleaning a week and I have a big home that I don't want to sell."
(Consultation feedback)*

DCC previously provided a small number (33) of lower level HCPs but discontinued this service several years ago. The HCP program was different at that time to current arrangements, with providers applying to the Australian Government in competitive rounds for block funding to deliver a specified number of packages.

DCC was not successful in these rounds and it was determined that the small number of packages it managed was not viable or beneficial.

The option to provide HCPs for DCC is quite different from its previous position because:

- the funding and operating environment has significantly changed
- DCC would achieve viable scale by managing significantly larger number of packages
- DCC would provide packages at all levels to provide continuity of care.

Issues with HCPs

The Australian Government recently commissioned Dr Sarah Russell to investigate the operation of HCPs from a consumer's perspective.²³ Older people consulted for Dr Russell's review identified a range of systemic problems with HCPs, including:

- being unable to access reliable information;
- experiencing high fees;
- receiving unclear financial statements;
- having no benchmark to compare costs;
- lack of audits;
- poor quality of some services;
- poor communication;
- ineffective complaints system;
- policy of full cost recovery; and
- staffing issues, including:
 - inadequate training;
 - insufficient numbers of staff;
 - high turnover of case managers and support workers.²⁴

Many of these issues are consistent with comments provided to the Panel during community consultation.

*"My dad passed away a few months ago waiting for a level 4 package. The waiting times are too long, people are dying."
(Consultation feedback)*

By addressing these issues as a HCP provider, DCC would benefit local residents who are HCP recipients. DCC is in a strong position to address these issues as an existing provider of quality aged care services, delivered by qualified and competent staff who are trusted by clients and residents.

However, it is important for DCC to develop and consider a full business case for expansion into HCPs that includes examining the potential reputational risk to DCC due to the application of potentially high client fees to cover operating costs and maintain a viable service. That is, DCC may be subject to similar adverse criticisms levelled at current HCP providers.

²³ Russell, S., 2019 *Older people living well with in-home support*

²⁴ Ibid.

The HCP market in Darebin

There is a substantial and growing market for HCPs, due to the Australian Government increasing the number of packages, growing numbers of older people and the increasing desire for older people to age in place to delay or avoid residential aged care.

However, while the size of the HCP market is increasing, DCC would be entering a significantly more competitive environment than for its current CHSP service: in metropolitan Melbourne there are a large number of providers currently registered to 23 Russell, S., 2019 Older people living well with in-home support provide HCPs; for example, there are approximately 60 providers listed in My Aged Care for the Reservoir postcode alone (it is likely that providers listed in one postcode are likely to provide services to the adjoining postcodes).

In developing a potential operating model for HCPs, DCC would need to factor in costs for marketing and publicity to establish and maintain a competitive position. DCC would also need to consider any potential reputational risk associated with marketing activities; e.g. provision of HCPs may be considered a waste of public funds, and a more entrepreneurial marketing campaign may not align with an established image of what is appropriate for local government.

In June 2018, there were 23,449 HCPs in Victoria; local governments in Victoria managed 4.5% of all HCPs. The number of HCPs managed by local governments had declined from 7.3% in June 2015.

The Australian Government does not provide data on the specific number of HCPs by LGA, however the potential number of HCPs in Darebin was estimated based on population projections, the likely number of HCPs per 1000 people aged 70+ and the ratio of higher and lower need packages.

Estimated number of HCPs by level in Darebin

	2018	2020	2025	2030
	@ 30 / 1000	@ 30 / 1000	@ 45 / 1000	@ 45 / 1000
Level 1-2	347	359	583	644
Level 3-4	149	154	250	276
Total	496	513	833	919

However, DCC would be strongly placed to be competitive because:

- DCC is currently the dominant provider of CHSP services in Darebin;
- existing CHSP clients are more likely to be prioritised for packages;
- current DCC clients are more likely to continue with their existing CHSP provider; and
- new HCP clients may be attracted by the reputation of DCC as an accountable, high quality and trustworthy service provider.

The table presents a conservative estimate of the number of HCPs DCC could secure based on a conservative assumption of 50% of newly available packages (i.e. not expecting that clients of alternative providers would change to DCC and also not expecting to secure all new HCPs clients).

Potential DCC share of the local HCP market

	Level 1-2		Level 3-4		DCC estimate total 1-4
	Total local HCPs	DCC estimate	Total local HCPs	DCC estimate	
2018	347	9	149	4	13
2020	359	24	154	10	34
2025	583	142	250	61	202
2030	644	173	276	74	247

Based on the current HCP program and funding guidelines, DCC could establish the expanded service as cost neutral to rate payers. A business case will need to be developed by officers to develop a new operating model and include any upfront commitment of resources to establish the service, and ongoing costs associated with the service. Additionally, reputational risk associated with DCC applying high client fees and service costs should be explicitly addressed in the business case.

Future planning would also need to consider additional risks as the service scope is expanded from the current entry level service, in order to maintain service quality.

It is unlikely to be viable for DCC to only provide Level 1-2 packages, because:

- clients are more likely to prefer a provider that can provide continuity of care as their needs increase;
- it is likely to require a mixed case load (i.e. Level 1-4 HCPs) to sustain the relatively high cost of case management and administration; and
- DCC is likely to be unattractive to clients eligible for lower level packages due to DCC's relatively high costs, which are likely to result in lower levels of direct service hours

*"I was on a level 2 Home Care Package... Council's CHSP is like a level 6 compared to the Home Care Package. Worst decision I've made to move to a package. I have no services now, I cancelled the package. I will look at coming back to the Council service."
(Consultation feedback)*

It is recommended that while the block funding continues from the Australian Government for CHSP, DCC investigates the feasibility of providing HCP's Levels 1-4 by DCC developing a detailed business case and operating model for a HCP service. Reputational risk associated with DCC applying high client fees and service costs should be explicitly addressed in the business case. (Recommendation 20)

Factors to consider in providing HCPs

A number of critical factors determine the viability of DCC continuing to provide CHSP services (and/or HCPs):

- i. The Australian Government discontinues block funding for CHSP;
- ii. Clients choosing DCC as a service provider in a competitive market; and
- iii. Application of National Competition Policy (NCP)

These factors are outside the control of DCC.

i. The Australian Government discontinues block funding for CHSP

Block funding provides DCC with a measure of certainty about the level of funding DCC must allocate from its own revenue sources to provide CHSP services (e.g. from rates, fees and fines).

However, if the volume of service specified in the block funding agreement is not provided (i.e. due to declining demand), DCC is required to re-pay the shortfall, in practice this is likely to result in a reduced block funding amount in the following year.

Without block funding, DCC is exposed to financial risks related to fully funding its aged care services from its own revenue without any guarantee of income.

ii. Clients choosing DCC as a service in a competitive environment

There are also associated cash-flow issues related to discontinuing block-funding due to expenses being incurred in advance of revenue; however, the relatively large size of DCC's total budget and its status as a tier of government should mitigate potential cash-flow issues.

iii. Application of National Competition Policy (NCP)

Client choice of DCC in a competitive environment will be highly dependent on DCC being price competitive, i.e. DCC's service viability will significantly depend on continuing to subsidise the full cost of its service to reduce client fees.

"I am disappointed in Council, they came for the cleaning, but they don't do it how I like it. You should leave it to other providers who do a better job. Help older people get out and about, to centres. Spend more on your libraries and leisure for older people." (Consultation feedback)

As previously discussed DCC would not be permitted to subsidise the cost of service delivery if the competitive neutrality principles of NCP apply to the delivery of community based aged care services. It is very unlikely that clients would (or could afford to) choose DCC if client fees were increased to cover the cost to DCC of providing the service. The table below compares current client fees types with estimated client fees required to cover DCC program costs for some indicative service. It is important to note that the estimated fees would be even higher than those shown if DCC corporate overheads were included in full costs.

	DCC client fee 2017/18	Estimated client fee reflecting full program cost*
Domestic Assistance	\$6.60 / hr	\$35.90 / hr
Personal Care	\$4.80 / hr	\$41.27 / hr
Delivered Meals	\$10.00 / meal	\$38.75 / meal
Home Maintenance	\$13.20 / hr	\$53.66 / hr

* Note that costs do not include DCC corporate overhead

In summary:

- if NCP applies it is very unlikely that DCC could successfully compete with other providers due to the requirement to charge full cost reflective pricing; and
- if NCP did not apply, and block funding was discontinued Council would need to consider the relative risks and benefits of entering a competitive market as a provider of CHSP services.

It is recommended that DCC pilots a social inclusion program while addressing older people's system-related risks. (Recommendation 21)

4.3 Breaking down social isolation

The goal of reducing loneliness and social isolation by reaching out to people at risk of social inclusion is core to the development of an Age Friendly Darebin.

"Social isolation and loneliness is and will continue to be one of the most pressing needs in our community, particularly for people whose ability to get out into the community is compromised." (Consultation feedback)

Social isolation occurs alongside other risk factors such as: chronic and/or acute health conditions, disability, poverty, and neighbourhood barriers and exclusion. Social isolation is a risk factor for mortality comparable with, if not greater than, such factors as smoking, obesity and physical inactivity.²⁵ International research into older peoples' social relationships and mortality risk suggests that older people with adequate social relationships have a 50% greater chance of survival compared to those with poor or insufficient relationships.²⁶

"Since I had a stroke – it would be nice if you can provide someone at least once a week – just to chat – to talk – I believe all older people like to talk with somebody – some have a family – some don't. I don't go nowhere, no group. I am stuck in my chair." (Consultation feedback)

For Darebin to become Age Friendly, it is therefore important for it to develop an approach to identifying and supporting at risk older people to connect and participate in the community. This requires action both with socially isolated individuals to support and encourage them to connect to informal networks and community.

However, action must be taken with the community – the physical and social group environment – to make sure that it becomes accessible and inclusive.

"A sense of isolation and the feeling that you have nothing worthwhile or of interest to contribute." (Consultation feedback)

While Age Friendly Darebin must have accessible and inclusive communities across the municipality, without a strategy to identify and support socially isolated residents to participate, there will be widening gap between those who remain isolated and those who are well connected as they age – to neighbours and community activities of all kinds.

²⁵ Holt-Lunstad J., et al. 2010

²⁶ Ibid.

A new DCC Social Inclusion Support Service

*"Council should make it their business to knock on doors where older people live, see if people are ok and if they need anything."
(Consultation feedback)*

In September 2018, Darebin Council agreed that ...

"Council commits to continue its annual \$6million investment into the longer term into the facilities, programs and services promoting the health and well-being of older people"²⁷

Option 3 therefore proposes DCC pilot a new service targeting those who are socially isolated and therefore at risk of morbidity and premature mortality which can be prevented.

Therefore under this recommendation it is proposed to utilise available budget from this commitment to invite the participation of those current home support workers who would relish building on their skills for trialling a new role.

The older people in this group are likely to be eligible for CHSP or level 1,2,3,4 HCPs, although there are some who may not yet be receiving any service from MAC because they may not know about MAC or their eligibility. There is also another group of older people who may have recently retired and who find themselves socially isolated but not yet needing a service. This group of older people would benefit from time-limited social inclusion support to help them become part of community.

The pilot should also incorporate a strong outreach to vulnerable older people.

*"About 80 % of the older people that live here live alone and don't get visitors. Many people would love to have someone knock on their door. Check on people who may not be doing well. Even a phone call might be nice."
(Consultation feedback)*

It is expected that that the proposed pilot of a social inclusion service would be additional to CHSP or an HCP, with clients eligible for either CHSP or HCPs who are identified and assessed as at risk from social isolation, receiving CHSP or HCPs plus the social inclusion service as outlined below.

²⁷ Darebin City Council, 2018, *Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 3 September 2018*

Outreach, identification and assessment for social inclusion support service

"Assessment is providing good quality service but we can't do both - navigator and assessment." (Consultation feedback)

The current assessment team for CHSP is highly skilled. Therefore, this presents an opportunity to utilise current assessors to refocus from CHSP assessment:

- monitoring and identifying older people at risk of social isolation (using a wide range of networks from within DCC and from NGO's and community groups);
- proactive reaching out;
- identifying latent needs, including obvious health needs and link to community health and GP's and NGO's;
- assessing older people who are vulnerable to social isolation;
- supporting older people to identify social inclusion goals;
- supporting via information, navigation and one-on-one advocacy for all eligible older people to transition to quality CHSP or HCP providers depending on their level of need;
- informally monitoring quality of CHSP and/or HCP delivery; and
- collecting information and intelligence to systemically advocate for improvement in MAC.

"There should be a social worker that can ask that of elderly people - are you happy with the treatment you're getting? - that way older people more likely to open up - social worker could be an option." (Consultation feedback)

Some of the target group for the proposed new service will already be receiving CHSP or level 1 to 4 HCPs and will continue to do so. Others ought to be receiving CHSP or packages but have not applied because they may not know they are eligible or their circumstance exclude them (homeless, itinerant, mentally ill, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)).

"Could the Council help older people to navigate the aged care system? Council should help to coordinate between health services, hospitals, rehabilitation, doctors." (Consultation feedback)

Client self-determination

Fully developed, the social inclusion support service would respond to choices as determined by eligible older people about how they would like a certain number of hours a week or fortnight to be used to assist them to break down their social isolation. This can change from week to week as social inclusion clients will be assigned hours rather than activities or services.

Genuine self-determination over how those hours with the social inclusion worker are used is core to having a sense of control over life and is also preventative of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.²⁸

Under the proposed pilot, DCC social inclusion workers would provide a wide range of different support activities, for example:

- assisting isolated older people to walk or wheel around the neighbourhood and meet new people, including walking or wheeling with a dog;
- assisting isolated older people to go to a park with a dog and introducing and assisting interaction with other dog owners;
- facilitating neighbour introductions;
- assisting isolated older people to invite neighbours in or visit neighbours;
- visiting isolated older people to share a meal, cup of tea and/or to listen;
- co-gardening with isolated older people and where possible linking to local community gardens, gardening clubs, neighbour gardens;
- facilitating telephone contact between isolated older people with families, friends or volunteer (e.g. telephone befriending schemes)
- identification of isolated older peoples' interests and facilitate them to join community activities;
- introduction of isolated older people to local community groups including neighbourhood houses and helping them settle in;
- assisting isolated older people to use public transport, use parks and gardens and public spaces;
- driving isolated older people to doctor and other appointments and waiting with them if they are frightened; and
- sharing meals or facilitating others to share meals with isolated older people.

This list is not a menu; rather it is indicative of the type of activities that would add to the health and well-being of older people because these activities and any others in the same vein break down social isolation.

But it is vital that older people themselves decide how engagement with the social inclusion worker is utilised within the broad remit of breaking down social isolation. Therefore, the role of the assessor and social inclusion worker would be to facilitate and back up the decisions of the older person. Older people will be encouraged to think outside the box and be creative in their decision-making.

Design and implementation of the pilot will need to promote stable one-on-one worker relationships, as the relationship with the social inclusion worker will be paramount to successful outcomes.

²⁸ Marmot M., 2013 *Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European Region: final report*

Social inclusion assessor role

The new role will identify and assess older people who are isolated and link them to the new DCC social inclusion service and their social inclusion worker, as well as to DCC for meals, community transport and home maintenance – these services would be continued because of thin markets.

"Should Council employ welfare officers to monitor vulnerable residents and link them to relevant supports?" (Consultation feedback)

Social inclusion assessors selected for this pilot would:

- no longer be funded through RAS/MAC and would be fully funded by DCC;
- differ from local NGO outreach work funded with CHSP under the Assistance with Care and Housing sub-program by not being restricted by MAC eligibility and screening criteria, so able to take a comprehensive and preventative approach; and
- include older people who have recently lost a partner; or their social group is diminishing because their peers are dying; or who are newly living alone or who have lost mobility function, or their mental state is deteriorating.

"The Council structure could be vital in catching people who fall through the cracks. There needs to be a local safety net." (Consultation feedback)

An ongoing part of the proposed role for assessors would be to assist and advocate for older people to navigate and gain access to MAC. This would require assessors to provide both information and assistance to older people in accessing aged care services. Such a role would capture and retain the detailed knowledge and 'street wisdom' DCC assessment staff already hold.

"Perhaps your role can be more of an advocate and practical supporter for our local community elders as they and their families try to navigate the new systems or simply those who for various reasons don't even try to access the new systems." (Consultation feedback)

Assessor to provide support for vulnerable residents to access My Aged Care

Assessors could also provide support for vulnerable residents to access My Aged Care assessment and HCPs.

For many older residents, securing appropriate services from MAC will be a demanding challenge, a challenge more likely to be addressed with advice and support from experienced assessors. In addition, engagement with assessors will enable residents to be informed about other DCC services that could support them to age well.

"Overall I think the hardest thing is having to make all the decisions on my own and no one wants to help me with that they all say I have to choose." (Consultation feedback)

Assessors are well placed to develop and conduct a monitoring system for outreach to vulnerable older people.

An important tool for assessors to be able to reach out to older people would be to establish and maintain a comprehensive monitoring system of vulnerable and isolated older people. This monitoring system could utilise:

- self-registration;
- GP referral;
- CHC referral;
- Primary Health Network referral;
- Senior Citizens Centres and other community groups of older people; and
- Heat wave registry.

Social Inclusion Workers

The Panel heard from the ASU, current CHSP clients, management and the workers themselves about the quality, stability, and commitment of the DCC workers, many of whom are also from the local Darebin area. It would seem therefore that the current workforce has the capacity to take on the new role proposed for piloting under Option 3. This role of social inclusion support worker will use current worker skills of listening, responding, supporting and identifying risk of social isolation, calling in volunteers and other resources.

Current certificate levels 3 and 4 might be helpful to the role, but a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) could be supported to design and mount a dedicated new certificate for social inclusion worker training.

The social inclusion worker would have many of the same qualities essential for their current role:

- empathy and listening skills;
- detailed knowledge of community activities;
- ability to undertake neighbourhood audits and assessment of neighbourhoods in terms of friendly neighbours, parks and gardens, walking paths, risks and street seats; and
- facilitation skills.

The goal of reducing social isolation by reaching out to residents at risk of social isolation is core to the development of an Age friendly Darebin. For Darebin to become fully age friendly it is important that DCC can identify and support socially isolated residents to connect and participate in the community. It is therefore recommended that Darebin pilot, with a view to eventual expansion, a strategy to identify and support isolated, older residents to participate more fully in their community.

- providing new roles for assessment officers and home support workers in delivering a navigation, monitoring and social inclusion service.

"Council should make it their business to knock on doors where older people live, see if people are ok and if they need anything. Give that a go. There are some people quite vulnerable that can't get around." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC to commence trial of social inclusion service when resource availability permits, while addressing older people's system-related risks by re-directing its own source revenue and re-developing roles and responsibilities to utilise assessment officers and community support workers in the piloting of the social inclusion service. (Recommendation 22)

Value of a bolt-on volunteer program

It is vital that social inclusion workers do not replace informal friendships and do not form dependency relationships with isolated older people.

It is undesirable for people to only have paid workers in their lives as even with the best intentions, these relationships are inevitably one way and somewhat transactional. Although the social inclusion role would be far more focused on relationship and community linkage, they must remain at a professional level.

Volunteers could provide a step towards friendships and informal contacts, as they are unpaid and there is an inherent mutuality where both the older person and the volunteer contribute to each other. Volunteer relationships at times can grow into friendships. Although to avoid pressure on both parties, there should not be an expectation and friendship must remain as a bonus.

*"Other older people can be trained to volunteer and reach out to the people who have put a wall up around themselves."
(Consultation feedback)*

It is recommended that DCC provides a volunteer service to support the social inclusion service with more intense engagement where needed:

- a. The volunteers would not replace paid workers, rather social inclusion workers would work hand-in-hand with the volunteer service and call volunteers in to provide more hours of contact;**
 - b. The volunteer service would include older people as volunteers for isolated older people.**
- (Recommendation 23)**

Council should also consider services to address vulnerability to service holes and/or 'thin markets'

*"Darebin Council need to get back to basic principles and puts its money in the direction of residents who don't have a voice but do have a great need to remain safe, healthy and social."
(Consultation feedback)*

There is a risk that alternative providers may not enter the market for some CHSP service types due to the relatively low unit price paid by the Australian Government for these services. While these services may be available in Darebin, CHSP clients may not be able to attract providers (i.e. a service hole); alternatively there may be only a limited number of local providers (or none) for some service types (i.e. a local thin market). For example:

- It is likely to be difficult for a CHSP client to secure home maintenance for very small but crucial activities; (e.g. changing a light bulb) without paying an inappropriately large call-out fee; and
- Similarly, it may be difficult to purchase a regular, nutritious, home delivered meal within the price of the current CHSP subsidy plus current DCC client fee.

"When you get quotes for work people see that you are old and alone and they quote a huge amount for the work, people feel like they can charge whatever they like and you cannot 'get a fair deal' " (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that alongside the Social Inclusion Service, DCC continues to provide its own directly funded services where there is a risk that vulnerable CHSP clients may not be able to access necessary services due to 'service holes' or 'thin markets' for example: delivered meals and home maintenance (including gardening). (Recommendation 24)

These service types were identified by older residents during the community consultation as important in maintaining their ability to age in place and engage with their community. It is also important that older people have a strong say in contributing to the development of models of delivery that would lead to good outcomes that include maximising independence, socialisation and inclusion.

"Maintain and if possible extend services to help older people stay at home...Greater provision and access to social activities to prevent loneliness and isolation." (Consultation feedback)

5 SOMEWHERE TO CALL HOME

Key to an Age Friendly Darebin is the issue of affordable, safe, supportive housing for older people.

Many older people spend a large proportion of their time at home, and are frequently at home alone²⁹:

- For people over 80 they can spend more than 80% of their time at home;
- For people between 65 and 84, approximately two thirds live with a partner (67%);
- For people 85 and over, the proportion of those living with a partner decreases to about one third (32%), while almost half live alone (47%).³⁰

Home therefore needs to be a place where older people are able to leave and come back to safely. Home needs to be part of community: in a place where older people are known and are familiar with.

Ageing in place is dependent on home being a place that an older person can:

- afford;
- access;
- be safe;
- be connected with others; and
- remain as independent as possible for as long as possible.

*"I strongly feel that it is so important to remain independent and remaining in your home is vital to physical and mental health"
(Consultation feedback)*

²⁹ Iwarsson, S., 2007 'Housing Matters in Very Old Age –Yet differently due to Adl Dependence Level Differences' *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy* Vol. 14 No.3

³⁰ Ibid.

5.1 Affordability

Being able to find and afford a home is fundamental to developing an Age Friendly Darebin. However, the gentrification of Darebin has made the affordability of ageing in place a significant challenge for many long-term Darebin residents.

"Through our work we also support many older people who are sleeping in cars and couch surfing...Lack of affordable housing is a huge issue for people on low incomes in an area of gentrification such as Darebin. As people age, health becomes more vulnerable... Housing is therefore essential in supporting older people's health and wellbeing." (Consultation feedback)

Housing affordability is especially a problem for older women. According to the latest Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, women over 60 are the lowest earning of all demographic groups nationally. Having raised families, worked part time or in unpaid roles (e.g. running the school tuck shop or caring for elderly parents) women retire with less savings and assets than men their age and are therefore at greater risk of homelessness.³¹

(i) Renting in the private market

Rent for private dwellings is soaring in Darebin, as for other inner Melbourne suburbs with demand exceeding the supply of rental housing. The rental market is further limited for older people because there is no minimum regulation that requires private housing to be accessible: therefore, the stock of accessible, low rent housing for older people is limited and becoming less available.

One solution that generates more affordable lower rental housing stock comes from a number of cities in Europe. These schemes provide rate concessions to landlords who charge moderate to low rents to low income residents.³² It would be valuable to explore these in more detail, including the cost and the benefit. DCC may also need to seek legal advice to ensure that these schemes are within Ministerial guidelines in relation to rates.

³¹ Wilkins, R. et al., 2018 *The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 16*

³² WHO, 2017 *Age Friendly Environments in Europe: A Handbook*

*"I can't afford my private rental – Council should work with other Government for housing solutions. It affects me directly... I am 65 next month and will need to work for longer than intended. Council could do support work or advocacy when we have to deal with Centrelink, Housing – help us get outcomes."
(Consultation feedback)*

It is recommended that DCC examines schemes that give private landlords rate concessions for charging moderate rents to low income older people. (Recommendation 25)

As well, it is recommended that DCC renews its efforts to advocate hard for a minimum regulation for private dwelling accessibility so that there is more accessible rental stock for frail older people. (Recommendation 27)

(ii) Public/social housing

The high public housing waiting list (2,499 people on the Darebin wait list) indicates that there is not enough public/social housing available.

In addition, many of the public housing estates are walk ups and inaccessible for older people using walking frames and in wheelchairs.

(iii) Supported Accommodation Services (SRS) and boarding/rooming houses

There are six SRS and 39 rooming houses in Darebin. Older people are often placed in SRS as an emergency response to homelessness and also as a response to lack of affordable housing. Some are discharged from hospital into SRS and/or boarding houses as a short-term option but are continuing to live long term in these sometimes dangerous environments.

(iv) Living in parks and gardens, sleeping in cars or in the street

Living rough is a huge risk to the health and safety of older people and is unacceptable. Housing is essential to support peoples' health and wellbeing.

5.2 DCC contribution to public housing

New public housing stock is urgently needed to reduce the waiting list and also to accommodate private SRS, rooming and boarding house residents, homeless older people and market renters who can no longer afford market rents after retiring.

In the seventies, along with other progressive councils, Northcote and Preston Councils introduced a scheme with the Ministry of Housing where DCC provided land for the Ministry of Housing to build public housing. This scheme continues to this day and in conjunction with NGO's, DCC nominates people who live in the area to this housing.

"We are really grateful for Darebin keeping the Darebin Council Housing sponsorship program ...that is a really valued program in the community ... It is often our best option." (Consultation feedback)

There is a total of 218 places for elderly single people sponsored by DCC and managed by the Victorian Government Office of Housing. These places are provided at three locations in Northcote and Thornbury.

The success of this scheme and the continuing large waiting list for public housing supports the scheme's expansion.

"You have helped me to get into this property so I am really happy." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC considers purchase of additional land or alternative use of existing land to partner with potential housing providers or with the Office of Housing to expand the volume of fully accessible public and community housing stock to be offered to older people who are homeless and/or older people living in SRS or rooming houses. (Recommendation 26)

5.3 Accessibility

For Darebin to become Age Friendly, older people need to be able buy or rent accessible homes, visit friends who live in accessible houses, enter accessible shops and other commercial buildings. Universal design describes the concept of designing all buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors.

I would very much like to stay in Reservoir when I sell my home, but I don't want a townhouse which may present problems as I age. Why are we not seeing more single storey housing? It's money. More money in townhouses than single storey. Sad, a shame." (Consultation feedback)

Local government has strong "persuasion" powers to promote the application of universal design, despite being restricted by state and federal government planning and building regulation and codes, and the dominating influence of the property and building industry lobbies.

DCC's persuasion powers should begin with a clear expression of Council's position on universal design. This should be supported by information and advice for developers by DCC to demonstrate Council's seriousness in its commitment to making Darebin fully accessible to all. For example, DCC could provide detailed kits, tools and an advisory service function.

The objective of DCC's support activities is to assist and support developers to decide to make their buildings accessible at the beginning of their development process, recognising that it is much cheaper to build in access than to add it in at a later stage.

In the specific area of access standards for private dwellings, for over a decade Darebin has provided important leadership.

In 2012 and 2015 DCC (and other local governments), advocated for improved accessibility standards for residential development during State Government planning reform processes. The State Government responded to a limited extent through some changes that were introduced to the planning scheme in 2017, particularly requiring minimum access to door openings, aisle widths, and accessible/adaptable bathrooms and toilets for 50% of new apartment dwellings that are the subject of planning permit. This means that only half of the dwellings contained in a proposed development must comply with the requirements.

It is now time for DCC to return to this battle.

It is recommended that DCC strongly renew its advocacy to the Victorian and Australian Governments for minimum regulation and building code reviews.

As well, DCC should update its approach to access in its planning requirements and make it a top priority to push access as hard as possible. This is absolutely fundamental to achieving an Age Friendly Darebin.

Similar to green standards, where DCC requires higher standards than required under statute, DCC should establish stronger than mandated access standards for all new, renovations and refurbishment of buildings – commercial, shops and dwellings and really promote them hard.

For example, DCC could consider adopting the approach taken by the City of Banyule. From 2013 Banyule Council has required the incorporation of liveable Design guidelines to improve the accessibility of new homes (refer to Appendix 3).³³ Liveable Housing refers to basic and easy to implement features that improve the accessibility of new homes so that they are:

- easier to enter;
- easier to navigate in and around;
- designed to meet changing needs of residents who may experience a disability, injury or change in the family; and
- of increased value and easier to rent by providing a marketing edge and appealing to a broader demographic.

It is recommended that DCC updates its approach to access in its planning requirements by:

- a. reviewing existing tools/levers in the planning scheme that could be used to encourage/require accessible features in housing;**
- b. developing additional tools and resources to support developers; and**
- c. implementing liveable housing guidelines similar to Banyule City Council. (Recommendation 28)**

Co-generational housing is another option that should be supported by DCC. According to a recent US research report nearly one in five Americans live in a household comprising three generations. Within Australia, 2012 research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) indicated that, at least at the time of that research, three generation households consisting of grandparents, parents, and young children were still a relatively uncommon phenomenon. However, with benefits including stronger intergenerational family bonds, greater financial flexibility for all involved, and older family members staying active physically and mentally through their daily engagement with their grandchildren, alongside the financial benefits of pooled costs, and young parents gaining the daily support that can help balance career, family and home, it is not surprising that several Australian home construction business are now marketing 'homes for all generations'.

³³ Banyule City Council, 2013, *Liveable Design Guidelines*

5.4 DCC Advocacy for Affordable and Accessible Housing

It is important that DCC reinvigorates its position as a strong advocate for affordable and accessible housing. Restating its strong views as advocacy commitments would support the allocation of necessary resources and stimulate energy, making it more likely that results would be achieved from advocating to the Australian and Victorian governments.

"Darebin Council has a role in advocating for the needs of the vulnerable members of its community with service providers and all levels of government. I would like to see my local council do more of this on my behalf." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that Council adopts a policy position and advocacy commitments similar to the City of Whittlesea:

- a. **"That every person has a right to affordable, adequate and appropriate housing to enable their participation and sense of belonging in community life."**
- b. **Commitment 1: State-wide planning measures should be adopted that mandate and incentivise Social and Affordable Housing (Victorian Government)**
- c. **Commitment 2: All new social housing dwellings should be required to comply with the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines Housing (Victorian Government)**
- d. **Commitment 3: Take action to break the cycle of homelessness by adequately investing in the housing and homelessness sector to assist people across all the life-stages Housing (Victorian and Australian Government)**
- e. **Commitment 4: The National Rental Affordability Scheme should be reinstated (Australian Government)³⁴ (Recommendation 29)**

"Can Council encourage/force developers to provide a percentage of low-cost housing as part of a build?" (Consultation feedback)

³⁴ Whittlesea City Council, <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/advocating-for-community-needs/social-and-affordable-housing/>

5.5 Safety: preventing injuries at home

Home (for those who have one), should be a sanctuary and a safe place, however, for many home is certainly not a safe place. Injury from falls is a common reason for people having to leave their home and enter residential care. While there are multiple causes for falls, creating a safe environment in the home will help to significantly reduce the risk of falls. It is undoubted that a fall that results in a fracture or other serious injury can have dire consequences that in many cases could be prevented:

- Almost half (49%) of all fall injury cases for people aged 65 and older that required hospitalisation occurred in the home (including the driveway to the home).
- Falls are the most preventable causes of needing nursing home placement: more than one-quarter of all people suffering a hip fracture die within a year of falling; another 50% never return to their prior level of mobility and for many they do not return to their home; and
- a further 16% of falls in the home were recorded as occurring in the outdoor areas of the home, with falls occurring in the bathroom and bedroom also relatively common – 11% and 10% of falls in the home, respectively.³⁵

"Council needs more of an emphasis on ensuring aged persons homes are safe, secure and equipped with appropriate railing, safe footpaths and security." (Consultation feedback)

Therefore, preventing injuries including falls in the home is an important priority for DCC, health services and community health centres.

DCC, in conjunction with community health services, provides 'light touch' home maintenance and home modifications, while community health provides occupational therapy assistance to older people to identify and address hazards that might cause injury at home.

It would however appear that those most vulnerable, living in private rentals, rooming and boarding houses or who are itinerant, are less or not likely to gain access to the support needed to prevent injury in their living space. Therefore, a priority needs to be given to older people who do not own their own home for assessment and provision of home modifications.

"Our ministry of housing flats are too dark, the lighting is not good enough. Security lights would be good. People could trip or fall." (Consultation feedback)

It is important to recognise that landlord permission is required for rental modifications and payment may also be required to remove modifications after the rental is over, highlighting the importance and benefit of advocating for the application of accessible private dwelling.

³⁵ AIHW: Kreisfeld, R., et al. 2017, *Trends in hospitalisations due to falls by older people, Australia 2002–03 to 2012–13*

Mobility aids and appliances

Proactive injury prevention also relates to access to equipment that might keep older people safer as they age in place. For example, one approach to dealing with increasing unsteadiness while walking or standing is to audit the home for hazards and to modify the home and make it as safe as possible.

However, a useful addition would be to provide equipment, such as electric or manual wheelchairs. While low cost equipment is available through CHSP, (although DCC currently is not funded by the Commonwealth in the block grant to provide this service type), higher cost equipment such as manual wheelchairs and electric mobility aids are almost impossible to get fully funded. This leaves older people in falls and injury danger, as well as being less likely to cook if standing and carrying is no longer possible.

In addition, access to equipment that may prevent falls is more likely to be unavailable to vulnerable low-income older people, who are less likely to be able to pay the sizeable gap (with the annual cap of \$500 in total support – where the cost of a mobility scooter is closer to \$3,500 – \$4,200).

DCC providing a loans scheme for mobility equipment

There is likely to be an increase in discarded mobility items in general household waste, refuse centres and landfill sites, in part because of the boom in equipment supply and turnover about to be generated by the NDIS.

"Mobility equipment is expensive and could be subsidised to make them more affordable." (Consultation feedback)

In contrast to people eligible for the NDIS, the cap on spending for individual pieces of equipment through CHSP prohibits those older people on low incomes purchasing many pieces of equipment that could assist them to not only be safer, but also to get out and take part in neighbourhood and community life.

It is recommended that DCC establishes a Mobility Equipment Loans Scheme (similar to a Toy Library), in partnership with an NGO expert in disability equipment. (Recommendation 30)

The Mobility Equipment Loans Scheme would recover, recycle and reuse electric mobility scooters and wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs, crutches, wheeled and framed walkers.

It is further recommended that DCC explores the possibility of donated and recovered equipment being restored by using a volunteer program established with a Men's Shed, also including older people. (Recommendation 31)

Home modifications

Home modifications can increase or maintain levels of independence, safety, accessibility and wellbeing and can also assist in creating a home environment that supports reablement and restorative practices.

Replacing steps with sufficient length of ramp at the correct gradient, widening doorways to make bathrooms and kitchens accessible to wheelchairs and walkers are all invaluable steps to reduce injury and promote independence among older people.

However, as the community told us, the importance of home modifications to reduce home-based injuries and promote independence to ageing in place is not reflected in the low-level funds available through CHSP or the impact of home modifications on HCPs.

For example, a basic bathroom accessible conversion is likely to cost at least \$15,000 which is beyond the CHSP cap (\$10,000) and Level 1 and 2 HCP levels (\$8,000 and \$14,500 respectively) and would severely impact available funding for service delivery and case management for Level 3 and 4 HCPs (\$32,500 and \$49,500 respectively). Clearly, major modifications are not possible within the limits of either CHSP or HCPs.

Additionally, there are insurmountable barriers to major home modifications when even minor modifications can be resisted, including landlord reluctance to have houses modified and then requiring that properties are returned to their former (inaccessible) condition. And issues related to boarding house and rooming house markets add an additional layer of complexity.

DCC facilitating a home modification social enterprise

It is recommended that DCC examines the opportunity for facilitation of a start-up home modification social enterprise, connected to a Men's Shed and/or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and supported by local businesses in a community business partnership. (Recommendation 32)

The market for home modifications could also include NDIS funded participants, who would pay in full and thereby cross subsidises home modifications for vulnerable older people.

Squalor and hoarding services

We heard from the community that squalor and hoarding also create risks of injury as well as broader health hazards at home and impedes independent living as well as socialisation. There are complex causal factors underlying squalor and hoarding behaviours that are not addressed through simple response like rubbish removal alone. DCC has recognised the need for a municipal protocol to respond to residents who have hoarding behaviours and/or living in a squalid environment.

DCC has recently (January 2019) commenced improving processes and responses to local people who have hoarding behaviours. People are generally identified by DCC staff monitoring municipal laws, but may also self-refer, or be referred by community members or other DCC staff. Residents may be vulnerable for a variety of reasons e.g.: risk of homelessness, cognitive impairment, financial risk (pending fines to clean up), elder abuse etc. The process has so far reached half a dozen residents of whom the majority have been reluctant to engage with the service system.

It is recommended that DCC considers the extent of services for people living in squalor, particularly considering older people living in rentals and boarding and rooming houses, as well as home-owners, and develops a comprehensive approach with NGOs that currently provide services to people with hoarding issues and people living in squalor. (Recommendation 33)

Cold and Heat

Low and high temperatures can also make home unsafe as a health risk to those who cannot afford heating and cooling.

"I live by myself, I have trouble walking and asthma. In summer in hot weather I need electricity to stay on. I need someone to call me on these days I panic because I can't breathe." (Consultation feedback)

DCC currently monitors CHSP clients at risk on high heat days. As far as cold goes, apart from NGO's supplying blankets and clothing, there is no support.

It is recommended that DCC adds to its monitoring of CHSP clients during heatwaves by also monitoring those at risk on extreme cold days, especially focusing on homeless older people. (Recommendation 34)

5.6 Safety: Feeling safe from crime

Older people told the Panel that they no longer felt safe at home as well as safe in their neighbourhoods.

"Safety is an issue for me, what do you do for people (especially women) living alone...Not enough police presence." (Consultation feedback)

On reviewing the data, it would appear that the incidence of crime has marginally increased; crimes against the person by a small number over eight years, although property and deception offences have increased more significantly. Fear is one reason for older people locking themselves inside and giving up going outdoors into the world.

In the case of older people living in rooming and boarding houses and who are homeless, there is also a greater threat of violence and abuse.

Victoria Police has a Proactive Policing Operative in charge of crime prevention. Victoria Police conducts community education sessions to improve safety at home; (e.g. awareness, behaviours, physical environment, etc.). The team also scans crime statistics daily: if an older person is a victim of a burglary or aggravated burglary a police officer makes a home visit to conduct a safety audit and provide coaching and reassurance to help the person restore their sense of feeling safe at home. DCC already has a positive working relationship with Victoria Police in Darebin.

It is recommended that DCC formalises a program to collaborate with local police to improve older peoples' awareness of common at-home risks. (Recommendation 35)

In addition, it is recommended that DCC partners with Victoria Police to reinvigorate Neighbourhood Watch to have a particular focus on older people. (Recommendation 36)

"I hope that we live in a safe area. Other than increase police patrol, (Council) can utilise elderly resident to patrol areas, make them feel part of the community and able to contribute to the community." (Consultation feedback)

5.7 Feeling safer at home by breaking down isolation

Interestingly, Darebin police have identified social connection and social contact as critical factors in people feeling safe, finding that loneliness and feeling unsafe go together. A contribution towards assisting older people to feel safe, as well as actually be safer at home, is to break down isolation by expanding the range of outside interactions – both formal and informal. This would require that social isolation be considered as the serious risk factor that it is.

If DCC focused on assisting isolated people to expand their neighbourhood and community networks with a Social Inclusion Service, older people would be regularly visited by social inclusion workers who would call in volunteers, and fears that can be associated with isolation would decline.

Recommendations are made above for the development of a social inclusion service with a bolt on volunteer program.

Safer and less isolated at home: Home Share and Co-housing

Schemes such as Home Share and Co-housing enable older people to share their homes with a person who has been vetted and matched to live with the older person in their own or rented home for a lower rent contribution. In exchange, the home sharer undertakes agreed on tasks such as putting out rubbish, walking dogs, playing games and watching TV.

Co-housing is an alternative home share arrangement where people of a similar age with similar needs rent a multi-roomed house. They can enjoy secure accommodation, and the support and company of each other, while a home carer can respond to all their needs in the same place.

"Home-sharing is a great option...It ticks so many boxes; helps support older people to live in their own home for longer by providing practical and emotional support." (Consultation feedback)

Home Share has proven to be an effective program for breaking down isolation and loneliness as well as supporting older people.³⁶

It is recommended that DCC facilitates a Darebin Home Share and co-housing program in partnership with an NGO with established home share systems and processes. (Recommendation 37)

It is also recommended that DCC markets and promotes Home Share and co-housing to older people via social inclusion workers and community organisations. (Recommendation 38)

³⁶ WHO, 2017

Safer and less isolated at home: Monitoring and engagement through a Home Phone Contact Scheme

There are numbers of schemes in other countries that are organised at the municipal level and provide volunteers to phone older people at home once a week, for quite lengthy 15 (or more) minute chats at a regular time in the evening and/or on weekends when isolation can be keenly felt.

These schemes are additional to monitoring and checking schemes in that the purpose as well as seeing that all is well, is to enable social contact for very isolated older people, who often because of physical decline, become housebound.

It is recommended that DCC explores further the opportunity to facilitate a home phone contact scheme with a NGO partner. (Recommendation 39)

6 AGE FRIENDLY OUTDOORS

Coming out of home and into the neighbourhood is taken for granted for most people and for many older people too. But there are those trapped in a cycle of isolation that can be caused by an unsafe and/or inaccessible environment outside the home which may often be initiated and/or reinforced by a fall or illness, with older people experiencing:

- difficulty walking or walking safely, particularly due to lack of mobility aids and appliances;
- physical barriers that make it difficult or dangerous to get out of the house and move around the community; and
- psychological barriers that can develop into a cycle of fear that can escalate to agoraphobia,

An Age Friendly outdoor environment should invite and encourage older people to come out of their home into their neighbourhoods and communities; knowing they can walk or wheel easily and safely to their destination; or that they can stay outdoors and enjoy a variety of open spaces. To ensure an Age Friendly outdoor environment, older people should have easy access to different modes of transport – public, community and cars with easy parking when needed.

*"We want to get out of the house, we want to be safe."
(Consultation feedback)*

Coming out of their homes and into the streets, neighbourhoods and parks can be the beginning of greater community connection and participation and may lead to involvement in organised community groups and activities. Or it can be an end in itself, but either way it is an important part of an Age Friendly Darebin to have an Age Friendly outdoor environment.

6.1 Walking and wheeling: A Network for older people

"Walking is the most popular physical activity and is essential to the mobility for many residents to get out and about. Concerns over road safety, falls in the street, footpath cycling and access to good walking facilities are important issues that should be addressed." (Consultation feedback)

DCC has responsibility for many of the significant features of the external environment that can either be filled with barriers and dangers or alternatively can facilitate older people (and people with disabilities and families with prams) to be able to leave their home and actively participate in the community. Age Friendly should result in being friendly for everyone.

DCC is responsible for providing both the means: local roads, footpaths, walking tracks; and the destinations: open spaces, activity centres, for older people to safely walk, exercise and relax, meet others and enjoy the wellbeing benefits of natural and green environments.

"...investment in and management of public assets has a direct bearing on the health and well-being of all citizens, vital for promoting active citizen participation in mainstream life..."³⁷

While the Panel found that all DCC departments contributing to the outdoor environment know that older people are an important group to receive services, use facilities and assets and to consult, it was less clear that there are specific plans (or activities and targets in plans) that take particular account of older people and their needs. For example, Darebin's Safe Travel Strategy recognises that the proportion of older people is increasing, however there are no specific targets or measures in relation to older people.³⁸

Detailing actions that are targeted to older people's outdoor access is valuable because such actions also pick up people with disabilities and families with prams and walkers – a large proportion of Darebin residents.

Darebin needs a seamless, safe and accessible walking and wheeling (i.e. or people using wheelchairs and mobility scooters) network for older people, that includes consideration of footpaths, pedestrian crossings, toilets, benches, water fountains and lighting.

Darebin Council has recognised that:

"Not only do we need to ensure that our walking environments are safe, convenient, pleasant and accessible, we also need to encourage everyone to walk more often..."³⁹

Walking is of great importance to the maintenance of health and wellbeing and also should be encouraged as an important mode of transport. As well, walking with others enables social connectedness.

³⁷ Darebin Asset Management Strategy 2015-2019 p. 4

³⁸ Darebin Safe Travel Strategy 2018-28

³⁹ Darebin Walking Strategy 2018-2028 p. 2

Walking groups initiated and organised by DCC, Community Health Centres and/or Neighbourhood Houses would be of great value in that they generate health and at the same time promote social engagement and support.

It is recommended that DCC develops a walking (and wheeling) group program to facilitate groups of older people, including older people in public housing, boarding and rooming houses as well as those using walking frames and wheelchairs. (Recommendation 40)

Older people should be able to walk to public and open spaces to sit and watch or find people to chat to. And if close enough, older people should be able to choose to walk to shops, businesses and community centres.

However, as DCC recognises, in a car dominated society, walking requires encouragement through conducive infrastructure such as: well-maintained footpaths, accessible walking tracks, comfortable and adequate seating, well positioned and unlocked toilets, adequate lighting for safety and well-placed water fountains.

Both the reality and the fear of injury outside the home can be a significant barrier to older people leaving home. This can be the trigger to a cycle of isolation – of being stuck inside too afraid to go beyond the front door.

“Darebin City Council is committed to reducing the risk of injury on our roads and pathways to a level where there are no fatalities. We want people of all ages and abilities to be free to travel on the road and path network to their chosen destinations safely, and with confidence.”⁴⁰

It is recommended that DCC establishes an Older Persons Open Space Audit Advisory Team made up of older volunteers who would be willing to participate in regular audits with DCC staff to consider footpaths, seating, toilets, bus and tram shelters and lighting. (Recommendation 41)

⁴⁰ Darebin Safe Travel Strategy 2018-28

6.2 Mobility aids and appliances

Where older and/or people with disabilities cannot walk or are at risk of falling when they do go outside the home, it is still vital for them to get out and about as they are particularly at risk of isolation. As outlined in Section 5: Somewhere to Call Home, mobility devices are important for maintaining independence in the home; they can also be life-changing for older people outside the home when mobility declines, opening up the capacity to go out and about in neighbourhoods, on walking paths, shopping and to all other activities that people can walk to.

It is recommended that DCC adds the word 'wheeling' and the disability symbol into all of its walking policies, strategies and projects in order to normalise 'walking' with a walking frame, in a wheelchair or on a mobility scooter, and ensure that people who are using mobility equipment are included in walking strategies. (Recommendation 42)

Mobility Loan Scheme

Enabling older people to remain or regain independent mobility outdoors when they can no longer walk can be critical to being able to age in place. For older people over the age of 65 who are not eligible for the NDIS, CHSP does not provide sufficient amounts for these mobility line items, nor does CHSP enable older people to make decisions to spend funds on equipment from their packages. Earlier in this report the Panel recommended that DCC establishes a library/loan scheme for older people to borrow equipment.

*"Could mobility aids be rented? Not everyone can afford them."
(Consultation feedback)*

6.3 Footpaths and kerbs

Uneven broken footpaths are not only hazardous to older pedestrians, they can be lethal for people with walkers, in wheelchairs or on crutches. Sustaining a fall outdoors can erode confidence and lead to older people becoming prematurely housebound and frightened to walk in the streets.

"I had a heavy fall, bruising to my face and stitches in my hands. It was on the footpath ... I couldn't take a photo of the broken concrete path because of my injured hands." (Consultation feedback)

There is 1,033,879 linear metres of footpaths within Darebin. In 2018/19 DCC allocated approximately \$3.5 million for footpath renewal; resulting in approximately 20,000m² of footpath renewed. Additionally, DCC also allocated \$700,000 for footpath maintenance, with remedial intervention for trip hazards being triggered when horizontal or vertical displacement is greater than, or equal to 25mm.

DCC has developed a Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) to guide the management of Darebin's footpaths. The PPN has three levels of priority that determine the frequency of inspection and renewal of footpaths:

PPN hierarchy	Walking strategy description	Inspection frequency
Primary	highest level of pedestrian activity is expected; the major focus for the implementation of future walking infrastructure improvements	12 month
Secondary	assigned a high level of pedestrian priority	18 months
Other	the remainder of the pedestrian network: recognised as providing a feeder role from residential and employment origins to the Secondary and Primary routes	24 months

DCC is also currently completing a Footpath Condition Audit, which will be used to review the footpath renewal schedule and inform future budgets.

*"Improve footpaths - I had a fall last week - tripped on a footpath - resulted in a gash on my forehead in Northcote."
(Consultation feedback)*

Stepping or wheeling down from kerbs should be easy and safe, encouraging confidence for older users. It was reported that there are kerbs that are too steep and require stepping down: this is both a hazardous falls risk and is an impassable barrier for wheelchairs and walkers. The building of appropriate ramps; (i.e. 'pram crossings') should be a high priority as part of the DCC road renewal activity.

"There is broken concrete on the corner near me and in my wheel chair I can't go over it safely, so I go out on to the road to get around it. The police told me not to do that as it is dangerous. What can I do? Stay at home all the time?" (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC introduces an additional footpath category into the PPN that addresses access for older people. This additional category should:

- a. be based on the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access activity and recreation centres, health and community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping;
- b. have a higher inspection frequency than the current 'Other' category (i.e. 12 months);
- c. provide a mechanism to allocate targeted funding to address priority renewals (i.e. additional to the footpath renewal budget); and
- d. identify footpaths and roads to be prioritised for renewal in order to construct appropriate ramps across kerbs and gutters (i.e. pram crossings). (Recommendation 43)

6.4 Public toilets

"Public toilets make an important contribution to Darebin's liveability ... They can support increases in walking and the use of parks and public transport, and increase public involvement in local facilities, businesses, festivals and public spaces...This essential infrastructure promotes wellbeing by encouraging active community participation in economic, social and recreational activities"⁴¹

Darebin has 58 public toilets. Not all public toilet facilities are made available to the public all of the time due to usage trends, staffing and budgetary limitations. Twenty-four toilets are open seven days per week (8:00am-8:00pm); four are open only on weekends; and 29 are permanently closed or only opened on request.

For many older people, continence declines with age and not reaching the toilet in time is mortifying and can become a very real barrier to going out into the streets and open spaces.

"Seniors need more public toilets along the high street shopping areas. The same applied to some parks where we walk regularly but at times have had to cut our visits short." (Consultation feedback)

⁴¹ Darebin Public Toilet Strategy 2015-2025 p.3

We heard from the community that toilets need to be strategically positioned and located so they are sufficient in number and placed to be easily reached. And they must be open: there is nothing more frustrating and upsetting than finally reaching a toilet to find it locked with no convenient and quick way of locating a key or getting someone to open it. Alternatives such as codes or keys available to older residents could be assessed, but whatever the solution, it is recommended that at least during the daytime, toilets should be accessible and useable for older people to promote their access to the outside environment.

*"Toilets are always closed and/or there are no toilets."
(Consultation feedback)*

It is recommended that DCC ensures that the location of new toilet facilities (which should all be fully accessible to people in wheelchairs) is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access to activity & recreation centres, health & community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping. In particular, the location of new toilets should be integrated with the proposed new Older Person category of PPN discussed above. (Recommendation 44)

It is further recommended that DCC ensures that public toilets, including accessible toilets be open, at a minimum, for use during daytime. (Recommendation 45)

6.5 Pedestrian crossings

DCC has committed to

"Improve safety for people that walk by ensuring that our roads are designed in a way that minimises actual risk of harm to people who are walking, particularly for the most vulnerable members of our community including older people..."⁴²

*"Traffic lights are too fast. Need to run across the road."
(Consultation feedback)*

The need to improve road safety for older people is starkly highlighted by two statistics:

- pedestrians represented approximately one quarter of all fatalities and serious injury crashes on Darebin's roads over the last 5 years; and
- approximately one third of all pedestrians killed on Victorian roads in 2015 were aged over 60, however, only 12% of older pedestrians were at fault in accidents affecting them.

⁴² Darebin Walking Strategy 2018-28 p 6

"Make pedestrian crossings easier at a range of different centres – especially shopping centres – this makes older people feel more confident to access the community." (Consultation feedback)

In response to community opinion it is recommended that DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings be well signed, clearly marked, plentiful and well positioned to prevent older people from taking risks crossing roads, most particularly in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin. (Recommendation 46)

It is also recommended that DCC ensures that traffic lights be positioned in high traffic areas and have mechanisms to slow them down so that older people can walk across the street safely. (Recommendation 47)

It is further recommended DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings are brought into alignment with the new Older Person category of PPN to create a seamless safe walking network. (Recommendation 48)

6.6 Water fountains

We heard from the community that ensuring that older people remain hydrated is important for their health; dehydration for older people is a significant risk factor, especially in hot weather. Older adults naturally have a lower volume of water in their bodies and may have conditions or take medications that increase the risk of dehydration. This means that even minor illnesses, such as infections affecting the lungs or bladder, can result in dehydration in older adults.

*"More Water taps and drinking and toilet amenities!"
(Consultation feedback)*

Drinking fountains are recognised in DCC's draft Open Space Strategy as important infrastructure in public open spaces. They encourage walking and cycling and provide water for dogs. They also reduce dependency on single use plastic bottles.

The draft Open Space Strategy commits to "Providing freely accessible drinking water in open space and gathering spaces" and "Increasing the provision of drinking fountains with tap and dog bowl in public open spaces, retail streetscapes, sporting reserves and cycling/walking paths."

It is recommended that DCC ensures that water fountains be available and easy to use in all open spaces and along walking paths. (Recommendation 49)

6.7 Street and open space seats

When walking to shops or open spaces or just taking a stroll, finding somewhere to sit can make the difference between staying at home or coming out into the neighbourhood and participating in the community. We heard from the community that walking is more likely if it is possible to sit down and draw breath and walk from seat to seat.

"We need more seating in places such as Northland, Preston Market and other places. Older people cannot walk very far." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC ensures that street seats are sufficient in number and well- positioned on walking routes for older people to be required to walk for no more than 0.5 km before being able to have a seat. (Recommendation 50)

It is recommended that DCC ensures that in parks and gardens and other recreation spaces, seats are plentiful and grouped to encourage conversation and exchange. (Recommendation 51)

"The council should provide seating along main streets for aged residents to be able to sit as they become tired when going for a walk to the shops" (Consultation feedback)

Older people told us that they prefer backs on street seats to be able to rest fully.

It is recommended that street seats have backs rather than benches. (Recommendation 52)

6.8 Street lighting

Coming outdoors to take a stroll, talk to neighbours or sit in the cool of the evening on hot days is life enhancing; for many older people from CALD communities it is reminiscent of twilight sociability in plazas and parks in countries of origin. Outdoor activities during the evening can be particularly attractive and important when the weather is hot and older people can feel trapped indoors through the heat of the day. However, well-lit footpaths, walking tracks and outdoor gathering places are essential for older people to feel safe and can also assist in preventing falls.

"Street lighting in Fairfield from the train station to Fulham Rd (is poor)... I do this walk after going out to dinner but I feel unsafe on the way home. A lot of elderly people are barricaded at home for fear of going out." (Consultation feedback)

It is important that older people are not left trapped at home because it is too dark and dangerous for them to come outdoors in the evening. However, there is a complex set of issues in relation to increasing lighting for some open spaces.

Increased lighting can create other problems, such as the potential impacts from light spillage and glare on surrounding residents/local wildlife and increased energy consumption.

Improve lighting in walkways. E.g. between Plenty Rd & Dunne St Reservoir- no lighting. Solar pathway lights would be good. I do most of my walking in the evenings." (Consultation feedback)

DCC currently considers a range of factors in relation to street lighting, including:

- community safety outcomes;
- meeting Australian lighting standards;
- promoting improved environmental and efficiency outcomes; and
- operational considerations (e.g. coordinating lighting changes / upgrades with other road works).

DCC's draft Open Space Strategy recognises that lighting upgrades have been shown to sometimes decrease crime and reduce fear of crime when the purpose is to increase visibility at night, activate an open space and support natural surveillance. While the draft strategy suggests that lighting does not prevent crime in isolation, it does recognise that it may be effective as an important contributor.

Therefore, DCC's works across the spectrum of crime prevention to enhance community safety and support the reduction of crime. This may include increasing passive surveillance, improving lines of sight, activating unused spaces, or defining boundaries between private and public spaces. Essentially whole of place upgrades that incorporate a framework of best practice principles applied to urban design to reduce the likelihood of crime occurring are likely to be more effective than lighting upgrades alone.

While the relation of street lighting to crime is complex, street lighting in relation to falls and personal injury is more straight-forward and clearly of concern to both older people and DCC.

It is recommended that DCC refers street lighting, particularly in relation to risk of falls and personal injury, to an Older Persons Open Space Audit Advisory Team. (Recommendation 53)

6.9 Outdoor plazas, parks, gardens and nature reserves

"It is important residents of all abilities, ages and interests are encouraged to use open space for both structured and casual activities. (and that there...) are many benefits that are realised from using and enjoying open space including physical, social, emotional and developmental."⁴³

Open spaces are vital meeting places. They are important destinations for creative and recreational activities that are accessible, inclusive and reaching out to older people.

"I suggest the idea of creating the promenade like in Europe where people meet and greet at their local squares in Italy, Greece and Spain & probably France." (Consultation feedback)

Open spaces are vital for older people to break down isolation and help them feel a part of a community. All uses of open spaces by older people add to their health and wellbeing, as well as to the dynamism of the city, from being able to sit and watch others, to conversation, through to actively participating in deliberate recreational activities and games.

"More opportunities for older people to do more free exercise for older people exercise equipment that older people can use i.e. Moreland (Coburg Lake)." (Consultation feedback)

DCC has developed a draft Open Space Strategy to guide the future planning and functions of open spaces in Darebin.⁴⁴ Extensive community consultation was undertaken during the development of the draft strategy which identifies the need for increasing and improving basic facilities in open space areas like seating, shade, bins, footpaths and drinking fountains.

"Edwardes Lake: not enough seating: tables/chairs/shady spots near the water." (Consultation feedback)

⁴³ Darebin's Open Space Strategy 2007-17 p.54

⁴⁴ Rewilding Darebin – The Open Space Strategy 2018. Draft for Consultation

It is recommended that a specific section of Darebin's Open Space Strategy be developed with the aim of increasing older peoples' usage. The development of this section should involve older people as the lead advisers. (Recommendation 54)

It is recommended that DCC explores the possibility of permanent games and exercise equipment for older people as part of this targeted strategy aimed at older people. (Recommendation 55)

It is recommended that open space planning is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access to activity and recreation centres, health & community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping. (Recommendation 56)

6.10 Dogs in Parks

There is important research that shows that living with a pet promotes health and wellbeing and breaks down a sense of loneliness and isolation.⁴⁵

Darebin's Domestic Animal Management Plan recognises a wide range of benefits to owning a pet in relation to health and wellbeing, responsibility and companionship.

These include:

- preventing loneliness;
- motivating people to exercise regularly;
- creating opportunities to meet people and make new friends; and
- teaching responsibility.⁴⁶

*"Please let dogs have access to off lead areas in local parks."
(Consultation feedback)*

Taking dogs for walks to parks and outdoor spaces has many benefits for older people. It encourages walking, although as older peoples' mobility declines so too does their ability to walk their dog far. In addition, dogs are great social connectors: linking people and promoting contact with others.

It is recommended that DCC takes into account risks and benefits to older people in any future reviews about the rules relating to dogs in open spaces. (Recommendation 57)

⁴⁵ Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017 - 2021

⁴⁶ Ibid.

6.11 Accessible community facilities

For inclusion in community activities, including sports and recreation to become a reality: facilities must be accessible for older people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and walkers at entry, toilets and doorways.

It is in the remit of DCC to be able to ensure that there is a rolling plan to upgrade all community and recreational facilities within a specified timeframe such as three years, so that they all become accessible however, there is currently no strategic plan (or designated budget) to achieve this objective.

Historically DCC has had a small reactive capital works budget (\$25,000) that can be used to respond to access issues as they arise or are identified. This includes funding access audits and design work, as well as minor capital projects or procurement to improve access outcomes on an interim basis. This budget allows issues to be addressed immediately, as opposed to having to wait for the next budget process, which could potentially result in more than year long delays. Recent work conducted includes access audits of the Arts Precinct Facilities and Reservoir Leisure Centre as well as an access audit and lift audit at Darebin North East Community Hub. It has also been utilised to purchase portable ramps and to fund curb ramp design work. Recently, DCC had also taken a strategic approach to improving accessibility across all of its facilities with a financial commitment to support this approach. This is above and beyond the reactive minor work approach.

It is recommended that DCC's next infrastructure audit:

- a. undertakes a comprehensive access audit of all Council facilities;**
- b. develops a priority list to address the access issues as identified above;**
- c. allocates adequate recurrent funding for annual minor works that should not be less \$50,000; and**
- d. considers an appropriate and feasible timeframe to ensure that all DCC facilities are accessible for the current generation of older people. (Recommendation 58)**

Going further afield

While walking and/or wheeling are important ways to get out and about into local neighbourhoods, it is important for older people to be able to go further afield. As well as participating in non-local activities, older people also need to be able to attend appointments, go shopping and visit friends and relatives. All activities outside home have a social inclusion benefit and therefore barriers to getting there by other means of transport must be addressed.

6.12 Public transport

As an environmental strategy DCC has a strong interest in promoting public transport and reducing car usage. For the present though, for many older people who are becoming frail, some forms of public transport such as trams and buses are hazardous.

"It can be difficult/ impossible to manage public transport as an older person. It's difficult to pull myself on to the tram or bus and I don't always get a seat." (Consultation feedback)

Darebin's Transport Strategy 2007–2027 recognises that:

"The ability for Darebin's residents to access jobs, schools, community services and shops is an essential element of 'social inclusion' – the degree to which people are able to participate in community life. However, a significant number of Darebin's residents do not have easy access to a car. This is exacerbated by the fact that the north of the municipality, where car ownership is lowest, is also the part of Darebin that is least well-served in terms of public transport."⁴⁷

Local government is not responsible for the provision of public transport and there is a history of state governments refusing to bite the bullet to make public transport accessible.

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 requires the removal of discrimination from public transport services on the basis of disability.⁴⁸ The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (2002) prescribe national requirements that public transport providers and facility operators must meet in order to comply with the Act when providing public transport services, however, full compliance is only required over a 30-year period.⁴⁹

"We need better public transport – you can't get on a bus with a wheelie walker." (Consultation feedback)

⁴⁷ Darebin Transport Strategy 2007 – 2027

⁴⁸ The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (C'wth)

⁴⁹ The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

For public transport services to be accessible, older people with mobility restriction must be able to:

- get to and from stations, stops and terminals including adequate way-finding;
- move on and off trains, trams, buses and coaches and manage any boarding gap between the conveyance and the platform (including direct assistance where required);
- access allocated space inside the train, tram, bus or coach including the use of mobility aids or assistance animals;
- understand information and announcements on board in an acceptable format including screen based as well as audio;
- obtain information or assistance from staff or drivers where boarding or other assistance is required.

This means, at the least, that there are no steps up and down. As we heard from the community, steps are prohibitive for older people in wheelchairs or on mobility scooters and with walking frames (as well as for families with children and prams); and can be a major barrier and just plain dangerous for ambulatory older people.

It is acknowledged that DCC has generally played an important advocacy role in campaigning to making public transport more accessible.

It is recommended that DCC undertakes a strategic piece of advocacy in conjunction with other Councils, targeting the State Government's unrealistic timelines for making public transport fully accessible for the current generation of older people. (Recommendation 59)

As well, when an older person has been dependent on a car but can no longer drive, they need to learn how to use public transport and to become confident and as safe as possible in its use.

It is recommended that DCC provides public transport familiarity training opportunities for older people. (Recommendation 60)

6.13 Bus and tram shelters

Lack of bus and tram shelters makes waiting for public transport impossible for many older people who cannot stand comfortably or safely. Darebin needs to advocate for shelters to be placed at every stop.

"More seating needed in public areas, especially on the main street, and near Northland and at bus stops." (Consultation feedback)

Darebin's Transport Strategy 2007-2027 has identified minimum levels of service quality for each of the proposed levels of public transport to retain existing passengers and, most importantly, attract new passengers, including 100% of residents being within 400m of a service on a public transport network.

It is recommended that DCC consults with the State Government on the development of an implementation plan to ensure adequate provision of bus and tram shelters. (Recommendation 61)

It is recommended that DCC ensures that seating at bus and tram stops is consistent with recommendations in relation to a seamless, safe and accessible walking network for older people. (Recommendation 62)

6.14 Cars

Many older people have been driving all of their adult lives and wish to continue to do so for convenience as well as valuing the skill. However, capacity and response rates decline with age and it can be especially dangerous in a busy inner-city suburb even with familiar routes and certainly be less safe than a country town.

It is recommended that DCC arranges for regular 'driving brush up' courses for older people to be provided with driving instructors as a way of lowering risk. (Recommendation 63)

6.15 Car Parking

"I don't drive as I suffer from blackouts. (I would like) ease of access to disability parking and a pass so people can use it when they take me out." (Consultation feedback)

Parking is currently a vexed issue for those older people wanting to drive to and stay at seniors' clubs or community groups for a period of time. Adequate numbers of dedicated parking around all clubs, for seniors and people with a disability, would be in the social inclusion interests of older people, as well as for people with disabilities.

DCC is currently developing a Parking Strategy, which has included significant community consultation with older people as a specific target group in the consultation. DCC has been very conscious of the diverse needs of older people and parking, not just those who drive but also those who are passengers.

One option is age specific parking similar to pram/pregnant parking. This type of parking does not have the status of signed disability parking; i.e. it cannot be formally enforced with an infringement/fine. On the other hand, it also does not have the resource requirement of disability parking in that it does not require the bureaucratic apparatus necessary for proving, assigning and paying for a permit or maintaining a data base.

More Disability Parking Spaces

There is a range of infrastructure issues related to assigning disability parking; e.g. additional size of parking space, access across curb and gutter, camber of road etc. Therefore, it may be easier to assign a non-regulated space to older people bearing in mind that other parking will be limited/impacted by allocating to specific target cohorts such as older people; e.g. younger people with disabilities, pregnant mothers, people with prams.

"Designated Seniors' car parking is good- could be more of this at other shopping centres." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC expands the number of non-regulated parking places close to senior citizens centres. It is further recommended that DCC consider a range of more innovative approaches to meet older people's need for parking, for example:

- a. **creating drop-off/pick-up parking zones for older people in front of services older people frequently use; e.g. health services, shopping centres, seniors' clubs, sport and community groups;**

- b. allocating parking for older people at designated times:
 - designated parking for older people could be based on identifying times that older people are likely to need parking in conjunction with lower use times for other residents;
 - this may be used to support DCC's economic development activities: encouraging older people to participate in economic / social activities in the 'down-time' for general business activities;
 - this could be used in conjunction with programs to encourage businesses to offer 'senior discounts' to coincide with these designated times;
- c. working with business owners /traders' associations to allocate parking for older people at the rear entrance of shops (i.e. where staff park or for non-delivery times) This may also improve disability access at rear entrances to permit clients to go through some shops to access main thorough-fare; (e.g. access to High St Northcote, from car park off Arthurton Rd);
- d. linking with volunteer driver or develop 'Uber local' for pick-up and drop- off. This should also be considered as possible economic development activity;
- e. advocating for free public transport for older people in off-peak periods (note that this is the case in other States, for example in Adelaide: the South Australian Seniors Card also serves as a Seniors Metrocard, providing card holder's public transport fare concessions, and free travel on all Adelaide Metro public transport services Monday to Friday 7.00pm to 7.00am (i.e. through the night) and 9.00am to 3.00pm);
- f. including drop-off/pick-up drive throughs as a requirement in the design of new developments or re-developments.
(Recommendation 64)

"Public transport subsidy needed, even free. I can spend \$10 a day on public transport which is a lot of money for a pensioner. I don't drink or smoke. I reckon it's more than the cost of petrol. I want to get out, not be here all day." (Consultation feedback)

6.16 Community transport

Community transport is an important means of transport for older people especially in groups for activities and shopping. Community transport in itself can assist in breaking down social isolation and help older people connect to others beyond the paid worker, for example, regular community bus users developing social connections and creating "communities on wheels".

"The council should keep supporting community transport and social outings for isolated community members and focus on social interactions - i.e. go to the gallery or cinema etc. help to maintain social connections, and foster physical and mental health." (Consultation feedback)

DCC provides a community transport service to residents from their homes or requested pick up points to set destinations (e.g. Northcote Plaza, Preston Market). DCC also makes buses available to community clubs for outings and contracts Link Community Transport, an NGO provider of community transport to take older people to appointments outside Darebin. Link Community Transport must be booked ahead by clients and uses a pool of volunteers.

DCC's community transport services are provided Monday to Friday 8.00am to 4.00pm (excluding public holidays). Residents are required to contact DCC to book a trip and are advised about approximate pick-up and drop-off times depending on time-tables, routes and vehicle capacity. Due to DCC subsidising the cost of this service from its own source revenue the cost to users is relatively modest: in 2018/19, return trip fares are \$4.60.

However, despite low fares and door to door travel, DCC's community transport service has relatively low usage: in 2017/18, 157 individuals made at least one trip on DCC's community transport service.

It is recommended that DCC encourages the use of community transport by older people living in boarding and rooming houses, public housing and from other vulnerable groups and also in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin, to broaden the group of older people who know of its availability and how to access it. (Recommendation 65)

7 INFORMATION AND DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

7.1 Participatory approach to information

*"Better information and a clear directory – who do you access for what – what services and for social connection."
(Consultation feedback)*

Information is power: power to know what the range of choices, options and possibilities are for ageing in place and for becoming fully included in the community.

Information is usually provided by those who have it to those who don't. Power over access and choice requires information in formats that are accessible, and about the issues and options that older people identify as important to them.

Research into the utilisation of information indicates the value of a participatory community development approach to:

- identifying what information;
- information needs of different groups;
- in what format;
- distribution;
- regularity;
- outreach to reach and include vulnerable groups; and
- accessible formats.

Often focus groups are used to test that the information is relevant, but once the focus groups on a particular topic are completed, the information may well be out of date or not relevant, especially to vulnerable communities, who are usually not included in the focus groups.

A participatory process ensures that both the information and the formats in which information is made available are what older people themselves say they want, that it is continuously being updated, and so the information is kept fresh, is provided in relevant formats, and most importantly is used.⁵⁰

DCC establishing an ongoing older peoples' participatory information project.

⁵⁰ Blair, T., et al. 2009, 'Participatory action research with older adults: key principles in practice', *Gerontologist*.49 pp.651–662

A participatory approach to information would require DCC to establish an information steering committee of older people, including representatives from all vulnerable groups. Council workers would support the Information Steering Committee (ISC), but the ISC would be in charge of deciding what information, in what formats and the regularity of updating. The ISC would utilise focus groups for more in-depth analysis as needed. The ISC would decide:

- the types of information wanted;
- agree on an index;
- formats and details;
- dissemination (including older people playing the lead role in communication, dissemination and guidance);
- reviewing effectiveness;
- updating; and
- continual improvement and addition.

A secondary outcome from establishing a major focus on information provision is that the quality of MAC services and DCC's service provision and social participation efforts, can be improved by public feedback loops.

It is recommended that DCC establishes an ongoing older peoples' participatory information project. (Recommendation 66)

It is recommended that DCC establishes an Information Advisory Group of older people, including representatives from all vulnerable groups. (Recommendation 67)

7.2 Information about MAC: access to services

With the Commonwealth's dramatic changes to aged care, the Panel heard that there is a huge information abyss about My Aged Care (MAC). MAC is the main entry point to the aged care system in Australia. However, it appears to the Panel that many people from the most vulnerable groups have no idea what the changes to aged care mean and what MAC is all about.

This information gap has two serious outcomes. It makes people terrified to leave what they know (CHSP) even if they need more service contact that is available only from HCPs. It also means that many others who might be eligible will not participate in MAC because they know nothing about it.

Perversely the more vulnerable older people, the more likely it is that they will be excluded completely from MAC because information about MAC does not reach them and is not in a format that is easy to understand or on a website that can be easily navigated. By contrast, the more educated and with higher incomes will persevere and find out what they need to know. This builds serious inequity into MAC that DCC should tackle.

7.3 Information through MAC: supporting client choice

Residents told the Panel that the MAC website was a nightmare to penetrate much less navigate. The central driver of the MAC market model: that people should be expected to ascertain the pros and cons of different providers, especially in terms of quality, is simply wishful thinking without one of the essential foundations of any market system: easy to access and understand information.

"There are a lot of elderly people who do not own a computer - hard copies are still necessary - My Aged Care takes an incredibly long time to get back to people - who are the other recommended service providers?" (Consultation feedback)

Unless older people are able to gather sufficient information to genuinely assess and compare services for price, quality and match, then the MAC competitive market model will not work.

At the very least easily accessible information is needed about:

- available services;
- ability to compare between services like Trip Advisor
- how to transition to higher numbers of hours of services (higher packages);
- cost comparison and management fees;
- how to navigate MAC website; and
- how to prepare and interact with the MAC contact centre.

This list outlining information needed about MAC is by no means exhaustive.

In fact, the identification of the information that is needed is a dynamic process and is central to information remaining relevant.

7.4 Information beyond MAC: breaking down social isolation

"It is one thing to have info - but we need you (Council) to outreach - explain things, leave info for me. Tailor to us. We need to be savvy about what we are looking for. We need someone to help guide us." (Consultation feedback)

A wide range of information is needed to assist people to participate and be included in the community. This information is required in a format that older people can understand and access easily.

Information is needed about both age specific community groups and activities and generic groups and activities that should be promoting participation by people of all ages.

Information can drive inclusiveness if it goes beyond description and has a mechanism for older people's involvement in program design and governance. For example, this could include a feedback loop with a "trip advisor" capability that allows older people to be engaged in quality monitoring and improvement, and peer support such as how older people:

- found the experience welcoming;
- were helped to feel included; and
- found the activities are the ones they hoped they would find.

It is a high priority for there to be an ongoing process for developing, reviewing and circulating information that is continuously updated and that includes quality measures for not only assessing MAC providers, but also Darebin's own social participation groups of all kinds. It is important for understanding rights and entitlements, comparison and choice of service providers as well as for the promotion of community inclusion among older people.

Unfortunately, during consultation, the Panel heard some negative views regarding the information that DCC provides about community groups for older people. At a minimum, DCC information should include:

- up to date information about what community groups were available at this point in time;
- how to access, where, when, cost;
- transport to get there;
- identifying which groups were welcoming; and
- the groups that had age friendly practices.

Other areas that require improved information relate to the built environment, toilet locations, transport, building access, street seats and water fountains. Older people also want to know about reliable local businesses, for example, about local trades people.

7.5 Information beyond MAC and DCC: digital enabling

The Internet is highly conducive as a platform for up to date, dynamic information collection, formatting, reviewing, updating and dissemination. The Internet is also key to older people being able to access information about every other aspect of life beyond MAC and DCC, from health to shopping (including banking and shopping online) to online friendships and dating.

"Older people need help with the fast developing technology, how to use a computer, write emails, use the internet for shopping and socialising." (Consultation feedback)

The Internet enables people to join online communities and so break down isolation and loneliness with continuous interaction in areas of interest. Measurement of the health and wellbeing benefits from being part of online communities indicates that it is an important tool for social connectedness and for the associated health benefits, even though face-to-face engagement in communities yields even higher rates of health and wellbeing. But for people aged over 85, who spend 80% of their time at home, often alone, online community connection can be of great value.

DCC website

DCC's own website's content for older people must be up to date. New content from the proposed older people led information project may require changes to the DCC website or it may require a dedicated platform: the proposed information steering committee would have a central role in examining all the options and making recommendations to DCC.

Help and access

"Technology can be very daunting. Managing pin numbers, keeping information secure. It is embarrassing to have to ask for help. But it is amazing what you can learn." (Consultation feedback)

While all community and seniors' centres can contribute, the core role of libraries would lend them to becoming central to the provision of assisted access to computers and iPads.

It is also important that libraries play a role in assisting older people to understand and, if required, fill in the plethora of forms and applications that are now required for day-to-day living.

It is recommended that DCC considers using volunteers from a proposed volunteer service at libraries, to assist older people to fill in online and paper forms and applications – regular weekly sessions could be trialled. (Recommendation 68)

Apps

There are numerous new applications (Apps) being developed to connect older people and break down social isolation, and DCC needs to have some systematic method for tracking and selecting models to trial in Darebin.

An example of a new model to investigate is "One Good Street" – a neighbour-initiated care model using an App developed by Bolton Clarke – a health and care service company. From starting an "Air Con Club" to help older residents during the heat, to sharing aged care equipment through tool libraries, to "Casserole Clubs" that provide nutrition and connection, "One Good Street" inspires and empowers neighbours to make a real difference in the lives of older people. "The One Good Street" App includes a feature that allows older people with similar interests who are feeling isolated to connect with each other within their local area. They are encouraged to spend one day or more in each other's company.

This is only one of hundreds of Apps developed already or under development. It is therefore important to enable older people to participate in active online participation using the internet as the enabler.

The ageing cohort, especially the older end of that spectrum, is more likely to be digitally excluded for many reasons, from the cost of technology, to the challenges of new learning, with no one available to take the time and effort to assist people to connect up. The more vulnerable the group, the less likely to be connected, especially for people who are homeless, living in SRSs, rooming and boarding houses and those who have a mental illness or alcohol and drug problem.

The Older Persons Information Advisory Group recommended above, should play the role of assessing and selecting possible applications.

Digital opportunities for the most vulnerable older residents

An evaluation of the Digital Inclusion Initiative (DII) (which provided digital access to 1,680 properties in two public housing estates in Melbourne, Victoria, with 1,820 residents trained) found that social benefits included a greater sense of empowerment and equity of access by these communities, increased computer literacy and greater interaction between residents.⁵¹

It is recommended that DCC takes a systematic approach to ensuring that digital opportunities are extended to its most vulnerable older citizens who are currently excluded. This may include:

- a. supply of basic equipment such as iPads;**
- b. supporting neighbourhood houses to undertake training and supply equipment to loan to house-bound older people; and**
- c. developing robust outreach programs to encourage those who are able to attend to come into a wide range of community groups for flexibly timetabled digital learning opportunities.**
- d. courses to be provided in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin and tailored for diverse needs that may include social media, communication such as Skype or email or for those who want to find information online. (Recommendation 69)**

Libraries, Neighbourhood Houses, U3A, and seniors' groups could all play an important role in dissemination of information as well as providing access and training for older people.

⁵¹ Infocchange, 2017, *Assessing the economic benefits of digital inclusion*

8 SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Social participation is broadly defined as a person's involvement in activities that provide interaction with others. Changes throughout the life course, including life events such as retirement, death among family and friends, illness and/or health conditions and socio-economic status can lower rates of social participation.⁵² Conversely unwanted isolation is a significant risk factor for physical and psychological ill health and for overall morbidity and mortality.

"How can you still feel useful in our current society? How do we take advantage of experience and skills of retired people? We want to be included and recognised." (Consultation feedback)

8.1 Benefits of social participation for older adults

Social participation is important because a large body of research demonstrates that social participation in community activities has a wide range of health benefits for older people. The University of Manitoba Centre on Aging for example, reported:⁵³

Injury prevention: For every one point decrease on a social activity scale, there was a 33% more rapid rate of decline in motor function (e.g. Grip strength, muscle strength) within an average of five years.⁵⁴

Mobility and disability prevention: The risk of developing a disability in activities of daily living decreased by 43% over an average of five years for each additional social activity engaged in; the risk of mobility disability decreased by 31%.⁵⁵

Depression prevention: Among older adults with depression, those who were highly socially active were over 2.5 times more likely to have improvements in their depressive symptoms two years later than those with low social activity.⁵⁶

⁵² Ashida, S., et al. 2008 'Differential Associations of Social Support and Social Connectedness with Structural Features of Social Networks and the Health Status of Older Adults', *Journal of Aging and Health*, Vol. 20, No. 7, pp. 872–893. (as cited in Novek, S. et al, 2013)

⁵³ Novek, S., et al. 2013, *Exploring the Impacts of Senior Centres on Older Adults*

⁵⁴ Buchman, A., et al., 2009 'Association Between Late-Life Social Activity and Motor Decline in Older Adults' *Archives of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 169 No.12 pp.1139–1146. (as cited in Novek, S. et al, 2013)

⁵⁵ James, B., et al 2011, 'Relation of late-life social activity with incident disability among community dwelling older adults', *Journals of Gerontology Series A: Biological Sciences & Medical Sciences*, Vol. 66A No. 4, pp.467–473, (as cited in Novek, S. et al. 2013)

⁵⁶ Isaac, V., et al. 2009. 'Social activity and improvement in depressive symptoms in older people: A prospective community cohort study' *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, Vol. 17No. 8, pp. 688–696. (as cited in Novek, S. et al. 2013)

Cognitive decline prevention: The rate of cognitive decline was reduced by an average of 70% in older adults who were frequently socially active compared to those who were infrequently socially active over an average of five years.⁵⁷

Dementia prevention: Older adults who participate on a daily or weekly basis in social activity have a 40% reduced risk of developing dementia compared with those who were not socially engaged.⁵⁸

Lower rates of mortality and morbidity in women: Older women who participated in organised activities or study circles had half the likelihood of dying within a twelve-year time period compared to those who did not participate in these social activities.⁵⁹

As a result of these significant health benefits, social participation is widely regarded as a strong determinant of healthy ageing. Yet social participation decreases with age and older adults face increased risks from social isolation. As social participation decreases with age, providing opportunities for social participation among older adults is particularly important.⁶⁰

Given the significant impact of social participation on health and the heightened risk of social isolation in older adults, opportunities for social participation constitute a critical component of policies, strategies and services designed to promote health and wellbeing in older adults.

Local government is critical in contributing to social participation as it is the level of government that is:

- closest to residents;
- best placed to provide extensive community development opportunities; and
- with the knowledge of who and where the most vulnerable community members are and how to include them in social participation.

8.2 Locational disadvantage of community groups and activities for older people

Geographic location can contribute to social exclusion. More disadvantaged neighbourhoods have negative intrinsic characteristics (for example, housing stock, public infrastructure, amenities and economic structure). The long-term concentration of disadvantage can create further problems such as poor environments, services and facilities and higher rates of crime.

"I feel it is not fair that we have no activities in our own suburb as everything is in Preston." (Consultation feedback)

⁵⁷ James, B., et al. 2011, 'Late-Life Social Activity and Cognitive Decline in Old Age', *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*. 2011 Nov; Vol.17 no. 6, pp.998-1005.(as cited in Novek, S. et al. 2013)

⁵⁸ Wang, H., et al. 2002 'Late-life engagement in social and leisure activities is associated with a decreased risk of dementia: a longitudinal study from the Kungsholmen project' *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. 155 No.12, pp.1081-7. (as cited in Novek, S., et al., 2013)

⁵⁹ Agahi, N., et al., 2008, 'Leisure Activities and Mortality: Does Gender Matter?' *Journal of Aging and Health*, Vol 20 no. 7, pp. 855-71. (as cited in Novek, S., et al., 2013)

⁶⁰ Lee, H., et al. 2008, 'The relationship between social participation and self-rated health by sex and age: A cross-sectional survey', *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 7, pp. 1042-1054. (as cited in Novek, S., et al., 2013)

It is therefore not surprising that more disadvantaged areas have fewer community groups and those groups are weaker in governance, fundraising and outreach for membership.⁶¹

This means that DCC needs to ascertain whether more disadvantaged parts of Darebin have fewer local community group activities for older people to join – such as senior citizens groups as well as generic community activity such as sports, recreation, cultural, libraries, carers groups and Men's Sheds.

It is recommended that DCC pilots a model in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin that enables a council worker to run social activities programs for older people, with the aim of developing local ownership and governance, so that ultimately the program turns into a senior's group with its own local ownership, control and governance rather than remaining as a service offering. (Recommendation 70)

It is also important for DCC leisure and recreation facilities, such as swimming pools, libraries and open space, be available in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin and for there to be outreach health promotion programs.

In the meantime, providing community transport to existing leisure and recreation facilities would be an important strategy to assist in encouraging disadvantaged populations to attend DCC facilities.

If DCC finds that there are fewer and weaker community groups for older people in more disadvantaged areas it is recommended that it devise a strategy to facilitate, fund and encourage community groups to set up in more disadvantaged areas with ongoing DCC support to assist them to not only survive but to flourish.

8.3 A Darebin network of community groups

"This is my first day at a seniors club. I am very nervous, but it was the good work by the staff at Darebin who encouraged me to come. Since my husband died 4 years ago I have been very sad and lonely. I wanted to do something like this but was scared to." (Consultation feedback)

Many older peoples' community groups are working in isolation and yet they are confronting similar issues such as:

- outreach to recruit and welcome new members so they feel included;
- providing relevant activities that are wanted;
- the ageing of committees and committee renewal;
- dealing with friction and struggles over governance.

Solutions to these and many other issues have common elements that should be shared so that groups can help each other move forward.

⁶¹ Wain, D., 2008, *Community Group Audit Project: Final report*

These meetings would work best if facilitated with regular meeting times and would provide opportunities for the groups to share strategies and experience about issues including:

- policy and practice;
- strategies about what works and what doesn't, especially to improve inclusion of vulnerable people into groups;
- approaches to inclusion; welcoming and supporting new members and actively seeking and approaching potential new members to join;
- identification of potential new members especially from vulnerable groups who are often discriminated against such as: older people with a mental illness, from rooming and boarding houses, people who have recently lost a partner, people who are ill, etc.;
- outreach volunteering, for example phoning, visiting, inviting;
- welcoming: warm introductions, buddying;
- mentoring and monitoring: to identify and support members who seem isolated or feel rejected;
- dealing with committee and/or member friction;
- deciding on activities; and
- identifying and adding new activities.

It is recommended that DCC develops and facilitates an Older Persons Community Group Network of all older peoples' community groups for learning and knowledge exchange, with participation by all presidents of older peoples' community groups. (Recommendation 71)

8.4 Co-location for older people's community groups

Ross House was developed in the 1980's as a building that houses 50 small community and peer support groups. It enables networks to develop, strategies to be shared and know how to be transferred between groups. Each group has its own place to leave files and equipment and all other equipment and meeting rooms are shared.

"There are not enough spaces for older people to gather. We meet in East Reservoir SCC but it's too small." (Consultation feedback)

There is a significant benefit in developing connections between DCC's older peoples' groups to share strategies and practices, and in view of the competition for space and decline in the amenity of senior citizens centres.

It is recommended that DCC considers adding to the space available for older peoples' groups that would benefit from a permanent venue by:

- a. identifying one larger DCC owned space that is little or unused and two smaller DCC owned spaces - with at least one of these being located in a more disadvantaged part of Darebin;
- b. refurbishing the three spaces into numbers of offices/desks (sharing photocopiers etc.) and numbers of large meeting and activity spaces - enough so that groups can schedule many more activities;
- c. some of the larger community organisations such as U3A could have branches in the smaller satellite co-shared spaces;
- d. a lead organisation such as U3A or a Neighbourhood House should be identified and funded to manage the space as well as support the co-tenant groups. (Recommendation 72)

8.5 Intergenerational benefit of community groups that are not older people specific

DCC is a generous funder of a large number of community groups in a huge range of areas such as sport, arts and cultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, disability, faith, environment, education, community health centres. DCC spends more than \$237,816 on community groups that are not older people specific. DCC also provides additional funding to some community organisations to supplement State Government funding (such as Neighbourhood Houses, discussed below)

Some of these groups are age specific and provide community activities for children or parents. Even so, groups for children and parents should also consider reaching out to grandparents, as many older people are taking on larger responsibility for children and are complementing or in some cases compensating for parent availability.

"Older people are not homogeneous, and benefit from involvement with younger people. Activities/interests should aim to attract people across age groups." (Consultation feedback)

Other more general sports, recreation, environmental, historical and cultural groups potentially provide a huge number of community opportunities for older people that are by their nature intergenerational. A wide diversity of interests can be met, as well as enabling older people to contribute their knowledge and experience to the group.

Numbers of these community groups and activities receive DCC funding and are supposed to be there for everybody and therefore could be of value to older people if:

- older people feel welcome and believe that there are genuine opportunities for them to participate and to contribute;
- the activity and/or rules are adapted to enable the inclusion of older people; for example, the Panel was told about exercise and sporting activities being run at a level that is dangerous for people as they age – and yet older people want to be able to continue to participate and also want to exercise and/or play with a cross section of ages; and
- there is an understanding and respect for the value of natural intergenerational mixing; for example, in their justifiable attempts to attract younger participants – especially in sports or activities that have been traditionally the choice for older people, such as lawn bowls, or Neighbourhood House lunches, older people can feel pushed out. It is important in diversifying the ages of participants that older people continue to be fully respected and included.

It is recommended that DCC provides targeted grants for general community groups planning to include more older people to provide:

- a. adapted equipment for sports and recreation;**
- b. outreach to attract older people;**
- c. development of creative works with older people participating.(Recommendation 73)**

8.6 Identifying gaps and encouraging groups

It could be argued that there are too many community groups and activities and that they should be rationalised and amalgamated for efficiency. This is contrary to the evidence about the health and wellbeing value of participating in social activities.

*“My mother would love to join social organisations (clubs) that provide common interest to her e.g. excursions, social lunch, knitting groups, exercises, walking, music, to name some areas.”
(Consultation feedback)*

It is recommended that DCC makes small grants available to support new groups and activities, as well as to assist generic community groups to adapt and include older people. These grants should focus particularly on assisting community activities and groups in geographically disadvantaged areas of Darebin and groups, such as Matrix, that have not received funding to date. (Recommendation 74)

Supporting older people to participate in social activities in the community is directly within the remit of DCC through:

- DCC’s community grants program;
- DCC’s funding and support for seniors’ clubs & groups.

8.7 Older peoples' one-off events and festivals

While one-off events are not of themselves sufficient to promote ongoing social connectedness, these events can be a starting point for older people to meet to put on the events, as well as meeting at the event to be referred and put in contact with ongoing activities.

An important outcome from festivals focusing specifically on celebrating ageing is that the events can break down stereotypes and utilise older peoples' creativity.

"Older people have a wealth of skills and experience to offer. Perhaps Council could have a database of skills and occasionally call upon when organising community events. Or establish a jobs board seniors can tap into." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended DCC supports older peoples' events and encourages older people to lead festivals and event initiatives. (Recommendation 75)

It is also recommended that DCC develops a robust outreach strategy for festivals and events focused on including disadvantaged groups and ensuring that participation in the event is not limited to those 'in the know'. (Recommendation 76)

It is further recommended that DCC provides certainty for multiyear funding for events to increase participation rates by allowing the knowledge to be disseminated that the events will be annual. (Recommendation 77)

8.8 Senior Citizens' Clubs

Senior citizens clubs provide subsidised meals, outings, games, networking and friendship opportunities. They provide a community focal point for ageing by enabling older adults to come together for activities that enhance their dignity, support their independence and encourage their involvement in and with their community. In Darebin, Senior Citizens' Clubs for people with a CALD background are particularly prominent.

"Mum attends the Italian Social Group and it has made a huge difference to her life." (Consultation feedback)

Compared to neighbouring councils, DCC allocates the highest level of funding to senior citizens clubs. Grants support clubs to:

- organise social events
- purchase of food for club lunches

- transport to support outings Membership and funding model
DCC provides two levels of support to Senior Citizens' Clubs:
- Level 1 Support (direct and indirect financial support) In 2017-18
 - DCC provided Level 1 support to 29 Senior Citizens Clubs
 - DCC contributed \$37.14 per member
 - grants to clubs ranged from \$2,179 to \$23,961
 - a total of \$141,038 was paid in grants to Senior Citizens Centres.

DCC also assists with costs of financial auditing, public liability and facility costs

- Level 2 Support

DCC provides resources via staff support to all clubs in Darebin, including clubs who do not receive grants. This includes information, advocacy, constitutional processes, networking opportunities, forums etc.

Issues in relation to DCC support to Senior Citizen's Clubs

Inclusion and outreach is not required

Health and wellbeing benefits should accrue to an older person who is a member of the group. However, some clubs find it hard to welcome new members and as a result new members may not experience the positive health and wellbeing outcomes; for example, new members trying to fit in can experience anxiety and an increased sense of isolation; and/or new members leave before experiencing any positive benefits.

There does not appear to be an expectation that one of the roles of the clubs in exchange for DCC funding is to actively welcome to new members and make them feel at home.

Inclusion of vulnerable members is not required

Becoming a member of a club can be challenging, particularly for vulnerable groups. There is no requirement or an incentive for clubs receiving funding to actively encourage or seek membership from identified vulnerable groups.

Conversely, groups of older people forming around Aboriginality, cultural background, gender, and sexuality do provide health and wellbeing benefits for their members. However, there may be particular difficulties providing support and overcoming barriers to participation for those with particular vulnerabilities such as a particular frailty, mental illness, chronic illness and disability - including intellectual disability and early onset dementia.

Fewer opportunities in geographically disadvantaged areas

In more disadvantaged parts of Darebin there are fewer clubs and no support for residents to get to clubs and demographic projections and analysis of low socio-economic status are not used as a basis for allocation of club grants.

Incorporation requirements

Clubs are required to be incorporated in order to receive funding from DCC, however, in special circumstances, Level 1 support (i.e. for financial auditing and public liability insurance) may be provided to groups who do not meet incorporation criteria.

Clubs with a very small membership struggle to maintain a committee, much less incorporate. This may be exacerbated where one of the stalwart members of the committee becomes ill. Yet these small clubs can be vital places of social participation for their members.

Grants are saved not spent on activities for members

There is no time limit for DCC funds to a club being spent on activities for members. Therefore clubs can, and do, elect to save the funds for the future, sometimes amassing savings considerably in excess of the yearly grant amount. High savings over a consistent number of years raises questions on the necessity for DCC funding to enable the club to operate.

In addition, the decision to save grant money or to spend fully on activities can be a cause for friction between club members.

Competition for venues and resources

Often club activities are not held at preferred times or at the frequency desired, due to limited space. Additional space/venues would assist in increasing the numbers of meeting and activities. In addition, increased bus availability for more outings would serve health and wellbeing goals.

Members are not Darebin residents

DCC only requires 60% of members to be Darebin residents. Because grants funding is primarily from Darebin ratepayers, it might expect that a higher percentage of club members should be Darebin residents. Additionally, larger grants reflect larger memberships, even though an increase in membership is likely to result from membership outside Darebin.

Correlating grants funding with Darebin residency may provide an incentive for clubs to undertake more vigorous outreach within local communities to seek, identify, and encourage more local members.

Perceived inequity in decision-making and lack of consistency and transparency in selection of Level 1 funding

New applicants for Level 1 funding have to meet additional criteria which are not transparent. This may result in new and emerging groups being excluded from grants funding.

DCC has already committed to "reimagine and revitalise Seniors' Citizen Centres to support active healthy ageing"⁶². Spending DCC funds to develop new activities on outreach, and/or volunteer programs to attract new members would be valuable for health and wellbeing. Spending saved funds could also be used on health and wellbeing activities such as exercise, walking groups, more communal meals.

Additionally, the decision on how savings could be spent could be made by older people while being facilitated by DCC.

⁶² Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021

"The criteria and limitations applied to grant applications could be broadened to cater for a wider range of activities involving older people." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that DCC develops a new model for funding senior citizens clubs, which should include consideration of:

- a. ceasing funding based on per capita membership;
- b. providing a base amount to all groups for the running cost for the group-meetings, governance;
- c. continue to provide in kind financial auditing and public liability insurance for all groups;
- d. providing in-kind venues (and where requested office/desk);
- e. directly subsidising bus trips, including procuring a bus charter;
- f. ensuring that older people from vulnerable groups are included in club activities with targeted funding for specific activities;
- g. separately funding (through an application process) specific outreach activities and Darebin area focused membership drives;
- h. separately funding (through an application process) activities in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin;
- i. looking for three locations to establish co-location spaces for interested senior citizens groups to be able to have office/desk space to establish as headquarters;
- j. funding a lead organisation to undertake venue management, support, facilitation, mediation; and
- k. establishing clear expectations and measures outcomes regarding outreach and inclusion of older people who are vulnerable (e.g. frail, low socioeconomic, etc.).
(Recommendation 78)

8.9 The University of the Third Age (U3A)

U3A is an international movement that encourages older people to take part in lifelong learning activities for the pleasure of learning.

DCC currently provides \$2,000 per annum to U3A. The Darebin U3A is a dynamic organisation that provides learning opportunities, educational activities and social interaction for older people over 50, helping them to keep mentally and physically active and involved. Activities span literature, fitness, games, creativity, planning activities and events. Similar to other groups, U3A is run entirely by volunteers.

U3A's membership is expanding, although in order for it to cover the running costs, the cost of membership is increasing and is now \$50 per year. The impost of \$50 on older people who are on an aged pension may be relatively high and in particular, may discourage potential participants from a low socio-economic background.

Increasing funding to U3A would support U3A extending its participation base to include an outreach to vulnerable groups, including those on low income. In addition, U3A is located in Northcote with classes in Thornbury. Location of U3A classes in the north of Darebin would be valuable for older people living in those areas, especially considering the trend for an increasing proportion of older people to be living in the north.

It is recommended that DCC supports U3A with an annual DCC grant of a minimum of \$4,000. (Recommendation 79)

It is recommended that DCC provides targeted funding to U3A to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about U3A and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation. (Recommendation 80)

It is further recommended that DCC considers U3A as a possible lead organisation in the recommended co-located space for older peoples' community groups. (Recommendation 81)

This would potentially assist in supporting U3A to extend its reach into Darebin's north, so making it more likely that residents from that area might participate in its valuable activities.

8.10 Men's Sheds

Men's Sheds provide important opportunities for men to meet while making, restoring, fixing, tinkering and obtaining new skills and learning together. Men's Sheds help men connect up while undertaking useful community work.

Men's Sheds are self-determining but are open to conducting activities that might be of value to the community and older people that are recommended in other sections of this report. For example, Darebin's Men's Sheds could be approached to ascertain interest in home modifications for older people and recycling of mobility equipment.

Men's Sheds should be encouraged to make all major decisions including decisions about opening hours, including considering opening for lonely times such as weekends.

Darebin's Men's Shed is located in East Reservoir in a relatively disadvantaged area where there is a lot of public housing. It is staffed and run by Your Community Health, which also supplies the venue. Darebin Men's Shed offers programs Monday to Friday, partly funded under CHSP as a social group activity and partly funded by DCC (a worker for two days and transport one day).

Darebin Men's Shed programs are generally well attended, however more transport assistance would allow more to attend at this location.

It is recommended DCC provides community transport assistance to allow more men to attend a Darebin Men's Shed. (Recommendation 82)

There could be significant value in establishing at least one more Men's Shed in the North with DCC in partnership with a CHC. This could be co-located in a new Ross House type community group headquarter arrangement as outlined above.

It is recommended that DCC considers establishing a new Men's Shed in Darebin, to promote geographical access, either co-located with a Neighbourhood House or at the proposed new co-located community hub (refer to Recommendation 72). (Recommendation 83)

8.11 Probus clubs

There are three Probus clubs offering interesting and informative speakers and opportunities for regular monthly socialising. They are located in Reservoir, Kingsbury and Preston. Probus is perceived to appeal to older people who may previously have been members of service clubs.

It is recommended that DCC considers offering targeted funding to Probus Clubs to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about Probus and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation. (Recommendation 84)

8.12 Carers' groups

The Panel heard from the community that the number of people actively engaged in caring for a frail ageing family member is likely to increase in proportion to the ageing community. Many carers are also part of the ageing cohort itself, with women significantly more likely to be primary carers (71%).

Carers' groups at local level are generally peer-supported, i.e. run by and for carers. They provide invaluable support for carers that tangibly improves the health and wellbeing of members and in turn improves the lives of the older and disabled people they care for.

There are a range of carers' groups in Darebin and DCC directly supports one: Yanada House Carers' Support group. DCC also supports Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC) who have seven groups in Darebin which are mostly attended by carers: Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Turkish and Vietnamese groups. Also Span Community House hosts a carers' high tea and a carers' support group.

It is important to ensure that carers of older people and carers who are older have groups that are convenient and culturally appropriate for them to join.

These groups need to be completely accessible and local for best impact. They also need to be available specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, CALD and LGBTIQ carers as needed.

It is also important to make sure that isolated carers are identified, informed and assisted to join carers' groups.

It is recommended that DCC considers commissioning Carers Victoria to partner with DCC in supporting the development of new Carers' groups for LGBTIQ, CALD and in other locations and with communities that do not have carers groups. (Recommendation 85)

8.13 Grief groups

Losing a partner is a significant risk factor for illness and decline in health and wellbeing. Peer support groups focusing on dealing with grief and re-establishing life without one's partner have been found to be of great benefit, especially if they are facilitated. Grief groups need to be available for CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) communities. Once facilitated, grief groups can continue without external support (i.e. similar to neighbourhood carers' groups).

It is recommended that DCC considers commissioning Compassionate Friends to partner with DCC to explore the benefits of trialing grief groups. (Recommendation 86)

8.14 Neighbourhood Houses: Older Peoples' Inclusion Strategy

Neighbourhood Houses are in a good position to include older people as members and participants in a range of activities: community lunches, community gardens, computer clubs and creative activities are but a few of the activities that Neighbourhood Houses might offer.

DCC supplements State Government funding to Neighbourhood Houses with a considerable level of support:

- \$51,000 contribution to the overall operational budget of the Neighbourhood House, which is generally used as a contribution to staff salaries (Note that DCC provides \$66,330 to the Reservoir Neighbourhood House because it receives less State Government funding than the others and is in a priority community for Council); and
- an additional \$10,000 for program delivery attached a specific proposal that aligns to the council plan goals. This funding is attached to specific output and outcome measures for a particular Neighbourhood House.

Neighbourhood Houses exist to be responsive to community issues and interests and use a community development model to ascertain their activities and facilitated groups.

All Darebin Neighbourhood Houses provide a huge range of activities that should be for all ages, including older people.

Neighbourhood Houses often develop parent groups: playgroups, childcare, after school programs. These could also include older people in their role as grandparents (where sometimes they are taking complete responsibility for grandchildren) or for older people who are not grandparents but would like to play a grand parenting role. Also, older people can provide mentoring coaching and skills for young people.

Community gardens are also intergenerational community activities and are often facilitated by Neighbourhood Houses.

Community gardens are an important activity for older people as well as for people from different cultural backgrounds in that they provide the opportunity to grow produce that relates to culture.

The Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education (PRACE) Neighbourhood House also specifically supports senior's clubs by providing space, mediation, advocacy and facilitation for clubs as needed. PRACE's role in supporting numbers of older people's groups is an effective model and could be funded to support their clubs to expand and reach out to new members from vulnerable groups. It would be valuable to compare a Neighbourhood House such as PRACE receiving funds to facilitate outreach to vulnerable groups compared to funds going straight to the seniors' club for this purpose.

Span Community House provides a focus on diverse programming that includes specific programs for older people such as road safety workshops for seniors, carers groups and an Older Men New Ideas social group.

It is recommended that DCC works with Neighbourhood Houses and older people to develop a list and best method for information dissemination (dynamic – with in-built update mechanism) of low-cost and free programs, services and events that Darebin Neighbourhood Houses run for older people. (Recommendation 87)

The audit and survey should include all Neighbourhood House activities such as: choirs, orchestras, community gardens, history groups, lunches, arts programs, digital training, health and wellbeing activities and volunteers for children's and other activities.

It is recommended that DCC works with Neighbourhood Houses and older people to identify best methods for outreach to older people who currently do not participate in Neighbourhood House programs, and to assign shared responsibility for outreach. (Recommendation 88)

In annual reports provided by Neighbourhood Houses there is a request for information regarding specific activities and numbers of older people participating, and generic activities and numbers of older people participating. (Recommendation 89)

8.15 Online community groups

The value of online community groups has been referred to in Section 7: Information and Digital Empowerment for An Age Friendly Darebin. Among many other benefits, they provide:

- continuous opportunities for interaction;
- choice across endless interests and domains;
- can be supportive as well as informative – but this is dependent on the group culture;
- available to housebound older people; and
- connect to CALD and other communities internationally.

While face-to-face groups have many additional advantages especially to older people who no longer have the opportunity to meet with people in the workplace, online communities are important to supplement or at times be the main community connection. However as is discussed in Section 7 this requires major attention to enhancing older peoples' online access, skills and cost.

It is recommended that DCC adopts the goal of enabling older people from all income levels and backgrounds to bridge the digital divide and join online community groups and activities. (Recommendation 90)

It is further recommended that DCC develops a digital community group strategy, including an implementation timeline. (Recommendation 91)

8.16 Libraries

There are four libraries in Darebin, in Fairfield, Northcote, Preston and Reservoir. Libraries in Darebin already play an important role in enabling community activities and supporting community groups for older people.

*"I would like Darebin libraries (and Northcote Town Hall) to be resourced to provide a greater role in supporting older (and younger) people to participate in socially inclusive activities."
(Consultation feedback)*

In order to embrace the ageing Darebin population, libraries need to plan and prioritise services for older people.

Libraries provide:

- **Places to meet:** A place for older people to meet informally and formally – participating in community groups run in library spaces as well as volunteering (such as older people reading to groups of children after school);
- **ePlatforms:** to support lifelong learning, e-government, independent living and support, accessing MAC, MAC website;
- **Supportive contact with Age Friendly staff:** Library staff are vital points of contact for lonely, isolated older people, therefore time and responsibility for being able to establish relationships is an important part of all roles of people working in libraries;
- **Information and education about ageing:** Providing information and education about health, ageing, supports, CHSP, MAC, older people's groups, U3A, other community groups;
- **Improved library design and access** to transportation by including older people in design;
- **Digital inclusion:** Providing state of the art computer access and training for older people (for example, computer and gaming clubs specifically for older people); and introducing the latest technologies to revolutionise the types of resources available to upgrade genealogy and history research;
- **Support to older people with specific needs:** including library services for older people with vision or hearing impairment; for older people from a CALD community, and visiting library services for frail older people who are housebound or living in residential centres;
- **Employment and volunteering of older people in the library:** considering opportunities to employ older people. Separately from paid employment there is an opportunity to harness the capacity of retired people as volunteers;

- **Adaptive technologies and methods for inclusion of older people:** investigating the opportunity to utilise and make available adaptive technologies for older people with vision impairments, such as:
 - voice output
 - screen enlargement software
 - document readers
 - equipment to assist older people with physical disabilities such as modified keyboards; and
 - large print book formats.
- **Other opportunities** for inclusion such as:
 - hearing loops;
 - audio books in community languages;
 - reminiscence kits including: handling objects, listening to poetry and prose, and viewing photographs to encourage older people to share their memories.

In view of the value of library services in providing and supporting community activities, it is vital that they include vulnerable groups and communities.

It is recommended that DCC funds the visiting library service to expand its support of homebound residents. (Recommendation 92)

It is further recommended that as DCC develops its new library strategy, the needs of older people are strongly considered, particularly in terms of their residential location. (Recommendation 93)

8.17 DCC Volunteering program

A Volunteering Victoria publication on volunteering by older people provides a review of literature which evidences how volunteering benefits the health and wellbeing of older volunteers as well as recipients,⁶³ for example:

- **Hypertension:** In 2013 a US study followed people aged over 50 for four years and found that those who had volunteered at least 200 hours in the previous 12 months were less likely to develop hypertension than non-volunteer.⁶⁴
- **Pain:** People suffering from chronic pain experience declines in their pain intensity when they assist others also suffering from chronic pain.⁶⁵
- **Cognition:** A 2009 study found that older adults who volunteered were able to delay or even reverse declining brain functioning. They made gains in brain regions that support cognitive abilities important to planning and organising daily life.⁶⁶
- **Mortality:** A 2013 university of Exeter meta-analysis of five studies identified a 22% reduction in early mortality among volunteers compared to non-volunteers.⁶⁷

Within seniors' groups there are many volunteer roles that need to be filled in order for the group to be able to operate and reach out to new members. These volunteer roles require skills and knowledge in areas such as: governance, meetings, outreach and marketing, organising outings, fundraising.

In the past DCC may have considered that volunteers could become substitutes for paid workers. Volunteers are however different from paid workers in that their role is non-transactional with reciprocal benefits to receiver and volunteer.

It is recommended that DCC establishes a Volunteer Program to provide the opportunity for older people and people of all ages to contribute to others in the community. (Recommendation 94)

These volunteering roles should address:

- volunteering to assist people of all ages in many different capacities;
- specifically, intergenerational; for example, as older people reading to children at schools and in libraries (grandparents' corner in libraries);
- volunteering to regularly assist other older people including: regular visiting, regular telephoning for longer catch-up calls rather than just checking up (these catch up call schemes would be specifically organised by DCC); handyperson using skills to assist other older people, reading and library book delivery, transport;
- volunteering to regularly share meals;
- volunteering to regularly pick up isolated older people and participate with them in community activities; and
- joining service clubs that are specifically focused on volunteering – providing a double benefit of being a member of the group, as well as volunteering.

⁶³ Volunteering Victoria, 2016, *The impact of volunteering on happiness and health*

⁶⁴ Sneed, R.S, et al., 2013, 'A Prospective Study of Volunteerism and Hypertension Risk in Older Adults', *Psychology and Aging*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp.578-586 (as cited in Volunteering Victoria, 2016)

⁶⁵ Arnstein, P., et al., 2002, 'From chronic pain patient to peer: benefits and risks of volunteering', *Pain Management Nurses*, Vol.3, no.3, pp.94-103 (as cited in Volunteering Victoria, 2016)

⁶⁶ Parsons, T., 2009, 'Brain benefit for seniors who volunteer,' Johns Hopkins University, 24 December 2009, <http://www.futurity.org/brain-benefit-for-seniors-who-volunteer/>, (as cited in Volunteering Victoria, 2016)

⁶⁷ Jenkinson, C.E., et al, 2013, 'Is volunteering a public health intervention? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the health and survival of volunteers' *BMC Public Health* Vol.13 no 703 (as cited in Volunteering Victoria, 2016)

"I found out through chatting to a neighbour that their son was struggling with English subject at school – I help him with English and it is great – this contact with him does me good. It gives them a different view of older people." (Consultation feedback)

It is recommended that the proposed DCC's Volunteer Program undertakes identifying, recruiting, informing, as well as training and support for volunteers, including older volunteers. (Recommendation 95)

Volunteers could add value to the impact of social inclusion workers.

Where it is assessed that isolated older people need more contact than could be provided even with the social inclusion worker as outlined in recommendation 22, it is recommended that a volunteer be brought in to extend the intensity and contact for an activity for the older person for a period of time.

It is important to note that the proposed volunteer roles would:

- not replace the paid workforce;
- be in reciprocal relationships;
- contribute to a time-intensive community development approach;
- bolt onto a social inclusion service providing more intensive one-on-one contact to isolated older people; and
- fulfil a range of potential roles such as: home visiting, outings, transport, library support programs, information services.

The skilled matching of volunteers to individuals is important to the success of such a program.

Circles of Support

Matching volunteers with socially isolated older people to extend the role of the social inclusion workers could expand into developing 'Circles of Support' for very vulnerable older people living on their own, where regular meetings of people prepared to play a role in supporting the older person discuss and plan methods and ideas for supporting the older person to stay connected and included.

A systematic approach to volunteering will harness a huge resource for Darebin as well as providing older people with rich opportunity for social inclusion.

9 NEXT STEPS TOWARDS AN AGE FRIENDLY DAREBIN

In many ways development of an Age Friendly Darebin builds on DCC's commitment to a bolder, more connected city, and DCC's mission to preserve and improve the physical, social, cultural and economic health of all neighbourhoods while ensuring quality of life for current and future generations.

Following Council's and the community's consideration of this report, it is expected Council will respond to the report's recommendations and set a direction for the development of an Age Friendly Darebin.

"In all applications and projects before council could there be a requirement "How does this affect people over 65?" (Consultation feedback)

It is expected that implementation of agreed recommendations of this report will, of necessity, have to occur over a number of years and will require Council to make decisions in regard to prioritising activities and allocating resources, including redirecting existing resources or allocating new or additional resources.

A fundamental principle for Age Friendliness is that older people should be actively involved in the development, monitoring and improvement of services and infrastructure that affects them. Throughout the report there are specific recommendations for opportunities for older people to become the auditors, designers and informers to make Darebin Age Friendly. The contribution, participation and support of older residents is central to an effective implementation of agreed recommendations.

"When council does follow up work, gather us together, I need to say, look – this does or does not make sense. Invite us back when you are designing the follow up – ask us – does this meet the needs you've expressed." (Consultation Feedback)

While final responsibility for delivering agreed recommendations should reside with DCC's CEO.

It is recommended that DCC should establish a Cross-Organisational Project Control Group, to be charged with responsibility for implementation.

The Project Group to be chaired by a General Manager from DCC's Executive Leadership Team and comprised of officers from across DCC with appropriate experience, information and authority to oversee the development of an Age Friendly Darebin. The Project Control Group to:

- a. be chaired by a General Manager from DCC's Executive Leadership Team and comprised of officers from across DCC with appropriate experience, information and authority to oversee the development of an Age Friendly Darebin;
- b. to consider and provide advice for Council regarding prioritisation, resourcing and implementation of Age Friendly Darebin initiatives and activities; and
- c. to conduct regular consultation and seek advice from DCC's:
 - Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board
 - Older Persons Community Group Network
 - Information Advisory Group
 - Older Person Open Space Audit Advisory Team (Recommendation 96)

It is further recommended that the proposed Cross-Organisational Project Control Group to report to Council on progress towards agreed commitments to develop an Age Friendly Darebin annually as part of the monitoring achievement towards Council's 2017 - 2021 Goals, particularly:

- a. Goal 2: improving the wellbeing of people in our community by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well;
- b. Goal 3: ensuring our planning system facilitates high-quality and sustainable development that extracts social, environmental and economic benefits for our community; and
- c. Goal 5: leading on equity and recognizing our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges. (Recommendation 97)

When reporting against these goals the Committee should also provide advice to Council on:

- a. progress and challenges in ensuring an Age Friendly Darebin; and
- b. appropriate action to address emerging issues that may impact on DCC's ability to deliver its Age Friendly Darebin commitments. (Recommendation 98)

APPENDIX 1: REVIEW'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

1. The Advisory Panel on Creating an Age Friendly Darebin will collect and consider evidence, ideas, and community input about how Council can best create an Age Friendly Darebin where older people are valued, supported and empowered to live well, including but not limited to these topics:
 - a. social inclusion, social and civic participation
 - b. built environment, transport and housing
 - c. community support and health services.

2. In considering community support and health services, the panel will consider Council's future role in providing services, programs and facilities to older people post-2020 within the context of the federal My Aged Care system, federal funding reform and changing community needs.

The panel will consider and investigate a range of options, including the following:

- i. continuation of existing Council services to older people
- ii. expansion, growth, reduction or adaptation of existing Council services (including consideration of whether council can become a provider of home care packages)
- iii. transitioning clients of identified existing Council services to other service providers over time
- iv. establishing new or additional services, programs or facilities for older people.

The impact of competition policy must also be considered when assessing the options.

3. After collecting information and evidence, and hearing community submissions and feedback, the panel will prepare a report making recommendations to Darebin Council on the above topics.
4. Darebin Council is committed to an Age Friendly City which values, supports and empowers older people – so that older people can live well, be healthy, be socially connected, and live independently within their community.
5. Older people must have access to the quality services, programs and facilities that they need. In particular, vulnerable and disadvantaged older people will need additional support.
6. Darebin Council intends to have a long-term role in supporting and advocating for the wellbeing of older people.

7. Darebin Council is committed to maintaining investment in the health and wellbeing of our older residents. Council must also ensure that we spend our resources responsibly for the benefit of older people.
8. Darebin Council cares for its clients and for the Darebin community. We will consult and communicate openly about the decision making process.
9. Darebin Council cares for its staff. We will consult and communicate openly with staff about the decision making process.
10. Darebin Council must at all times comply with legislative and regulatory requirements.
11. The review must take into account that the lifestyle, work and needs of older people are changing and will continue to change into the future.
12. The review must consider innovative models of service provision, initiatives and programs.
13. "Is committed to open and transparent decision-making processes and will therefore bring any recommendations emanating from the review process back to an open Council meeting for a decision by Councillors."

Scope

The Advisory Panel on Creating an Age Friendly Darebin will:

14. Review evidence and information about: community views and needs; Council's current aged care services and programs; federal funding reforms; options for future service provision including potential new or expanded services or programs; innovative or best practice initiatives, projects or services in Australia or overseas.
15. Identify any additional information or analysis required
16. Issue a public discussion paper which sets out ideas and options for creating an Age Friendly Darebin, including options for future service delivery.
17. Invite submissions from the community, from staff and from stakeholders in relation to the discussion paper.
18. Specifically invite consultation and comments from:
 - Existing Council clients, including clients and stakeholders from CALD backgrounds
 - Senior citizens clubs, U3A and other groups
 - The Darebin Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board
 - Carers Victoria, Council of the Ageing and other bodies
 - Council staff
 - Service providers, peak bodies, regulatory bodies and relevant unions.
19. Ensure that information materials and information sessions are provided in key community languages.

20. Ensure that submitters have an opportunity to publicly address the panel about their submission, and for the panel to ask questions.
21. Consider evidence, analysis and community feedback.
22. Prepare a preliminary report containing recommendations to the Council.
23. Issue this preliminary report and invite further community submissions.
24. Consider the second round of community submissions.
25. Finalise the report and recommendations to Council.

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Panel membership:

Council appointed Rhonda Galbally AO and Peter Allen as members of the Review Panel for Creating an Age Friendly Darebin.

Principles for conducting the review

26. Darebin Council is committed to an Age Friendly City which values, supports and empowers older people – so that older people can live well, be healthy, be socially connected, and live independently within their community.
27. Older people must have access to the quality services, programs and facilities that they need. In particular, vulnerable and disadvantaged older people will need additional support.
28. Darebin Council intends to have a long-term role in supporting and advocating for the wellbeing of older people.
29. Darebin Council is committed to maintaining investment in the health and well-being of our older residents. Council must also ensure that we spend our resources responsibly for the benefit of older people.
30. Darebin Council cares for its clients and for the Darebin community. We will consult and communicate openly about the decision making process.
31. Darebin Council cares for its staff. We will consult and communicate openly with staff about the decision making process.
32. Darebin Council must at all times comply with legislative and regulatory requirements.

33. The review must take into account that the lifestyle, work and needs of older people are changing and will continue to change into the future.
34. The review must consider innovative models of service provision, initiatives and programs.
35. Is committed to open and transparent decision making processes and will therefore bring any recommendations emanating from the review process back to an open Council meeting for a decision by Councillors.

Approach

The Review Panel conducted the following activities:

36. Reviewed evidence and information about: community views and needs; Council's current aged care services and programs; federal funding reforms; options for future service provision including potential new or expanded services or programs; innovative or best practice initiatives, projects or services in Australia or overseas.
37. Prepared and released a public discussion paper which set out ideas and options for creating an Age Friendly Darebin, including options for future service delivery.
38. Invited submissions from the community, from staff and from stakeholders in relation to the discussion paper.
39. The Review Panel conducted a significant community consultation process (refer to Appendix 5, for further details) which included:
 - meetings with specific stakeholder groups and community organisations;
 - meetings with DCC A&D services staff;
 - meetings with the general public;
 - meetings with representatives across different DCC departments;
 - regular project update meetings with DCC's General Manager, Community and Manager Aged and Disability;
 - review Panel meetings with service providers, peak bodies, regulatory bodies and relevant unions; and
 - public hearings conducted by the Review Panel.
40. The Review Panel was supported by DCC staff who provided background information and information in response to particular requests. The Panel also received external support appointed by DCC.
41. DCC staff conducted internal and external meetings to collect and provide information to the Panel, including:
 - DCC staff meetings with specific stakeholder groups and community organisations;
 - DCC meetings with the general public; and
 - DCC staff meetings (e.g. ideas hack, focus groups etc).
42. Preparation of a draft report for consideration by Council.
43. Release of the draft report for community consultation.

APPENDIX 3: BANYULE CITY COUNCIL: SUMMARY OF LIVEABLE HOUSING GUIDELINES⁶⁸

Banyule's liveable Housing guidelines are in relation to:

Access to the dwelling:

- a continuous accessible path of travel from the street to the dwelling entrance.
- a continuous accessible path of travel from car parking areas to the main entrance or another dwelling entry.
- the path of travel must be minimum 1000mm wide and at a maximum gradient of 1:14 and with a crossfall no greater than 1:40.

Entrances:

- at least one level (step free) entrance into the dwelling that provides:
- direct access from the accessible path of travel described above.
- a level landing area of 1200mm x 1200mm, exclusive of the swing of the door.
- a minimum doorway width of 850mm.
- the height difference between abutting surfaces must be no greater than 5mm.

Corridors:

- the width of internal corridors must be a minimum of 1000mm.

Doorways:

- the width of doorways must be a minimum width of 850mm.

Toilets:

- a toilet on ground floor that provides:
- a clear width of 900mm and a space of 1200mm (length) forward of the pan (exclusive of the swing of the door) if toilet is located in a separate room.
- reinforced walls to allow for future installation of grab rails.

⁶⁸ Banyule City Council, 2013, *Liveable Design Guidelines*, Banyule City Council, <https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Services/Planning/Livable-Housing>

Bathroom and shower:

- access to a shower on the ground floor that provides:
 - a step free shower area of at least 900mm x 900mm in width and length
 - a clear space in front of the shower that is 1200mm x 1200mm in width and length.
 - reinforced walls to allow for future installation of grab rails.

Bedroom:

- a room on the ground floor that could be used as a bedroom that is at least 10m².

APPENDIX 4: DATA AND INFORMATION TABLES

A4.1. City of Darebin Population Forecast (ERP: Estimated Resident Population)

Age Group	2016 ERP (adjusted)	ERP 2021	ERP 2026	Change from 2016 to 2021	Change from 2016 to 2026
Total Population	155,022	173,386	189,985	18,364	34,963
Total 65-79	14,163	15,425	17,599	1,262	3,436
Total 80+	7,359	7,911	8,187	552	828
Total 65+	21,522	23,336	25,786	1,814	4,264
% Total 65+ of Total population	13.9%	13.5%	13.6%	99%	12.2%

Source: 2016 Census data and the population forecast data were adjusted by id consulting (November 2017)

A4.2. City of Darebin Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, 2016

Area	IRSED index score	Postcode
Australia	1001.9	
Victoria	1010.0	
Greater Melbourne	1021.0	
City of Darebin	1004.0	
Alphington	1088.9	3078
Fairfield - Alphington	1073.0	3078
Northcote (East)	1065.1	3070
Northcote	1064.4	3070
Fairfield	1064.2	3078
Northcote (West)	1063.4	3070
Northcote Activity Area	1060.4	3070
Bundoora - Macleod	1055.7	3083
Thornbury (West)	1055.3	3071
Thornbury	1038.3	3071
Thornbury (East)	1026.2	3071
Preston (West)	1024.4	3072
Kingsbury - Bundoora	1013.6	3083
Preston	996.2	3072
Reservoir (Edwardes Lake)	982.7	3073
Preston Activity Area	981.7	3072
Preston (East)	971.0	3072
Reservoir Activity Area	954.8	3073
Reservoir	952.6	3073
Reservoir (Cheddar)	946.0	3073
Reservoir (Merrilands)	941.2	3073
Kingsbury	938.4	3073
Reservoir (Oakhill)	935.7	3073
Northland Activity Area	840.5	3072

A4.3. CHSP Outputs 2017/18 Actual

Service type	Output type	Outputs	% total hours
Assessment	hours	8,357	7.5%
Domestic Assistance	hours	66,245	59.3%
Personal Care	hours	20,678	18.5%
Respite	hours	4,396	3.9%
Social Support	hours	10,614	9.5%
Home Maintenance	hours	1,483	1.3%
Delivered Meals	meals	30,818	na
Community Transport ¹	trips	1,650	na
TOTAL	hours	111,773	100%

1. Community Transport NOT funded through CHSP

A4.3. DCC Aged & Disability Services: total revenue and expenditure 2017/18 Actual

Service type	Revenue	Program cost	Council contribution	Council contribution (adjusted)
Assessment	\$751,096	\$1,577,778	-\$826,682	-\$826,682
Domestic Assistance	\$3,152,626	\$5,530,594	-\$2,377,968	-\$2,377,968
Personal Care	\$1,501,454	\$1,942,046	-\$440,593	-\$853,419
Respite	\$374,381	\$344,336	\$30,046	-\$120,146
Social Support	\$327,768	\$532,413	-\$204,645	-\$265,255
Home Maintenance	\$196,961	\$205,573	-\$8,612	-\$79,577
Delivered Meals	\$493,151	\$1,613,839	-\$1,120,688	-\$1,194,210
Community Transport	\$34,980	\$448,315	-\$413,335	-\$413,335
Community Participation	\$261,896	\$1,100,764	-\$838,868	-\$838,868
TOTAL	\$7,094,313	\$13,295,659	-\$6,201,345	-\$6,969,459

Note:

- Program cost does not include corporate overheads
- Program cost total varies by \$1.00 from sum of service type costs due to rounding
- Council contribution is the difference between revenue and program cost
- Council contribution (adjusted): reflects variation from contracted outputs if the Australian Government 'claws back' revenue for outputs below agreed targets.

Note:

- 2017/18 Assessment and Domestic Assistance actual in excess of agreed outputs
- No CHSP funding for Community Transport and Community Participation

APPENDIX 5: ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION REPORT

Background

Council's strong commitment to consultation is expressed in the Council Plan:

"Goal 5. We will lead on equity and recognise our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges...

5.2 We bring the ideas of our diverse community into our decision-making."⁶⁹

The public consultation comprised two rounds and formed a significant component of the overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy of the Age Friendly Darebin Review. The review was also informed by evidence from research literature, and information about community needs, aged care services data and programs, federal funding reforms, innovative or best practice initiatives locally and internationally.

This report details how the consultation was implemented and summarises the community response that formed a vital source of data available for analysis by the Panel.

Federal Government funding extension of block funding for aged care home support services

The expected transition to a full competitive market for home support services in 2020 played a significant role in the community's engagement during the first phase of the Age Friendly Darebin consultation process. This consultation was undertaken before the Federal Government committed to extend block funding until 2022. The community's engagement was strongly focused on council continuing Home Support services provision. An Aged Care Services Petition was raised by a group of City of Darebin residents which called on Council to commit to maintaining its role as a provider of aged care services into the future. Publication of the Panel's Draft Report in April 2019 coincided with the funding extension announcement. The level of community engagement and the number of feedback submissions was significantly less for the second round of consultation.

⁶⁹ Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021

Aged Care Services Petition

A petition was raised by a group of City of Darebin residents at a Council meeting on 30 April 2018. The petition called on Council to commit to maintaining its role as a provider of aged care services into the future.⁷⁰ The tabling of this petition coincided with Council's announcement that a decision about the process on how to consult with the community, and not about Council's role in the future, would be made at the Council Meeting on 21 May 2018. The petition was tabled at four subsequent Council meetings throughout 2018 and culminated in a final tally of 1850 signatures received by Council on 15 October 2018. This petition is a data source that was considered by the Panel, however the numbers of signatories are not aggregated with data collected during the Age Friendly Darebin Review and consultation as it was a separate process.

Similarly, results from the 2017 Aged & Disability community consultation "A Review of the needs of older people in Darebin" was considered by the Panel but not aggregated with the Age Friendly Darebin review data.⁷¹

Consultation Method

The consultation method was guided by the Terms of Reference of the Age Friendly Darebin Review and the intentions of the Panel.

It was therefore designed to offer:

- sufficient time for individuals, groups, organisations, staff and other stakeholders to consider, respond and provide ideas;
- a broad range of locations, formats, languages and possible means for clients and community members to understand the purpose of the review and to contribute their thoughts.

The reach and methods of the consultation enabled broad community participation and therefore met the requirements of the terms of reference in this regard. In particular, substantial efforts were made to reach residents whose first language is not English and those who need support to be heard. In general the conversation was lively and people responded positively to the opportunity to have a say.

70 Full wording of the Petition:

"We the undersigned residents and ratepayers of Darebin, petition Council to publically commit to maintaining its current role as a provider of aged care services including transport, cleaning, personal care, meals, home maintenance and respite care, into the future.

We urge Council not to abandon its role in providing the above aged care services in view of the Federal Government's privatisation agenda of aged care services.

We are proud that Darebin Council is a long-standing provider of high quality aged care services and has built a strong and trusted reputation as a preferred provider with elderly residents and their families in the community.

In Darebin 25,534 people (18.8% of the total population) are aged over 60 and many are receiving, or will soon require, support services to enable them to remain in their home. We firmly believe that current and future aged community members should continue to have the choice to receive home care service directly from trusted and committed Darebin Council staff."

71 Pope, J, 2018, *Review of the needs of older people in Darebin*

Timing of activities

Date	Activity
9 th October 2018	Release of Discussion Paper
Throughout October and November	Community meetings and focus groups - See table below for the list of meetings and events. These were held in community and council locations
23 rd November 2018	Closing date for submissions
6 th December 2018	Panel hearing
9 April 2019	Release of Draft Report and Draft Report Summary in English and 12 community languages
April and May 2019	Call for feedback submissions, Senior Citizen Clubs and other stakeholder meetings, Darebin staff workshops – see table for list of activities below
15 May 2019	Closing date for submissions
30 July 2019	Release of final report

Description of activities

Pop-up: A small team of (two to four) staff attended the scheduled location for a specified time (usually two hours), and set up a temporary "stand" with copies of the Discussion Paper and a range of other relevant information to hand out and Council banners. Usually with a table and chairs. Staff, actively engage with community members to inform and encourage their discussion and comment.

Drop in session: A larger scale (longer duration, more staff, larger set-up, refreshments provided) event held at Council venue, where community members were invited to attend. Panel members and senior management attended.

Focus Groups: Up to eight to ten representatives of stakeholders of similar cohorts invited to a meeting facilitated by the Panel and/or staff to discuss issues in more depth. Notes were taken by staff and added to the consultation material available for the Panel's consideration.

Panel meetings: Ranged in size, some very large (e.g. 100 staff) where Panel encouraged comment, questions and discussion. Some singular and by specific appointment, e.g. with Commissioner for Senior Victorians.

Department meeting: Regular (quarterly) meeting of the Aged & Disability Department. Specific theme regarding the Review on this occasion.

Consultation Session: Some similarity to a Pop-up but attending an existing group/club/program/meeting by invitation/arrangement.

Workshops: Held with Darebin Council experts from various departments.

Panel Hearing: Formal, scheduled, public session held in Council Chambers, chaired by Panel. Written submissions were required prior, and presenters had a specified time to speak to their submission. Session was recorded.

First round consultation

List of consultation events

Event Attendees	Event Type
Australian Services Union	1x Panel Meeting, 1x Meeting with Council Staff
Italian Seniors Clubs	Panel Meeting
U3A, Matrix, Probus	Panel Meeting
AHAAB Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board	Panel Meeting
Progress Association	Panel Meeting
Aboriginal Stakeholders	Panel Meeting
Greek Seniors Clubs	Panel Meeting
Macedonian Seniors Clubs	Panel Meeting
Organisations that work with hard to reach communities	Panel Meeting
Aged & Disability staff	Department Meetings
Aged & Disability staff	3 x Panel Focus Groups
General Public: Preston Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Reservoir Senior Citizen Centre	Pop Up session with Council staff
Council Staff	Council Meeting
Council Staff	Workshops with Council staff
General Public: Your Community Health, Men's Shed	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Preston Market	2 x Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Preston Shire Hall	Drop In session with Council staff
General Public: Kingsbury Bowls Club	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Holmes Street public housing residents	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Reservoir Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Preston Church of Christ Community Lunch	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Summerhill Retirement Village residents	Pop Up session with Council staff
Arabic Seniors Groups	Consultation session with Council staff
Maltese Seniors Groups	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Agg Street public housing residents	Pop Up session with Council staff
Chinese Seniors Groups	Consultation session with Council staff

Kingsbury Probus	Consultation session with Council staff
General Public: Northcote Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
Aged Care Services Clients	Panel Focus Group
Carers	Panel Focus Group
Active and engaged seniors	Panel Focus Group
Italian and English Seniors Clubs	Consultation sessions with Council staff and interpreters
General Public: Fairfield Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
Greek Seniors Clubs	Consultations with Council staff and interpreters
Carers	Consultation session with Council staff
Vietnamese Seniors Groups	Consultation session with Council staff
Aged Care Services Clients	Focus Group with Council Staff
Macedonian Seniors Groups	Consultation sessions with Council staff and interpreters
General Public - Community Sunday Lunch Reservoir Senior Citizen Centre	Pop Up session with Council staff
Aboriginal Elders	Panel Meetings
Peak Bodies: COTA, Seniors Rights Victoria, Merri Health	Panel Meeting
General Public: Northland Shopping Centre	Pop Up session with Council staff
Gerard Mansour, Commissioner for Senior Victorians	Panel Meeting
Council Staff	Ideas Hack with Council staff
Women's Advisory Committee	Consultation session with Council staff
General Public	Public Panel Hearing

Discussion Paper

Structure

The Discussion Paper was comprised of five main sections:

- introduction;
- themes and questions;
- how to have a say;
- glossary and appendices;
- feedback form (response sheet). A reply-paid fold-up sheet that provided a blank page for open comment.

The Discussion Paper introduced the concept of an Age Friendly City, the various issues and challenges of ageing, Darebin demographics, aged care services generally, and the role of Council historically and currently in service provision.

People were welcome to respond to the consultation and Discussion Paper in any way they chose (phone, in person, written), however most respondents made use of the response sheet. The response sheet included a section asking for (voluntary and anonymous) basic demographic information to enable an evaluation of reach to, and diversity of, respondents.

Key themes and questions

The Discussion Paper presented five main themes, each with a list of questions intended to elicit discussion and response:

- **Living in your home.** Questions included whether Council should continue to provide all of its existing aged care services, or expand, reduce or adapt them? Questions also explored what role Council should have in contributing to service quality generally, to the support of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and older residents from culturally diverse backgrounds, LGBTI communities, and the vulnerable.
- **Quality information, navigation and brokerage.** What are the best ways for people to get the information they need? How can older people be assisted to exercise choice and be in control? Who should advocate for the needs of the most vulnerable, socially isolated older people?
- **Beyond the home.** What can Council do to enable older people to be able to get out and about and enjoy Darebin's public spaces, streets, shopping centres and parks easily and safely, to have access to affordable housing, and access to mobility equipment?
- **Connection to contribute.** How should Council enable an expansion of opportunities to draw on the skills, experience and expertise of older people?
- **In the community.** What can Council do to assist residents to connect to community, including groups? Are there enough venues? How should Council structure its grants program to assist older people's needs?

Promotion

The consultation schedule and review were publicised widely in traditional (press conference, paid advertisements, radio interviews) and social media (Facebook, Twitter) and via Council's internal municipal promotional mechanisms (Website, Darebin Community News) and Aged & Disability's networks (clients, newsletter subscribers, clubs and groups). There were also numerous by-invitation meetings and focus groups with a range of stakeholders (see table above for full list).

Some stakeholder groups met more than once with the Panel (e.g. staff, AHAAB). Some individuals contributed as an individual and also as a member of a stakeholder group.

In all there were 50 separate events during the consultation period encompassing meetings, pop-ups, and focus groups, located across the municipality. These included 44 Community events with 60 community organisations/groups and eight staff events (224 staff members participated).

Seventeen of these events were chaired by the Panel, the remainder were conducted by Council staff on the Panel's behalf.

Where indicated, interpreters were arranged to encourage and enable participation of community members whose first language is not English.

Participation and response

Reach

4500 copies of the Discussion Paper were distributed in hardcopy via mail out and from various locations across the municipality. It was translated into six community languages: Italian, Greek, Macedonian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic. Verbal participation in languages other than English was enabled via language-specific meetings and focus groups and on an individual basis as required via provision of interpreters or bilingual staff.

The Discussion Paper was also available on line via the Darebin YourSay platform and website, and via email on request.

Response

Community and stakeholder participation in the Age Friendly Darebin Review consultation was diverse and substantial:

- 1,130 people in total participated in engagement events;
- 773 people provided feedback in some form (366 of these in person- meetings, focus groups, pop-up and drop-in sessions or panel hearing)
- 407 written items of feedback were received, of these
 - 75% (307) were on the hardcopy version of the response sheet that came with the Discussion Paper;
 - 15% (65) were on the electronic online version of the response sheet;
 - 10% (35) were separate submissions (letters, emails, papers);
- twenty-three respondents chose to speak to their submission at the public hearing;
- some people who gave written feedback, also gave verbal feedback.

Review respondent demographics compared to client and broader Darebin community demographics

Demographics	Respondents	Council clients (2017-18 data)	Darebin (2016 Census)
Geography			(all ages)
Reservoir	49%	47%	30%
Northcote	20%	13%	15%
Preston	14%	22%	20%
Thornbury	10%	10%	11%
Fairfield/ Kingsbury/ Bundoora/ Alphington/ Other	7%	18%	24%
Language			(all ages)
English	52%	57%	56%
Other	48%	43%	44%
Age			
20-50	4%	3%	50%
51-65	17%	7%	15%
65-79	49%	31%	9%
80+	30%	59%	5%
Clients/ non-clients	48% Council clients 47% no services 5% Other services	Not applicable 100% (of council clients are council clients)	14% of over 65s are Council clients
Carers/ non-carers	29% carers/ 71% non-carers	Not available. (We only collect if clients have a carer = 32%)	(all ages) 9% Darebin residents all ages identify as carer

*N.B. The figures in this table do not include data received from the Darebin aged care services petition referred to above, this data is taken from the demographic data included on submitted Feedback Forms

The following observations were made regarding the reach and response of the consultation, on the basis of demographics:

- geographically, a broad representation of the older person target group was achieved, with some over representation of people from Reservoir and Northcote;
- regarding language - respondents were skewed to CALD compared to the client and Darebin cohorts;

- age - a broad representation was achieved.;
- client-non-client split - nearly 50% of respondents are current clients;
- carer-non-carer split - the respondent sample was skewed toward carers, which was considered desirable for the purposes of the consultation.

Results

The below sections present themes, ideas and recommendations that were shared by the community with the Panel and Council staff during the Age Friendly Darebin consultation period on the Discussion Paper.

Section 1 is a summary of the feedback received via completed feedback forms.

Section 2 summarises material presented at consultation meetings and focus groups (listed above).

A full list of all submissions including those made at the Panel's hearing is available on the Council website.

Section 1

Feedback received from individuals via feedback form

The feedback form was an insert provided with the Discussion Paper, it was a free text form with the following prompt

"Use this page after reading the Discussion Paper to provide your feedback about the key issues for older people. How can Darebin become a truly Age Friendly City?"

The form collected basic de-identified data about the respondent including:

- language spoken
- age bracket
- postcode
- provides support to an older person - Yes/No
- receiving an aged care service - Yes from Darebin - Yes through other provider - No

Data collation and coding method

Most feedback forms were completed in hardcopy and posted to Council via reply-paid. Some forms were completed via web form or submitted to the Aged Friendly Darebin email address. All verbal feedback received, by phone, or at Pop-up events, was recorded in written form by staff and included in the data pool for coding.

Verbal feedback spoken in languages other than English was verbally interpreted and then notes taken in English. Written responses in languages other than English were professionally translated to enable coding.

The analysis of the material or coding was conducted by council officers based on judgement in reading all submissions (i.e. was not algorithmic based on word frequency).

Therefore it was possible to record multiple themes for individual submissions as expressed by the respondent, rather than officers determining a primary/priority theme for individual submissions, see table below for the results of the coding.

Limitations

Numeric or quantitative data resulting from the feedback should be treated with caution because:

- it is possible for one person to submit multiple times
- submissions may not be free of influence
- several staff were involved in recording verbal feedback so recording may not have been consistent
- it is an open text submission format, not a statistically- validated instrument
- weighting of responses is unavoidably subjective e.g. an idea submitted by 20 people is not necessarily superior to an idea put forward by only one person.

The consultation process was not designed or intended to be a quantitative. Research process and therefore no statistical significance can be concluded from numbers or proportions of respondents or responses. The results are best interpreted as illustrative only of some of the views of those who chose to and were able to participate.

The feedback form did not allow for clients who are dual service recipients to indicate that they are service recipients of both Council and another service provider

Respondent categories

169 = Council clients

164 = Not a service user

19 = Did not indicate if client or not

17 = Clients of other aged services

Total response items = 369

Response themes in rank order of frequency

N.B Most responses included more than one theme (average = 3.7)

Theme	Rank
Council should stay in aged care services	1
Council's aged care service standards are good	2
Increase flexibility of Council aged services	3
Council aged care services should expand/offer additional types of services	4
Council's aged care service staff are valued and trusted	5
Affordability: Council should provide more low cost or free activities	6
Council's aged care services should include gardening support e.g. lawn mowing	7
Challenges experienced navigating the aged care system and choosing aged care services	8
Council should provide additional, accessible and flexible community transport options	9
Challenges experienced with Council's information and communication about services	10
Public transport system and physical access is not Age Friendly (e.g. Myki/ accessible stops)	11
Housing challenges - feel safe and secure in affordable housing	12
Concerns about health issues and access to health services (including mental health)	13
Concerns about unsafe footpaths - risk of falls	14
More opportunities needed for social interactions with others	15
Concerns about loneliness and isolation (about others or self)	16
Challenges with limited finances and cost of living	17
Concerns about vulnerable residents - Council should have a monitoring role	18
Culturally appropriate services are important	18
Council should provide improved places and spaces for physical activity of seniors	18
Council to offer more opportunities for older people to go on social outings/trips	19
Concerns about access to (wait times) and quality of Home Care Packages	20
Council's aged care service standards are not good/not good enough	21

Council's focus should be on core business: rubbish, signs, assets, graffiti management	21
Seniors clubs and groups are valued	21
Informal support through family and neighbours is valued	22
My Aged Care System is confusing and complicated	23
Council should provide more advocacy to Government on behalf of older people e.g. housing, transport etc.	24
Don't privatise aged care	25
Concerns about safety & personal security (crime)	25
Facilities, centres and parks don't meet the needs of older people	25
My independence is important to me	26
Council should provide community connector service (connecting people to services and supports that they need)	26
Council should provide transport to medical appointments	26
Not enough public seating	27
Improve parking options for older people (accessibility, availability, timeframes)	28
Not enough safe and accessible public toilets	28
Improve pedestrian crossings with older people in mind	29
Council Facilities, centres and parks are valued	29
Council should support skill development of older people, e.g. computer literacy education	29
I don't like change	30
Increase opportunities for intergenerational activities	30
More opportunities to contribute to community, e.g. volunteering	30
Concerns about access and affordability to mobility equipment e.g. scooters etc.	31
Improve lighting across the community	31
Increase funding for aged care services	32
Darebin is a good place to live	32
Council should stop providing aged care services	33
Council should employ more aged care services staff	33
Age friendly planning is important	33
Public transport should be subsidised for older people	34

Most frequent response themes sorted by client-non-client respondents

Non-Client top themes	Rank	Client top themes	Rank
Council should stay in aged services	1	Council should stay in aged services	1
Increase flexibility of Council aged services	2	Council's aged care service standards are good	2
Council aged care services should expand/offer additional types of services	3	Council's aged care service staff are valued and trusted	3
Challenges experienced navigating the aged care system and choosing aged care services	4	Council aged care services should expand/offer additional types of services	
Public transport system and physical access is not Age Friendly(e.g. Myki/ accessible stops)	5	Increase flexibility of Council aged services	4
Housing challenges - feel safe and secure in affordable housing		Council's aged care services should include gardening support e.g. lawn mowing	5
Council's aged care service standards are good		Issues with community bus access, additional community transport options	6
Challenges experienced with Council's information and communication about services		Challenges experienced navigating the aged care system and choosing aged care services	7
Council's aged care service standards are good	6	Challenges experienced with Council's information and communication about services	8
Concerns about unsafe footpaths - risk of falls		Concerns about health issues and access to health services (including mental health)	9
Council's aged care service staff are valued and trusted		Challenges with limited finances and cost of living	10
Council's aged care services should include gardening support e.g. lawn mowing			
Council should provide additional, accessible and flexible community transport options	7		

Section 2

Summary of stakeholder Feedback provided at meetings and focus groups

Council staff worked with the Panel to offer the community a range of opportunities to share their opinions and ideas throughout the Age Friendly Darebin consultation period. See table above for a full outline of the consultation schedule. The consultation officially commenced with the release of the Age Friendly Darebin Discussion Paper on October 9 2018. The Panel met with some stakeholder groups prior to October 9. The purpose of these pre-consultation meetings was to enable the Panel to tune in to the local issues affecting older people in Darebin and to ensure that the proposed consultation methods would allow as much reach as possible.

Notes were recorded from all meetings and focus groups that occurred during the pre-consultation and consultation stages. Each event is considered to be a source of data that informed the Panel's Report to Council. Summaries of each stakeholder's responses are represented below. Some summaries are grouped together where the cohort were consulted more than once.

A few key representative and advisory groups were consulted before the Age Friendly Review Consultation period. These included the Active and Healthy Aging Advisory Board (AHAAB), The Darebin Ethnic Communities Council and The Darebin Progress Association. Members of these groups provided firm and consistent messages to the Panel and Council staff. Table 4 below outlines some of this feedback. The Panel also consulted the Australian Services Union throughout key stages during the review.

1. Feedback from key advisory and advocacy groups

1. 27 August 2018 - Darebin Ethnic Communities Council
Including Panel Members and Council Staff
2. 20 September 2018 - Darebin Progress Association
Including Panel Members and Council Staff
3. 10 August & 19 September 2018 - Active and Health Aging Advisory Board
Including Panel Members and Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

Valued Council aged services should be retained

- Council's workforce is trusted, well trained and highly skilled. This workforce will be negatively impacted if Council withdraws from services.
- Firm recommendation that Darebin Council commits to remain in aged care service provision (with reference to strong community will as per petition to Council).

Avoid privatisation of aged care services

- Strong concern that the Commonwealth's privatisation of Aged Care Services will result in poor service outcomes for older people in Darebin, and particularly people who may be vulnerable or for people that have cultural barriers to service access.
- Privatisation creates transient workforce with low minimum standards, this in turn will lead to poor quality service outcomes for older people.

Concerns about consultation

- Costs relating to hiring an external Panel of experts was unnecessary and the review could have been achieved by Council Officers.

2. Darebin Women's Advisory Group

29 November 2018

Members of Darebin women's advisory committee, including Council staff, Panel members not present

Some Viewpoints

- Opportunities need to be available for older people to be included and valued in community life.
- It is important for older people to have intergenerational experiences.
- Council to consider how it can support volunteering options for older people, such as through libraries or community events.

3. Aged Services Service Delivery Unit staff with Panel Members

2 meetings on 18 October 2018

Including Panel members

Some Viewpoints

Strengths of Services

- Trusted and skilled workforce, provides good monitoring and support of older clients that may be vulnerable.

Limitations of current practices and My Aged Care

- Most service complaints are due to windows of time for service; lack of service flexibility; not providing routinely consistent CSW.
- My Aged Care is confusing for older people – more could be done to provide information and navigation assistance.

Future options for Council

- Review Occupational Health & Safety guidelines to allow flexibility.
- Expand to include – social contact or welfare checks with vulnerable, isolated clients; more transport to appointments/social activities; help with filling out forms; tailored support based on client goals; Home Care Packages, gardening.
- Some office functions and roles could be structured more efficiently.

4. Council's Regional Assessment Service staff

<p>1 October 2018 Including Panel Members</p>
<p>Some Viewpoints</p> <p>Challenges with My Aged Care Access and Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration and access is challenging for vulnerable groups. • Service navigation and informed choice about service options after an assessment is difficult for clients. • Support that assessors can provide is constrained by referral rules and conflict of interest rules (this means Council Assessors cannot show bias, or influence a decision of a client in choosing a Council service as opposed to another local service organisation). <p>Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of local transport options, gardening and social isolation are issues that are identified often by clients. • The quality and reputation of Darebin services is perceived to be higher than other services. Other CHSP providers are not always accountable (e.g. not offering a timely service, not picking up the referred client). <p>Future Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to consider: • Home Care Packages • Navigation and support service • Support for vulnerable older people, including Short term case management

5. Council Staff "Ideas Hack"

<p>22 November 2018 Including 21 staff from across Council departments (Panel members not present)</p>
<p>Staff from each Council Division shared broad strategies and ideas about how their areas can promote an Age Friendly municipality and Age Friendly Council organisation. The ideas reflected a shared commitment to think about how liveable communities are communities for all people across the lifespan. Many ideas were generated for each theme – some examples are below.</p>

Theme 1 – Good Quality Information

- Use of Libraries and Community Spaces as knowledge hubs for Aged Friendly Information.
- Technology assistance and education for seniors.
- Technology platforms for Information and education/free wifi.
- Staff trained to have awareness of Age Friendly customer responses.
- Location based information.
- Education programs for carers.
- Peer/volunteer programs.
- Good accessible information/including diversity – use of interpreters and translations.
- Navigation support for older people re: services (not just aged services).

Theme 2 – Beyond the home

- Planning precincts to be age friendly.
- Built environment safe, accessible, pedestrian friendly and connected by transport.
- Important services and amenity should be well connected by age friendly transport.
- Mobility equipment – recharge stations.
- Social inclusion built into the design of our spaces.
- Advocacy around age friendly developments and housing solutions.

Theme 3 – Connection to contribute

- Employment and transition to retirement options for older people.
- Volunteering options for and with older people – Intergenerational.
- Representation of older people – challenge stereotypes – promote capacity and skills of older people.
- Arts – positive participation of and depictions of older people.

Theme 4 – In the Community.

- Re-think or improve spaces and places to invite social inclusion, exercise and participation in arts and cultural events.
- Partnerships with community organisations that have relationships with older people at local level.
- Promote intergenerational infrastructure.
- Welcome older people visually – physical signs promoting age friendly.
- Comfortable spaces that cater language, culture, and welcoming spaces that are linked by public transport and walkability.

6. Clients of Darebin Aged Care Services

1. 7th November 2018 including Panel members and Council staff
2. 14th November 2018 with Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- High level of satisfaction with Darebin services, although would like more flexibility with hours of service.
- Important for workers to have local knowledge of supports.
- Like to have more resources that list services available in the community.
- Support in home also has benefit of socialisation which is an important component.
- Personal security is a concern – trust in services.
- More out and about activities.
- Accessibility to community is challenging – uneven footpaths, overhanging branches, access to trams and trains.
- Difficult to access services using My Aged Care, not user friendly.
- Important to stay active and be supported to do this.
- No cost effective gardening available.
- Intergenerational options, want to be part of the community and offer skills and knowledge to younger people.
- Support for people from non English speaking background to navigate the service system and be informed of what is available.

7. Carers of older people/people with dementia

1. 7th November 2018 including Panel members and Council staff
2. 8th November 2018 including Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Transport to social groups and to appointments is limited.
- There is need for respite for carers as their caring role leaves no time for socialisation, impacting on their informal relationships.
- Socialisation with others is important to client wellbeing.
- There is trust in council provided services that is a priority for some people.
- Fear of loss of services to support people with dementia.
- Specialised services for people with dementia needs to be a priority.
- Other community members are not skilled in working with people with dementia eg: taxi drivers, hospital staff.
- Difficult navigating aged care system (Home Care packages, residential care).
- Access to community is compromised by unsafe footpaths (using a frame), limited transport options and public transport accessibility (platforms at tram stops).
- My Aged Care contact centre has long wait times and is difficult to navigate for older people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seniors and Elders and workers who provide support to Aboriginal elders

8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, seniors and carers

19 November 2018

Aboriginal Seniors and Elders with Panel members and staff from Council. Other community organisations present (including Banyule Community Health, Banyule Council staff)

Some Viewpoints

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seniors need information and support to access health and aged services.
- Culturally safe aged services and health services are important, ideally with members of staff that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Aboriginal Elders take large burden of responsibility within immediate and extended family, including direct care of grandkids, where family members are suffering from trauma and mental health issues. These issues often lead to Elders neglecting their own needs to help others.
- Cost of living issues are challenging for older Aboriginal people, especially at important times of year, E.g. Christmas.
- Council could help with transport – consider trips for Elders back to country.
- Council to advocate for better, linked up services for younger Aboriginal people – youth workers that can support young people and reduce impact of drugs and violence – so that Elders do not have to bear the brunt of these issues, including elder abuse.
- Community safety and safety at home is important, including the condition of public housing, having access to duress buttons.
- Council could put on afternoon tea for Elders.
- Council could promote and recognise the contribution of Elders in community.

9. Community organisations that work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Seniors

Focus Group

26th September 2019

Participants from organisations including – Aboriginal Advancement League, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (VACCHO), Banyule Community Health (Counsellor and legal service), Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

Panel Members

Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Darebin Council are doing well respecting and acknowledging Aboriginal people, however could improve by training and employing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Council needs to understand that Elders are busy, they have Sorry business, family and community responsibility and they must travel– to involve Elders you need to give many opportunities and keep trying.
- Council can help older Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations to understand the Aged Care reforms and how to navigate My Aged Care. Information should be over multiple mediums – in person, through Aboriginal media such as the Koori Mail or 3knd radio. Provide a My Aged Care information session for Elders.
- Aboriginal community organisations will struggle if/when block funding is removed. These organisation will need support to continue to provide the kinds of support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need. It is difficult for Aboriginal people to navigate the NDIS and My Aged Care supports.
- Darebin needs a gathering place, like in Banyule or the one being built in Whittlesea. A space where a whole family can access support – E.g. where grandkids can have a playgroup and the older person can have a health check, or legal support in a safe space.
- Fundamental supports such as housing, access to health services and legal services are most important, assist Elders by making these supports readily available without confusing bureaucratic processes.

Members of senior's clubs and groups - Culturally specific

10. Greek Seniors who are members of clubs that meet in Darebin

Focus Groups

1. 20th September 2018 - including Panel members and Council staff
2. 8th November 2018 - including Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Concerned about bureaucratic matters such as club funding, rules and processes.
- Council should offer expanded assistance around garden and home maintenance and home care should offer greater flexibility.
- Council's transport service should offer outings further afield.
- Council should enhance its role providing information in language.
- Seniors would benefit from Council rate and pet registration concessions; and public transport should be subsidised.
- Parking availability near senior's centres - parking timeframes not adequate for older people.
- Improve upkeep of the City - E.g. waste and litter management and mowing nature strips.
- Some concerns about elder abuse in families (by children or partners).

11. Italian Seniors who are members of clubs that meet in Darebin

1. 21st September 2018 - Italian Seniors group members, Panel members and Council staff
2. 7th November 2018 - Italian Seniors group members, Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Concerned about club funding rules – incorporation requirements and Council's stance not to fund clubs that attend venues with pokie machines.
- Appreciate that Council provides good support to members of Italian senior citizens clubs.
- Would like more transport support for members to get to clubs and to have outings further afield; public transport is not easy to use for older people.
- Council's Aged Services should be more flexible with less restrictions.
- Community safety and safety at home (from crime) is an issue for older people, especially older women.
- Parking availability near senior's centres and parking timeframes are not adequate for older people. Members risk parking fines, which are too high for seniors.
- Concern expressed for disengaged or vulnerable older community members, such as people who might be hoarders.

12. Macedonian Seniors who are members of clubs that meet in Darebin

1. 26th September 2018 - Macedonian Seniors' group members, Panel members and Council staff
2. 14th November 2018 - Macedonian Seniors' group members, 1 worker from Macedonian Community Welfare Association (MCWA), Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Council Aged Services are appreciated by those older people that receive them, although many families try to provide care and support to older people instead of calling on services.
- Council to consider gardening support to older people.
- Some are concerned for isolated older community members, especially those that are vulnerable to elder abuse from adult children. Council and/or MCWA could perform a role checking on those at risk of isolation.

A range of views about the supports that Council offers seniors clubs including that:

- Council offers good support to clubs in terms of funding and through support provided to groups by Council staff.
- Some participants welcomed Council's stance on pokies others were frustrated by this.
- Some additional transport would be welcome, including trips further afield, although one club reports that they are managing to charter their own transport.
- Some groups manage to provide their members with some light catering others would like support from Council to do more in this area.
- Upkeep of Council facilities that host the clubs could be improved E.g. kitchen and toilet facilities.
- Incorporation paper work and applications are challenging, MCWA tries to assist but more assistance from Council would be welcome.

13. Indo-Chinese Seniors group

<p>Friday 9th November 2018</p> <p>Participants from Preston Reservoir Indo Chinese Seniors' Group and Council Staff</p>
<p>Some Viewpoints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people in the group have limited awareness about what services and supports are available to them. • Translated information about Council services would be welcome. • Use of interpreters at events is important. • Having translated material about events such as elections is important as older community members often struggle to know what they need to do. • Families try to support each other for care of older people in the home.
<p>Quotes</p> <p>'We would like the Council to provide us with information in Vietnamese'</p>

14. Chinese Seniors group

<p>2nd November 2018</p> <p>Reservoir Chinese Seniors' Group and Council Staff</p>
<p>Some Viewpoints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council should continue to provide aged services. • Mandarin speakers employed by Council would be welcome. • Council should advocate on behalf of older people - for low cost public transport , lower bank fees and to Centrelink. • Council to install Age Friendly exercise equipment in parks. • Council to improve availability and accessibility of toilets. • Medication costs are high for older people. • Community safety is a concern (crime) for older people.

15. Arabic Seniors group

Friday 9th November 2018

participants Arabic Speaking Women's Group and Council Staff

(The Islamic Elderly Group (men from this community) meet regularly in Merrilands Community Centre, however, the hall is being redeveloped so they are having a break.)

Some Viewpoints

- Information provision is important for older people.
- Transport to get to social support is important for older people.
- Support with garden and home maintenance would be welcome.

16. Peak Bodies and Organisations that support older people and carers

19th November 2018 including Panel members and Council staff

Representatives from COTA-Vic, Seniors Rights Victoria, Merri Health (Carer Links)

Some Viewpoints

- There is a need for an intergenerational focus.
- Liveable communities rather than Age Friendly communities provide an age friendly lens.
- Need to measure outcomes, possible use existing systems to capture data.
- Role definition of State and Local Government unclear.
- Difficult for carers and consumers to navigate systems - Doubts in the sector about under-funded/narrow commonwealth navigation service.
- The My Aged Care system is predicated on consumers being able to exercise choice in a complex system and market.
- Lack of transparency re providers - administrative costs passed onto consumers.
- Co-design plans for re-engaging, working with people to increase capacity and build on strengths.
- Connection for people in residential care and retirement villages.
- Public health and wellness plan. Social connectedness/preventing isolation.

17. Meeting with Commissioner for Senior Victorians

21st November 2018

Gerard Mansour Commissioner for senior Victorians
including Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Access to navigation support is a gap.
- Focus on positive ageing and carers needs are important for local government regardless if a provider of CHSP services.
- Local government is seen in a positive light by consumers – brand is associated with service quality.
- Focus on long term planning, vulnerability and isolation of older people as a result of current system issues.
- Importance of intergenerational approach and sustainability of senior citizen programs.
- Role for capacity building of individuals, access support and community information provision.

18. Staff from local community based organisations that work with older people in Darebin who are undergoing hardship

26th September 2018

Organisations represented:

Haven Home Safe, Merri Outreach Support Services, Your Community Health, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged program), SPAN Neighbourhood House, PRACE Community Centre, Jika Jika Neighbourhood House

Meeting with Panel Members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Older public housing tenants can face a range of challenges to varying degrees including, but not limited to: cost of living; social isolation; exposure to crime, noise and abuse; food insecurity; lack of information about or support to access health care or aged services; disrepair of property; transport issues; lack of affordable recreation options (other than gambling venues).
- People over 65 living in private rental face regular rent hikes, significant housing related poverty and can be at risk of homelessness.
- There is a lack of affordable or social housing options in Darebin and the public housing waitlist is prohibitive. Council should continue or increase advocacy for more social housing.
- Darebin Council's Public Housing sponsorship program is a valued service that is often a last resort for people who require urgent housing access.
- Homelessness for older people is a growing problem in Darebin and the Northern Metro Region. Older people are sleeping rough, sleeping in cars and are vulnerable to exploitative rooming house operators.
- Many Supported Residential Services do not provide enough support to residents. Exposing sub-standard housing services is a catch 22 as closing a service can increase homelessness.
- Some older people are caring for grandchildren where child protection issues are present in the family. These older people's own needs are often put second.
- Services are struggling to keep up with demand, the Tennant's Union has had its funding cut, DIVRS has had to stop emergency relief and they now are focused on food parcels.
- Neighbourhood houses and community centres provide 'wrap-around' supports which enable older people to maintain their connection to community and derive wellbeing outcomes. Council might consider supporting these organisations with rental costs so they can maintain and expand their reach.

19. Seniors interest groups

1. Focus group on 19th September including participants from Matrix Guild (support and advocacy for older lesbians), Darebin U3A (University of 3rd Age), Kingsbury Probus, Preston Probus, Darebin Life Activities Club. Panel members and Council Staff
2. 24 November 2018 presentation by Council staff to Kingsbury Probus

Some Viewpoints

Matrix:

- Older lesbians need non-discriminatory service delivery – Council aged services are a trusted service.
- Council's domestic assistance is inflexible.
- Social isolation and loneliness is an issue in the community – social inclusion strategies are important.
- Council should promote accessible housing developments.
- Provide sheltered bus stops and street seating.

U3A:

- U3A offers opportunities for social inclusion.
- Sourcing funding is challenging, Council provides some rent assistance, however more funding (approx. 4,000 dollars annually) is needed.
- Older people have the capacity to 'co-produce' rather than have things done for them.
- Safe accessible transport is needed by older people, and accessible parking close to amenity.
- Council run exercise programs need to be more mindful of the limitations and needs of older participants.

Probus:

- Securing funding and recruiting new members can be difficult, Council grant processes and applications are onerous.
- Transport support to social activities is important for older people.

20. Focus Group with Darebin Seniors that do not access aged care services

11th November 2018 with Panel Members and Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Council has a good reputation for aged services, but could do more to support older people with information and navigation – about services, but also to use technology – navigate Centrelink, provide a retirement consultant.
- Better and timely services are needed for people toward the end of their lives such as palliative care or high level packages.
- Council Recreation services and exercise could be more age friendly – e.g. promote social inclusion and be safe to use.
- More Bus trips and expand to Gardening and Home maintenance.
- Elder Abuse is an issue in the community and needs more broad responses from community and Council.
- Council could check in more with Seniors before designing things for them. Involve Seniors to audit Council communications and plans.
- More to be done to address loneliness and social isolation.

21. Meetings with Your Community Health social support

1. Tuesday 24th October 2018 – Men's Group with Council Staff

2. Tuesday 24th October 2018 – Women's Group With Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Social isolation and loneliness is an issue for many, social support group and services are the only contacts for some.
- More information about services and social options.
- Transport access is a challenge, however the Community bus support provided by Council and Your Community Health is valued.
- Poor paths and pedestrian crossings make mobility with walking aids/wheel chairs challenging. Lighting is poor in some areas.
- More support to know who older people can trust – e.g. with accessing trades.
- Neighbours – some are supportive and friendly, others make us feel unsafe.

Second round consultation- Draft Report

Full Draft Report structure

The Draft Report was comprised of five main sections:

- executive summary;
- summary of the 98 recommendations;
- themes and recommendations;
- next steps;
- glossary and appendices;

The full Draft Report comprised 171 pages and included detailed discussion of the Panel's research, considerations and rationale. To enhance community accessibility of the content, a "Snapshot" version was produced, comprised of 23 pages.

Snapshot version structure

The Snapshot was comprised of three main sections:

- Introduction to the Panel
- Summary of the 98 recommendations
- How to provide feedback

The Panel had reviewed all community feedback on the Discussion Paper and other information to prepare the Draft Report. The report was presented to Councillors on 1 April and made available to the public from 9 April. 4,500 Snapshot brochures were distributed and translated versions in Darebin's 12 main community languages were passed on to members of CALD communities. The Draft Report was publicised widely via (hardcopy and electronic) mail-out to aged care services clients, newsletter subscribers, seniors clubs and other stakeholders. The call out for feedback was promoted through the Darebin website, social media, radio interview with the Mayor and during a variety of community events. English and translated versions of the executive summary were presented to various seniors groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, supporting stakeholders to provide feedback. Second round feedback submissions closed on 15 May 2019.

Feedback on the Draft Report

The community was asked to provide feedback via posted letter, email or to leave a comment on the Darebin Website. People were offered support to provide feedback via phone and/or in their spoken language. Twenty-one submissions were received, including feedback from eight individuals, five community organisations and eight seniors groups.

The small number, and diversity, of submissions means it is not feasible to derive themes from the content. The clearest common thread is from the concerns expressed by seniors groups' about being adequately funded.

The Draft Report was also discussed with council officers with relevant expertise from across Council to elicit comment on the Panel's recommendations and to inform the Panel in preparing their Final Report.

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8.2 BREATHING SPACE - DAREBIN OPEN SPACE STRATEGY**Author:** Landscape Architect**Reviewed By:** General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (Appendix A) is an ambitious and future looking strategy that will help Council achieve its vision for “a greener, bolder, more connected city”. It is reflective of Council’s goals and objectives as well as responding to the projected growth and change forecast for the municipality.

It sets aspirational directions for the City of Darebin in three focus areas: *Meeting Community Open Space Needs*, *Rewilding Darebin: Improving Biodiversity* and *Creating a Green Streets Network*, which together help our community respond to the climate emergency.

Each of these directions outlines clear objectives with strategic and detailed actions. This is a forward-looking strategy that will be implemented progressively over time. It is expected to be current for at least the next ten years and likely well beyond.

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is the result of an extensive engagement program with the community and stakeholders and reflects community priorities and aspirations.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1) Thanks community members and stakeholders for their feedback and advice to date to help develop the *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy*, and
 - 2) Releases the strategy as a final draft for a third phase of consultation for three weeks from 23 July 2019.
-

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

A requirement to review Council’s Open Space Strategy was included in the Annual Action Plan as part of the 2017/2018 Council Plan Action Plan. Specifically, Council committed to “Review our Open Space Strategy through an audit of open space and publish a list of new public open spaces to acquire, preserve or upgrade.”

This report and the attached strategy is in response to and meets this action.

Previous Council Resolution

This matter is not the subject of a previous Council resolution.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

Community engagement to develop this strategy began in March 2018. This first phase of consultation was focused around understanding how the community values its open space.

To do this, a survey was conducted from 28 March through 18 April 2018 asking questions about individual preferences, uses and service provision in Darebin's current open space network. Concurrently, conversations were held with key stakeholder groups to understand how they use and perceive open space.

This information formed the basis upon which the consultation draft of the strategy was written.

Community engagement on the draft Open Space Strategy began on 14 November and concluded on 18 December 2018. The consultation included a series of opportunities for individuals, groups and Council teams to engage with the strategy, to ask questions and provide feedback on the document. These methods included the following:

- Your Say page with FAQs and translated fliers
- Extensive social media campaign including posting of translated fliers
- Drop in sessions
- Presentations
- Postcards and posters
- Darebin leader advertisements
- Targeted emails and meetings

Overall, the response from the community and stakeholder groups was positive, with many praising the focus on increasing biodiversity as well as improving the quality and quantity of open space throughout Darebin. Universally, the idea of more open space and increased access to nature were very well received by respondents.

The Darebin Nature Trust provided advice in development of *Breathing Space: the Darebin Open Space Strategy*.

The Darebin Nature Trust (DNT) was formed in June 2018 through a motion from Council. The DNT is an advisory group to Council expert in the field of conservation, preservation and management of natural systems. Because of their collective knowledge in conservation and biodiversity, the DNT was asked to comment on the draft strategy and as a result of their feedback a number of directions have been strengthened to ensure it delivers on its aspiration of enhancing biodiversity and a number of matters clarified.

Community engagement targeted Council's standing advisory committees, internal working groups and the broad community.

The intention of the engagement was to build awareness about climate emergency and how Council is responding, as well as to solicit comment and feedback regarding the strategy's directions and goals, identifying any gaps or omissions. The strategy should be both usable by Council staff as well as a reflection of the community's aspirations for open space. Feedback on the strategy included:

- 16 presentations to stakeholder groups and Council teams

- 5 phone calls
- 72 participants at Northcote drop in session
- 92 participants at the Reservoir drop in session
- 2,536 reached on Council's Have Your Say website with 95 engaged visitors on (provided feedback or comment); 641 informed visitors (downloaded at least one document), 1,800 aware visitors (visited the site)
- 3,834 people reached through Facebook including 7 comments, 8 shares 56 Likes and 5 Loves.

Community engagement with CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) and hard to reach communities was a focus.

Because *Breathing Space: the Darebin Open Space Strategy* has a municipal wide area of influence, it was important to engage with the community as inclusively as possible. The consultation included several targeted approaches to CALD and hard to reach communities. The engagement plan included:

- Using trusted and established Council networks to reach out to groups and individuals such as Darebin's seniors, Traditional Owners and children
- Translation of the promotional consultation flier into Darebin's top 5 languages – Arabic, Italian, Greek, Vietnamese and Chinese
- Access to a conversation on the strategy in a variety of languages if requested
- Drop in sessions staffed with multi-lingual staff
- Facebook postings targeted at language groups containing translated flier.

Below is a table showing the online interaction through Facebook with translated materials for the strategy and the consultation.

Engagement Tool Name	Visitors	Downloads/ Views
Draft Darebin Open Space Strategy 2018 (downloaded from non-English sources)	65	69
Arabic info sheet - Draft Darebin Open Space Strategy	41	78
Italian info sheet - Draft Darebin Open Space Strategy	36	68
Greek info sheet - Draft Darebin Open Space Strategy	36	69
Vietnamese info sheet - Draft Darebin Open Space Strategy	31	61
Chinese info sheet - Draft Darebin Open Space Strategy	27	51
Darebin Open Space Strategy 2007-2017	8	9
FAQ (English)	10	13

This type of indepth approach to CALD and hard to reach communities has not been undertaken for a Council strategy to date. Reaching CALD communities is a continued focus of the implementation of the strategy, with work planned to observe and understand how distinct cultural groups value, use and interact in public spaces.

Moreover, open spaces will be designed and programmed to be welcoming, inclusive and safe places for the CALD community. The strategy intends to strengthen and reflect the

cultural identities of the community and create opportunities for meaningful interaction across all ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

To help achieve this, Council has partnered with the University of Melbourne's Designing for Difference program by offering opportunities for pilot projects looking at the intersections of cultural and ethnic difference in public space and the development of design and policy toolkits to optimise diverse public space use.

Communications

Communications Plan

A detailed communications plan has been prepared. If adopted, a launch will be planned.

Key messages:

- Access to open space is critical to quality of life
- Darebin has beautiful and extensive green and public spaces
- As new developments bring forecasted increased population, there is a risk of not having the quantity or quality of open space needed to ensure ongoing quality of life for our residents
- *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* needs to be bold and far-reaching to address this risk
- The Darebin Open Space Strategy will help meet the community's need for open space, improve biodiversity and creating a green streets network.
- *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* addresses the climate emergency by focusing on improving biodiversity, increasing the amount of public open space and increasing canopy cover.
- The Darebin Open Space Strategy focuses on equitable distribution of quality open space across Darebin to meet the needs of the diverse community

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 3 - A liveable city

- Council Plan Goals 1.3 & 3.1 - Expand our land subdivision levy to fund more open space

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy aligns with the Council Plan and reflects leading practice and actions regarding the climate emergency and how Darebin can influence and offset its effects. Increasing biodiversity is a key driver behind the review of the open space strategy and underpins the document from start to finish. It is also a practical way to address the likely effects of climate change.

The strategy proposes that a list of key species be developed for fighting local extinctions to deliver on Council's direction for a 'no local extinctions' policy. This list will be created from a flora and fauna survey.

Generally, the direction set in this strategy will improve, extend and connect habitat for local endemic species of flora and fauna of all sizes and shapes. It also prioritises protection of existing habitats.

Climate Emergency

Open space, increased vegetation and increased canopy cover all play a big role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This may be via direct means such as sequestering atmospheric carbon. It may also be via indirect means such as the following:

- Trees and other vegetation in open spaces cool the city during periods of high temperatures through provision of shade and moisture released through leaves and stems. This reduces dependence on air conditioners
- A network of cool, shaded streetscapes reduces the dependence on private motor vehicle use by providing appealing alternatives to driving

Actions in the strategy that support this include:

- Increasing the total percentage of tree canopy cover on public land to 25%
- Planting the largest tree possible in planting sites
- Using drought tolerant species
- Prioritising infill planting on the principle pedestrian network
- Increasing the use of sustainable and active transport through the design and implementation of the green streets network
- Seeking opportunities to put power lines underground as part of public or private development works to enable the planting of larger tree species

Open space will be affected by climate change through increased and prolonged periods of high temperatures, more frequent flooding and less rainfall. However, open space can also improve the ability of a region to cope with increased incidences of extreme weather events such as floods and storms through attenuation and retention of storm water. The incorporation of water sensitive design can reduce the impacts of flooding, improve water quality, improve the health of trees and vegetation with passive watering and increase the provision of habitat.

Appropriately chosen vegetation species is also a very important consideration given the climate change impacts we are already experiencing.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

There is a clear link between health and wellbeing and access to quality open space. The strategy considers creating spaces for all of Darebin's residents regardless of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic condition, dis/ability and includes consideration of equitable access, mobility, amenity and services across the municipality.

The completed document sets a minimum proposed quality standard and encourages all open spaces to meet and/or exceed those standards. As much as possible, every Darebin resident should see themselves reflected in their open spaces.

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy has undergone an Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Planning and Audit Tool (EIWPAT) assessment to ensure it maximises equity and inclusion.

Cultural Considerations

The strategy accepts and celebrates Darebin as a diverse and multicultural municipality and views this as a key strength. Consultation on the draft strategy reached out to all Darebin residents inclusive of cultural groups as well as traditional owners.

The new strategy recognises and celebrates Traditional Ownership in Darebin and proposes ways to improve the connection to the past uses of the land. The strategy also makes recommendations about understanding and enabling the use of open space by different culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups.

Economic Development Considerations

The outcomes facilitated by an open space strategy are complementary to enhancing the economic activity in Darebin. Having great open spaces, which offer a diversity of uses, retains locals and attracts people from neighbouring suburbs to spend more time in our city.

Financial and Resource Implications

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is intended to be a high level, strategic document that sets the vision, directions and aspirations that Council has for managing, improving and growing its open space into the future.

The strategy is intentionally flexible in that it provides implementation options and clearly notes that the strategy will be actioned over time. This provides flexibility for Council in that it identifies a direction, ambition and vision while allowing implementation of specific actions to take place over time so as to take advantage of other ongoing work at a local and state government level.

One of the key actions in *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* is a proposed increase in the open space contribution rate. The *Open Space Contributions Review* provides a proposed rate and justification for that rate. This change, if adopted, will be implemented through a planning scheme amendment that will begin following adoption of the *Open Space Contributions Review*.

Breathing Space will have cost implications as it recommends improvements to open space, increased maintenance levels and acquisition of land. As a high level document, it proposes:

- An increase in quality of open spaces generally and specifically depending on the classification/type of the space
- A more equitable distribution of open space (more open space)
- A system of classification of open space that directly relates to the level of maintenance and provision of services (better quality through increased assets and amenity)
- A net increase in open space

The increase in the open space contribution rate will help to offset capital costs of improving the quality and quantity of open space, and as such the most likely cost implications will come in the form of increased asset and open space maintenance.

Legal and Risk Implications

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy sets a direction for responding to a range of strategic risks including population growth, climate emergency and biodiversity loss and seeks to respond to and reduce these risks.

DISCUSSION

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy proposes changes to the way that open space is managed and understood compared to the Darebin Open Space Strategy 2017. A list of key changes is provided here:

Contained Within Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy 2019	Previous Thinking - Open Space Strategy 2017
Proposes an increase to the open space contributions rate	Open Space Levy is not considered as part of the Open Space Strategy
Uses a formula of proximity (500m), projected population growth and quality to determine open space provision rates	Uses proximity (500m) to determine open space provision rates
Net gain of open space policy	No net loss of open space policy
Identifies streetscapes as opportunities to increase habitat linkages, green the city and offset the urban heat island effect	Streetscapes mentioned as playing a role in habitat linkages
Adds a biodiversity lens across the municipality and establishes principles and priorities for improving biodiversity	Biodiversity not a focus
Accepts that there is a climate emergency and identifies open space actions as one way to address it	No mention of climate emergency.
Proposes that there should be an increase in the planting of native and local indigenous plants	Expresses a preference for native planting where possible
Proposes that the default approach landscape in Darebin should be native bushland or native grassland	Does not identify a default landscape or propose a deviation from the status quo of turf and trees
Proposes a tree canopy cover target of 25% cover in public land	Does not have a target for tree canopy cover.
Places the needs of natural systems and managing climate change at equal prominence with the needs of the community	Addresses the needs of the community as first priority
Recognises the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of Darebin land	Does not mention traditional ownership
Recommends using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles for making spaces safer, inclusive and usable	Identifies improving safety as a goal but does not go into detail
Recognises that Darebin's population is growing rapidly and recommends flexible open spaces	Recognises that Darebin's population is increasing at a steady rate
Proposes a series of principles to identify dog off lead areas and other facilities	Recognises that Council promotes responsible pet ownership
Places value on intergenerational, inclusive and accessible spaces	Discusses that open spaces should be inclusive and accessible
Identifies that best practice maintenance techniques are a key aspect of providing quality open spaces	Recognises that maintenance needs to be effective and appropriate to the relevant category of open space
Sets out a hierarchy of public open spaces and recommends a standard of provision for each one	Sets out a hierarchy for parks that does not reflect accurately the current diversity of Darebin's open spaces

Suggests an approach to focussing effort to fight local extinctions	Does not include mention of local extinctions
Contains precinct plans to allow for recommended projects to be considered	Uses suburb based precinct planning
Identifies diversity as cultural, age, gender, sex, and socioeconomic status	Identifies diversity as cultural
Recommends that open spaces will be designed and programmed to be welcoming, inclusive and safe places for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.	Recognises a need to provide a diverse range of open spaces which considers and celebrates the cultural diversity of the city

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Council has the option to release a final draft for a third phase of consultation (recommended), or to adopt the strategy at this point.

Officers note that councillors have not yet considered the draft strategy in a formal Council meeting and may wish to release it for further consultation.

As outlined in this report, feedback on the draft strategy document has shown that there is good support for the strategy. There have been two phases of extensive consultation to both develop the strategy and then seek feedback on a draft strategy document. Community feedback has been incorporated into the strategy document attached. Given this, councillors could also consider adopting the strategy without further consultation.

Option one: Release the Darebin Open Space Strategy as final draft for consultation. (Recommended)

- A third phase of consultation would further test 'have we got it right'. Officers would run a short consultation including:
 - Comment open for three weeks from 23 July 2019.
 - Direct communication with interested stakeholders and people who registered for updates.
 - Social media posts which, for audiences that speak other languages than English, are automatically translated by social media platforms
 - Updates to Council's yoursay webpage
 - A media release
- Progressing implementation activities would be around 1-2 months later than in option 2.

Option Two: Adopt *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* and begin to implement high priority actions over time.

- Council could adopt the Strategy as it is, or with minor changes.
- Officers would share Council's decision widely and progress with implementation of the strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

A further phase of consultation would include:

- Direct communication with interested stakeholders and people who registered for updates.
- Social media posts which for audiences that speak other languages than English are automatically translated by social media
- A media release

When the strategy is adopted, the next steps would be:

- Media release sharing news of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* following adoption.
- Thank community members and stakeholders who contributed to the consultation and share the strategy with them.
- Launch event
- Implementation of recommendations and actions from the strategy in line with budget and work plan cycles

Timeline

- 23 July – media release and social media reflecting Council's decision.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Attachments

- Breathing Space - Darebin Open Space Strategy (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



BREATHING SPACE

The Darebin Open Space Strategy

the place
to live





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Message from the Mayor



Mayor's Message

Darebin is a great place to live and open space is central to our quality of life. It brings our diverse community together, provides a home for precious local species, and allows us to take part in everything from active recreation to silent contemplation.

Here in Darebin we are lucky to have a wealth of natural beauty in our parks, creeks and streetscapes, which make up over 750 hectares of public open space. However we are also under pressure. Like the rest of metropolitan Melbourne, Darebin is growing, and our population is increasing as more people choose to call Darebin home. We need to be bold and ambitious if we are to maintain the beauty of our green and natural spaces and safeguard the liveability our open spaces give us.

Our vision for open space in Darebin is an ambitious one and *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* provides the context and direction to achieve this.

As the city grows and housing density increases, we see a future city that is more abundant in green, open space.

We look forward to living in a city where...

- local people have more access to beautiful, functional, contemplative and active spaces that improve their health and wellbeing, and increase their social and cultural connections
- local species thrive, lost habitats are regenerated and lost species return
- streets, rooftops, backyards, nature strips, and medians are lush with trees and plants playing their part in keeping the city cooler
- green space is deeply respected, understood and protected by everyone in the city, and locals act as the custodians of the natural world for current and future generations.

Cr Susan Rennie

Mayor, Darebin City Council

01
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Introduction



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

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 pays respect to their elders, past, present and emerging. Council affirms that Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

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

1.1 Strategy purpose

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy provides the overarching framework and strategic direction for public open space in the City of Darebin, for the next 10 years and beyond, and builds on the previous Open Space Strategy: 2007–2017.

The strategy acknowledges the rich diversity of public open space in Darebin, and the need to manage these spaces to ensure the city is greener, bolder and more connected, in line with the high value placed on public open space by the community.

The strategy is driven by the overarching theme of responding to the climate emergency. It does this via three key directions:

- Meeting community open space needs
- Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity
- Creating a Green Streets Network.

The strategy provides guidance to inform Council's decision making regarding investments in and improvements to open space.

The strategy also interfaces with a number of other Council objectives including:

- As a key component of Council's response to the climate emergency declared in Darebin, the strategy outlines key actions to manage, mitigate and repair damage done through climate change.
- As a practical way to improve the wellbeing of people by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well.
- As an articulation of the importance of planning for biodiversity and increasing the conservation and improvement of habitat.
- As a means to improving active transport throughout the municipality through improving the walkability and cyclability, amenity and provision of shade on residential streets and in activity precincts.
- As a vehicle for planning for the population growth and change that is predicted for the short and long term.

1.2 What is open space?

This strategy focuses on space which is publicly owned, freely accessible and set aside primarily for recreation, nature conservation, passive outdoor enjoyment and/or public gatherings.

It also recognises a broader definition of open space, where open space includes not only parks and reserves, but also streetscapes, nature strips, productive food gardens, urban nodes, quasi-public space, parklets, transport corridors and overlapping uses of space with schools, public asset providers and other institutions.

Collectively, these spaces all make an important contribution to shaping the lived experience and aesthetics of an area, and there are opportunities to recognise the cumulative contribution of these spaces in policy and planning.

While these spaces are outside of traditional definitions of open space, they are recognised in Plan Melbourne, the current metropolitan strategy for Melbourne, as crucial for the future of the city.

This definition is broader than the definition for public open space described in the Subdivision Act¹, which is used to determine how open space contributions from development are expended.

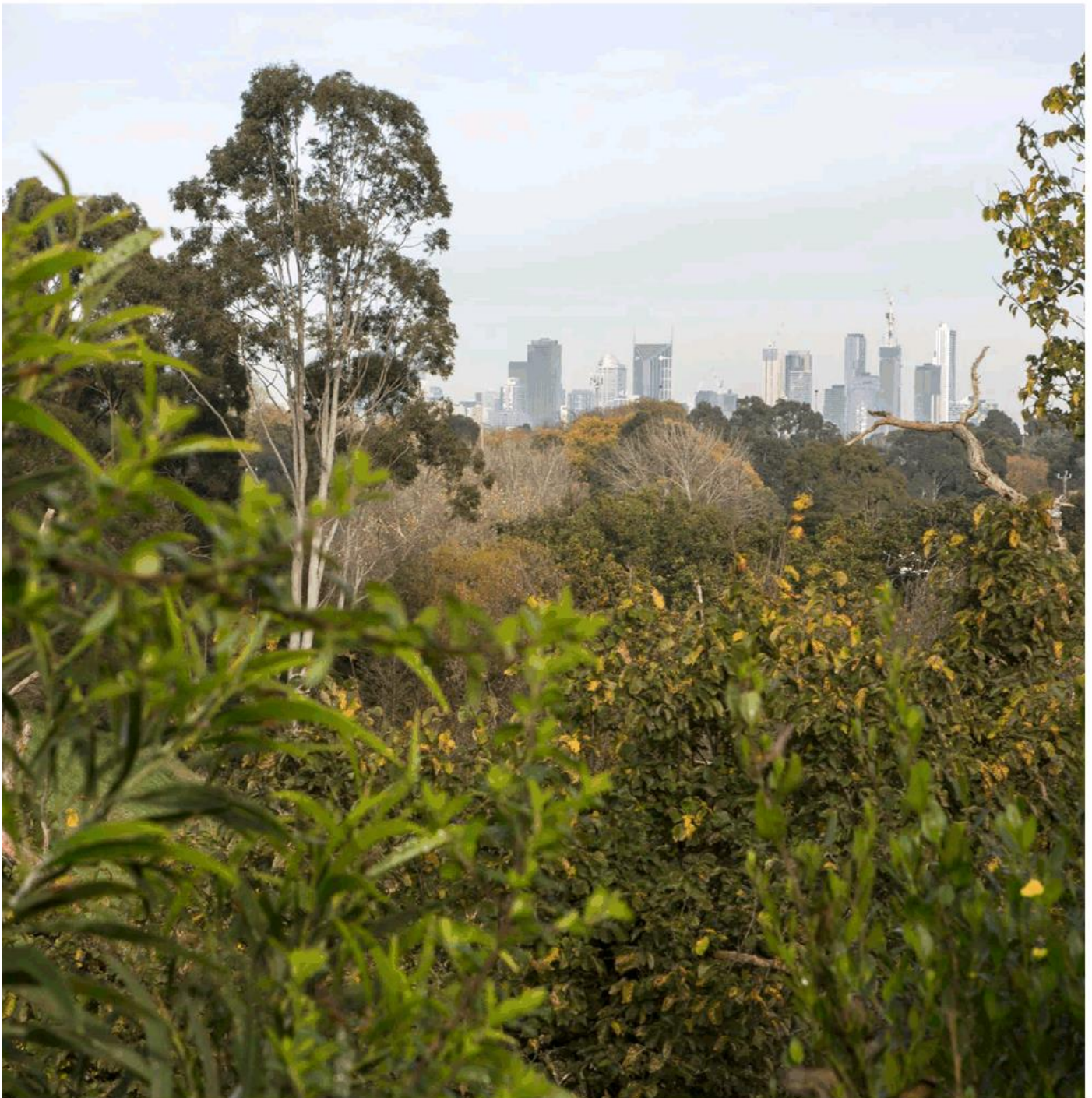
The strategy also acknowledges the contribution private open spaces make to the overall character and environmental qualities of Darebin.

1.3 Council's role in Open Space

Council can fulfil a range of roles in influencing the management, design, quality and location of open space. Many of these roles are addressed in this strategy and Darebin Council is particularly ambitious in the diversity of roles it plays.



1. Public open space is defined in Section 18A of the Subdivision Act of 1968. It states:
 Public open space means land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under a planning scheme -
 a) For public recreation or public resort, or
 b) As parklands
 c) For similar purposes



02
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Ambition



Darebin is rapidly becoming denser, more urban and more populated, and this is putting increased pressure on our open spaces. As private open spaces become smaller, access to public open space is more important than ever. This public open space becomes the place where children play, where the local community can commune with nature and keep active, and where diverse cultures and different generations can come together.

At the same time, local species are under threat and it is critical that the natural environment mitigates the impacts of the climate emergency we currently face. Our native ecology is also under pressure from the impacts of urbanisation, growing community demand for nature based experiences and the impacts of climate change.

2.1 Council's vision

The vision of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* is that the future of Darebin will be a green one with more and better open spaces that respond to the climate emergency.

Delivering on this vision will require collaboration of multiple teams in Council and the community.

2.2 Foundations on which this strategy is built

The following foundations have guided the development of the strategy, and are embedded throughout the content and recommendations.

Climate emergency

Urban design, tree and plant selection and education are targeted towards mitigating the urban heat island effect and conserving precious resources such as water.

Biodiversity

Location and planting of open spaces is viewed through the lens of maximising habitat areas, connectivity and corridors for local species.

Community stewardship

Engagement and participation are seen as a central component of the strategy in building the community's sense of connection to, and protection of, their local open space.

Social cohesion

A broad range of community needs, from access, health and ability to human connection and cultural diversity, are considered in planning and managing open spaces.

Connectivity

Open space is a network of large, small, linear, vertical, public, private, formal and informal spaces and habitats that create an interconnected habitat for wildlife and unfettered access for people.

Leadership

The strategy seeks to set bold and ambitious standards for both quantity and quality of green spaces, to inspire and to demonstrate what's possible.

Return to nature

The default position for developing and managing open space is a return to local, native and indigenous bushlands that celebrate the unique and special natural qualities of our city.

Multifaceted

Our open spaces will function on multiple levels, seeking ways to maximise and integrate benefits to local communities, local species and the natural environment.

Equity and inclusion

Our open spaces are inclusive, accessible and equitable, responding to the diversity of needs, rights and priorities in our communities.

2.3 Delivering the strategy

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is an ambitious and visionary document that provides a framework for achieving Council's vision of "a greener, bolder, more connected city".

The many strategies and actions described in this document are designed to shape multiple Council services, programs and practices as they are rolled out each year through the work planning and budgeting cycles.

The level of investment and time needed to fully realise the ambitions of the strategy will take major investment of effort and resources over many years, and in collaboration and partnership between Council, our stakeholders and our community.



03

The benefits and opportunities of open space



Open space plays a role in so many areas of our lives: from mitigating the impacts of climate change and protecting threatened species to inspiring us to move more and giving us access to beauty, wellbeing and social and cultural connection. The strategy considers a much broader range of potential benefits than traditional open space strategies.

3.1 Contributions of open space

Addressing the climate emergency

In 2016, Darebin Council became the first government in the world to formally acknowledge a climate emergency that requires urgent action from all levels of government. Darebin acknowledges that, without ambitious action to restore a safe climate at emergency speed, there will be dramatic and negative impacts on the community – both locally and globally. In Australia, we are already experiencing the impacts of more frequent and extreme heat waves, drought, flooding, bushfires, and bleaching of our Great Barrier Reef. Darebin is not immune to these impacts, with health stressors already felt by the community.

In practice, this means that Council commits to fast tracking programs and policies that rapidly eliminate greenhouse gas emissions, and draw down excess emissions. Management and development of green public open spaces and increasing vegetation canopy cover are important, as the natural processes of plants and urban ecosystems can help to offset the hot and dry conditions caused by climate change.

There are a range of ways open space can contribute to addressing the climate emergency. Many of these also help address other issues in Darebin.

- Trees and other vegetation in open spaces cool the city during periods of high temperatures through provision of shade and moisture released through leaves and stems.
- Open spaces with irrigated areas or bodies of water have a cooling effect on cities through evaporation and the natural respiration of plants.
- Increasing vegetation canopy cover delivers shade, reduces temperatures, decreases air pollution and sequesters atmospheric carbon.
- Cool streetscapes that connect to a network of small and large parks are attractive for walking and cycling and create an appealing alternative to driving. This reduces private motor vehicle travel which decreases emissions and air pollution while improving health and wellbeing.
- Ultimately, a reduction in demand for motorised transport activates open space, resulting in safer open spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, and the opportunity to reclaim parking space for open space.
- Open space can improve the ability of a region to cope with increased incidences of extreme weather events such as floods and storms through attenuation and retention of storm water. The incorporation of water sensitive design can reduce the impacts of flooding, improve water quality, improve the health of trees and vegetation with passive watering and increase the provision of habitat.

Recognising Aboriginal people and their continuing connection to the land and waters

The recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, and that of Traditional Owners in particular, is paramount to social justice and reconciliation efforts. This includes recognising the historical injustice experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and its lasting legacies, as well as recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents for their knowledge, strengths and contributions.

Given Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's continuing spiritual, physical and cultural connection to the land, open spaces are particularly suited to be reflective of this connection. Respecting the Aboriginal cultural rights highlighted in section 19(2) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is crucial in recognising and celebrating this connection.

Enhancing biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat. It is a critical consideration in open space planning. A high quality open space network can have a significant impact on biodiversity values, particularly in urban environments. Darebin's urban biodiversity includes humans as well as indigenous and introduced species of flora and fauna.

Green open spaces provide an ecological benefit in enhancing the biodiversity of species within the urban landscape. Biodiversity values can be enhanced through species selection, increasing canopy cover, improving soil health, connectivity of parklands and habitat creation for fauna including birds. Open space distribution is critical to the protection of the diversity of remnant vegetation and habitat. Remnant vegetation refers to vegetation that has not been cleared. To save our remnant areas and create new indigenous vegetation and habitat, open spaces must be increased, protected and managed.

Non-native plants also provide a range of benefits for urban landscapes through passive heating/cooling, food production, evapotranspiration, greenhouse gas reduction, habitat, and adaptation to challenging urban locations (streetscapes in particular). Plants and trees should be selected based on the role and function they are intended to have in the urban ecosystem as well as their likelihood to thrive in the intended location. This includes vegetation selected to create habitat, produce food, increase shade, beautify an area or create a protective buffer or barrier.

Ensuring Darebin's growing population can access open space

Access to open space is central to community health and wellbeing. The increasing number of people moving into the culturally diverse City of Darebin, combined with the fact that growth in Darebin will largely be in the form of higher density development (with reduced private open space), will increase the need for different types of open space.

The strategy considers both acquisition of new open space where possible (although this is challenging in an urban environment) as well as improving the quality and usability of existing open space as ways to meet this need.

Fostering creative culture and events

Public open spaces provide opportunities for festivals and programs, and places to gather or facilitate performances. They can also deliver locations for permanent or temporary public art installations. They are spaces that can strengthen community connectedness, providing social benefits and building a strong sense of identity within the community.

Increasing opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Using open space is something that we all have in common. However, the way that individuals from different cultural backgrounds use, understand and interact with open spaces can vary depending on the user group.

Open space plays an important role for many in our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, particularly those who are more recently arrived, where a sense of welcome, familiarity and safety have profound meaning.

When planning for, managing and designing public open space, it is imperative that the way Darebin's diverse community experiences and uses their open space is considered and included in a practical way. This includes understanding the make up of different CALD user groups, identifying through thoughtful consultation what they need from their open spaces and interpreting that into the way Darebin's public open spaces are designed and managed.

Open space can respond to the specific needs of diverse user groups through consideration of:

- the size and layout of gathering spaces
- the positioning of BBQ areas
- the types of vegetation used
- the inclusion of performance
- the inclusion of culturally reflective art
- allowing for evening use
- wayfinding using universal symbols
- appropriate translations on signage and within spaces
- the type and amount of equipment or park furniture

Open spaces provide members of the CALD communities places to gather with others in their community and feel a sense of home, as well as make connections with the broader Darebin population.

Generating economic benefits

Access to high quality open space increases the economic potential of a region in terms of tourism, leisure and cultural activities. Beautiful, usable and functional open spaces and streetscapes become destinations for visitors and add value for those who live nearby. The character of landscape creates local identity and sets the tone for future growth and development of the municipality. Destinalional parks, play areas, bushland reserves and recreational trails attract visitors within and outside of the local community and provide social benefits to the community which translate to increased land values². More specifically, open space in retail streetscapes helps to create and enhance a sense of place by creating an iconic look and feel that is uniquely Darebin. Furthermore, the construction and maintenance of these spaces and trails creates local employment.

The diversification of activities in open spaces, including mobile premises such as markets, food vans and other creative businesses, can deliver a range of benefits. These may include increasing passive surveillance, providing a drawcard for people to gather, increasing the chance that they will make social connections or be more physically active. This both activates public space while also supporting local businesses to expand their service space into the public realm.

Providing learning opportunities

A network of accessible open space encourages social inclusion and provides opportunities for learning and development for all ages. For children, research indicates the essential nature of development through play in the formation of self-esteem, social competence, understanding identity and the development of cognitive qualities necessary for adulthood such as problem solving and independence. Open space provides both informal and formal development opportunities across life stages.

Natural play and exposure to natural environments helps to forge a connection between humans and the environment. The more this connection is nurtured, the more people will love natural places, and find value and take pride in the native Australian landscape. For many this leads to a passion to preserve, protect and enhance natural spaces.

Fostering stewardship

Education and increased participation are key ways to address the climate emergency by actively involving the community in protecting and improving open space.

Increasing awareness that native/indigenous vegetation makes an important contribution to the ecosystem, habitat and aesthetics creates a new generation of environmental stewards. Nature is something that we all have in common and can be used to bridge gaps between individuals through this shared experience. For a culturally diverse municipality like Darebin, this is particularly important and meaningful.

Improving health and wellbeing

Human health and wellbeing are directly affected by the built and natural environments. Open spaces provide an opportunity for people to connect with the natural environment and each other, and engage in community activities, improving the health and wellbeing of people who live, work and play in Darebin.

Safety, including cultural safety, in open spaces is important to the success of this strategy. When people feel safe, they are freer to move about the city, socialise and work. When people don't feel safe, they may be isolated, less economically independent and less civically engaged. Council has the opportunity to influence safety by creating and maintaining spaces where people feel safe.

Open space can enhance feelings of belonging within a community by providing a place to meet and interact with others, spend a contemplative moment, participate in events and festivals and engage in sports and physical activity. This has been shown to improve social networks, social capital and the development of social skills, and to foster community cohesion, pride and safety.

There is a strong link between green open space and mental health and wellbeing, including reduced rates of depression and stress levels. Research shows that people in proximity to nature have a more positive outlook and reported higher life satisfaction³.

Open space provides opportunities to participate in organised and informal sport and physical activity and connect with nature. Research has shown that users of open space are more likely to meet suggested physical activity levels.

Participation in walking can increase by up to 50 per cent with access to large and attractive green space⁴. Linking open space with improved pedestrian and cycling transport networks further promotes physical activity. Where possible, new and upgraded transport links should be designed to be comfortable and attractive in their own right.

2. Councils of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik and Whittlesea 2016. Northern Regional Trails Strategy
3. Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and wellbeing. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne
4. Ives,C, Oke, C, Cooke, B, Gordon, A and Bekessy, S (2014) Planning for green open space in urbanizing landscapes

Strengthened inclusion and human rights

Open space has a social dimension: it encompasses places for people to meet and converse as well as places to participate in public life. In its physical design and range of uses, open space reflects shared social and cultural values; it is shaped by (and in turn further shapes and reinforces) social hierarchies and norms. The location and design of open spaces can either facilitate or impede their use by Darebin residents.

Open spaces can impact social inclusion through:

- Redistribution: equality of access to public goods such as open space.
- Recognition: meeting the needs of all within society, including women, children, older people, LGBTIQ community, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, new migrants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and homeless people.
- Encounter⁵: planning for interactions of individuals across difference.
- Inclusion: open space can strengthen inclusion, as well as human rights such as the right to peaceful assembly, "right to the city" and cultural rights, notably Aboriginal cultural rights.

Conserving cultural heritage and character

High quality open space reinforces local identity, civic pride and enhances the local character of a region⁶. Furthermore, open spaces can conserve and encourage understanding of the historical and cultural value of the region (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander cultural heritage).

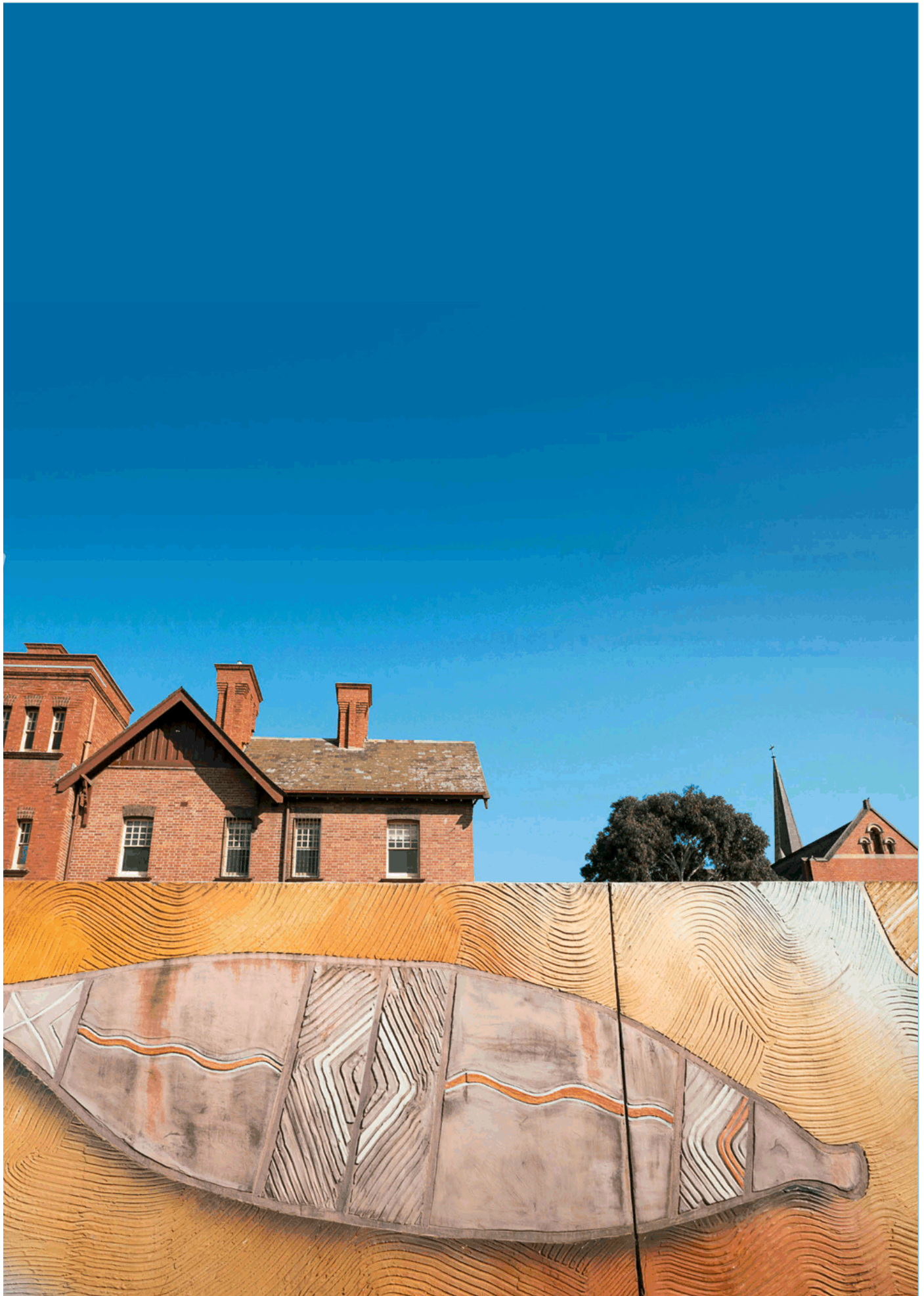
3.2 Diverse roles of open space

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy recognises the broad range and diversity of roles that open space can play, which at times overlap or are in conflict. This strategy suggests ways they can be balanced.

The process for planning this diversity is complex, and in many cases, there will be competing objectives and aspirations with practical implications. For example, the management of cycling paths through open space, if not done properly, has the potential to cause conflict with playgrounds and more passive activities; dog off lead areas can compromise biodiversity; children are attracted to natural, wild environments for play however, this can also compromise biodiversity. It is through good land management practices and education that Council and the community can collaborate to ensure the best use of resources and assets, consistent with the vision and principles of the strategy.

5. Fincher, Ruth and Iveson, Kurt, (2008) *Planning and diversity in the city: redistribution, recognition and encounter*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire

6. C.A.B.E. (2009) *Open space strategies best practice design*.



04

Where are we now?



Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy takes account of the current context for open space and builds on a range of existing policies and strategies and provides direction for new ones which influence the planning, design and management of open space to avoid duplication of policy and actions.

4.1 Policy context

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is guided by the Darebin Council Plan and, at a State Level, Plan Melbourne 2017-2050. It also interfaces with a number of existing Council frameworks, strategies and policies.

Council’s commitments to being an age-friendly and child-friendly city also informs this strategy.

The relationship of the strategy to other plans and strategies is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

4.2 Darebin now

Darebin is a rapidly growing and urbanising part of Melbourne, home to a progressive and culturally diverse community and a place of areas of significant open space and habitat corridors.

The City of Darebin is in the north of metropolitan Melbourne. The municipality’s southern boundary is approximately 3.5 kilometres north east of the CBD, with the northern boundary approximately 13 kilometres north east.

Darebin’s open space per capita is similar to other established municipalities, however it is lower than Melbourne’s outer and growth municipalities.

Darebin residents currently have access to 19.6 sq. m/ open space per capita which is below the commonly accepted benchmark of 30 sq. m per capita.

Figure 1: Existing policy context

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050		
City of Darebin Planning Scheme	Darebin Council Plan	
<i>Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy</i>		
Influencing Policy		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Gender Equity Action Plan	Playspace Strategy
Access and Inclusion Plan	GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy	Public Toilet Strategy
Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy	Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Safe Travel Strategy
Arts Strategy	Leisure Strategy	Tourism Strategy
Climate Emergency Plan	Multicultural Action Plan	Transport Strategy
Community Engagement Framework	Natural Heritage Strategy	Urban Food Production Strategy
Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework	Nature Strip Planting Guidelines	Urban Forest Strategy
Cycling Strategy	Open Space Asset Management Plan	Walking Strategy
Darebin Creek Management Plan	Open Space Contribution Framework	Waste and Litter Strategy
Equity and Inclusion Policy	Parking Strategy	Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin
New Policy *		
Biodiversity Management Plan	Land Management Plan	Strategic Land Acquisition Plan

* New policy as a result of actioning *Breathing Space: The Open Space Strategy*

The City of Darebin includes a mix of traditional low density suburban areas as well as higher density developments in activity centres and along transport corridors. Major activity centres include Northcote, Thornbury, Preston, Reservoir and Fairfield.

It is bounded by the Darebin Creek Corridor to the east and the Merri Creek Corridor to west, major regional ecosystems that are critical habitat corridors. The northern area of Darebin is home to several major remnant vegetation patches of the critically endangered and nationally threatened Western Plains Grasslands ecosystem of which less than 1% remains. Figure 2 shows neighbouring municipalities.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nations are the traditional owners and custodians of the land that is now known as the City of Darebin.

Currently 10.6 per cent of the total City area has canopy cover (vegetation above 3m), and thermal hotspots exist throughout the city, particularly in areas that people gather, such as shopping centres and recreation areas. This level of canopy cover is comparable to other inner northern suburbs however significantly lower than Council's goal of 25% canopy cover.

Figure 2: City of Darebin and neighbouring municipalities

Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2018



Recent growth trends

Darebin is growing at a rapid rate (refer Table 1). Recent rates of development in Darebin have been high in a regional context: between 2011 and 2016 Darebin grew at around 1.6 per cent per annum and accommodated nearly 10 per cent of regional population growth. The municipalities which are growing faster than Darebin are predominantly Growth Areas, rather than established areas.

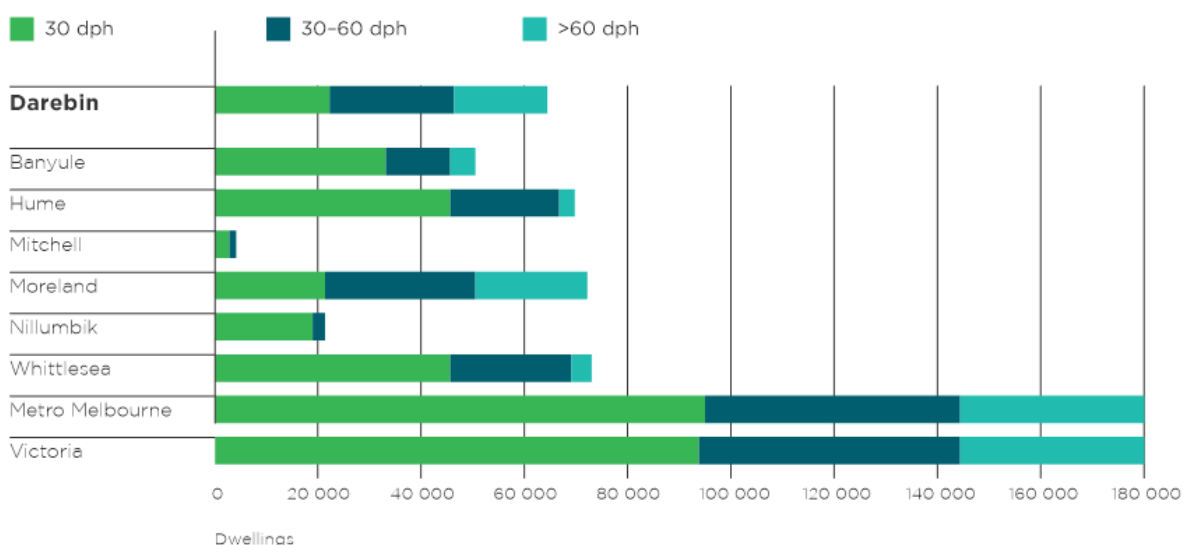
The form of recently developed dwellings is an important consideration for open space. The density of dwellings in Darebin in 2016 is a relatively even distribution between low, medium and higher density. As illustrated in Figure 3, there is a higher proportion of medium and higher density dwellings compared to metropolitan Melbourne. Dwellings per hectare (dph) is a measure of density. Fewer than 30 dwellings per hectare is low density, 30-60 dwellings per hectare is medium density and greater than 60 dwellings per hectare is higher density.

Table 1: Recent population growth trends

	2011	2016	2011-16 AAGR	2011-16 Change	2011-16 % of regional growth
Banyule	122,815	127,508	0.8%	4,693	3.8%
Darebin	142,942	155,022	1.6%	12,080	9.8%
Hume	174,320	207,663	3.6%	33,343	27.1%
Mitchell	35,095	41,692	3.5%	6,598	5.4%
Moreland	154,252	172,027	2.2%	17,775	14.4%
Nillumbik	62,884	64,465	0.5%	1,581	1.3%
Whittlesea	160,800	207,881	5.3%	47,081	38.2%
Northern Metro Region	853,108	976,258	2.7%	123,151	N/A
Metropolitan Melbourne	4,108,837	4,653,078	2.5%	544,241	N/A

Figure 3: Overall dwelling density by LGA 2016

Source: Housing Development Data, 2016



Dwelling type

Darebin's residential areas are becoming denser and more urban (see Figure 4). Between 2006 and 2016, the number of medium (townhouses) and higher (multistorey developments) density dwellings in Darebin increased significantly, while the number of lower density (free standing houses) dwellings (30 dwellings per hectare or lower – generally correlating with detached dwellings) decreased. This often occurs when stand-alone houses are replaced with town houses or apartments.

Age profile

The age profile of Darebin is illustrated in Figure 5, illustrating Darebin has a similar age profile to other established parts of the northern region, and to metropolitan Melbourne.

Figure 4: Change in dwellings by type 2006-2016

Source: Housing Development Data, 2016

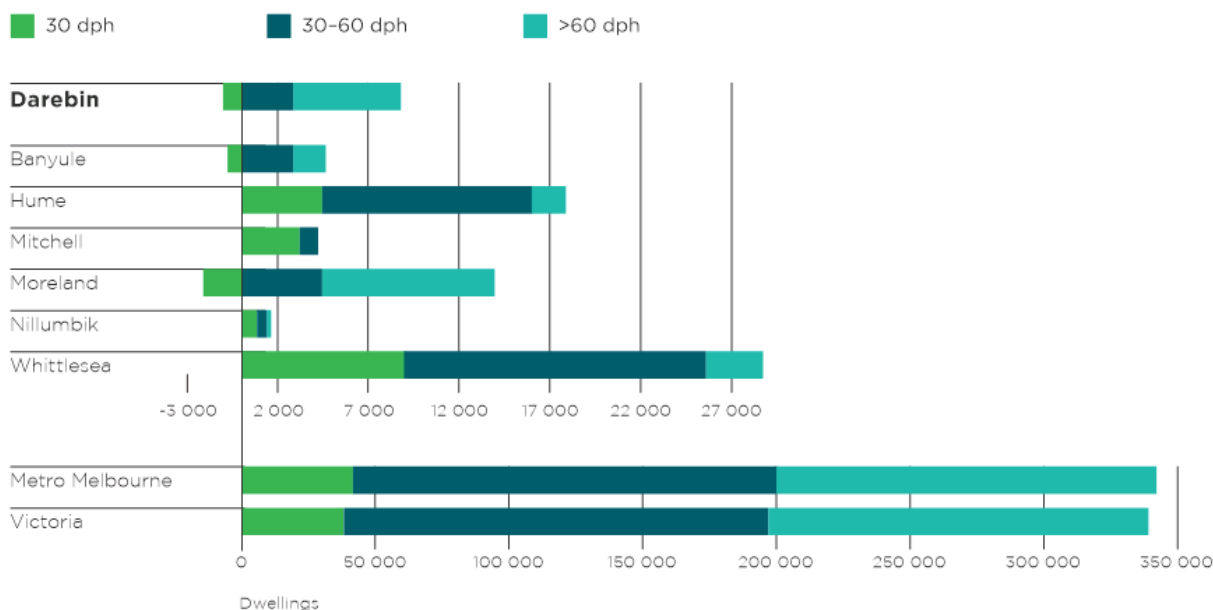
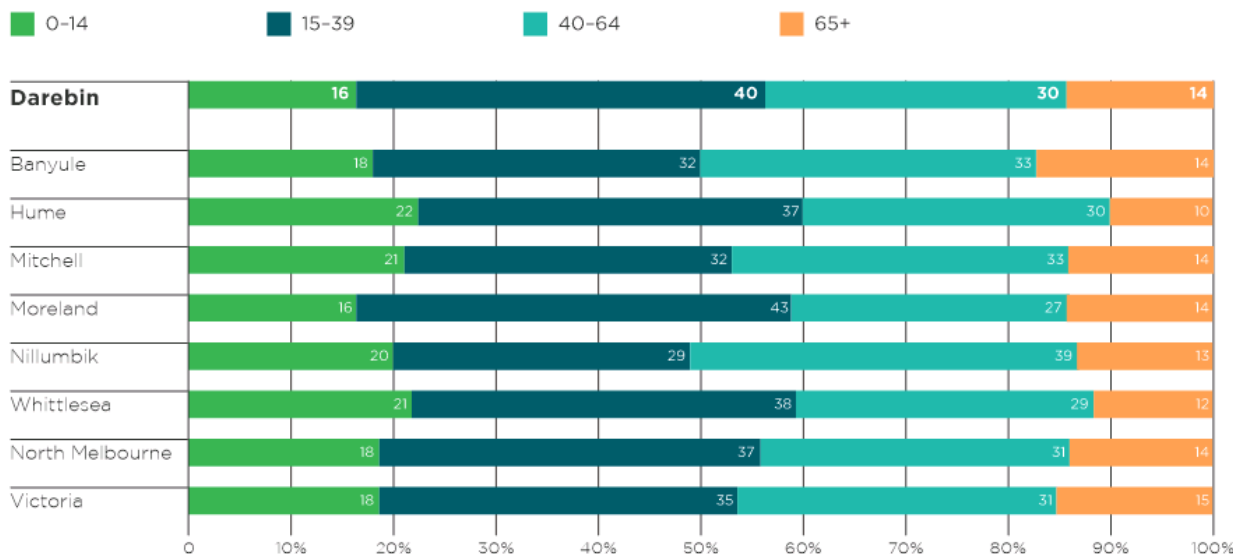
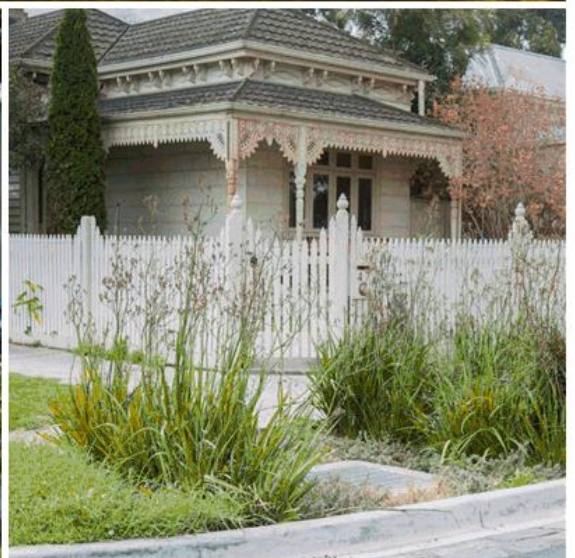


Figure 5: Proportion of population by age group (2016)

Source: ABS Census 2016





Cultural and linguistic diversity

Darebin is highly diverse. The cultural diversity in Darebin compared to other northern region municipalities, and metropolitan Melbourne, is illustrated in Figure 6. It shows Darebin has a lower proportion of people born in Australia compared to the outer northern region of metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria as a whole.

After Australian-born, the second highest place of birth was Europe and Americas, followed by East Asia. This is similar when compared with other established

parts of the northern region. Darebin does stand out in that it has one of the largest proportions of Aboriginal residents of the 31 municipalities in Greater Melbourne.

In Darebin, 56.6 per cent of people speak English at home (see Figure 7), compared to 68 per cent of Victorian households. The main languages other than English spoken at home in Darebin included Italian, Greek, Mandarin, Arabic, and Vietnamese. Many other languages are also spoken at home, and comprise a further 22 per cent of households which further illustrates the degree of cultural diversity in the Darebin community.

Figure 6: Place of birth of residents (2016)

Source: ABS Census 2016

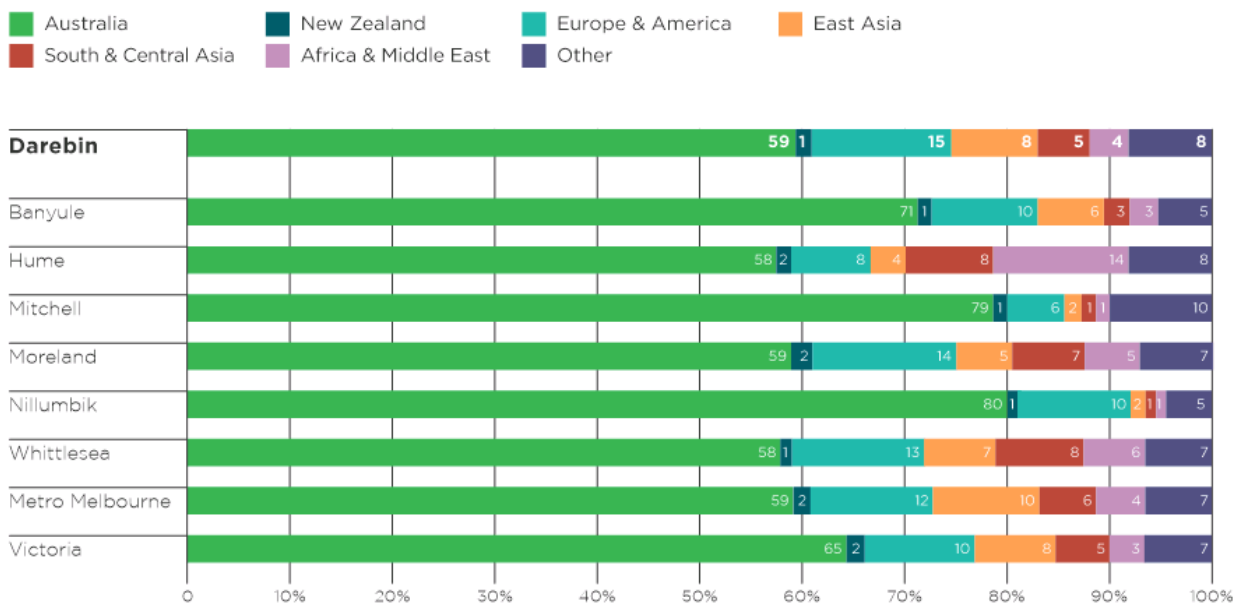


Figure 7: Language spoken at home

56% English, 7% Italian, 6% Greek, 4% Mandarin, 3% Arabic, 2% Vietnamese, 22% Other



Where are we now?

Open space plays a critical role for the community given that most interact with open space on a daily basis. As a result of its diverse community, Darebin's open space should consider and be reflective of the community profile by offering different types of spaces to meet these varying needs.

We know that a diverse community has different needs for their open space and it is important to understand what each group requires to encourage use, make them feel welcome and safe, and to embed the sense of Darebin as their home.

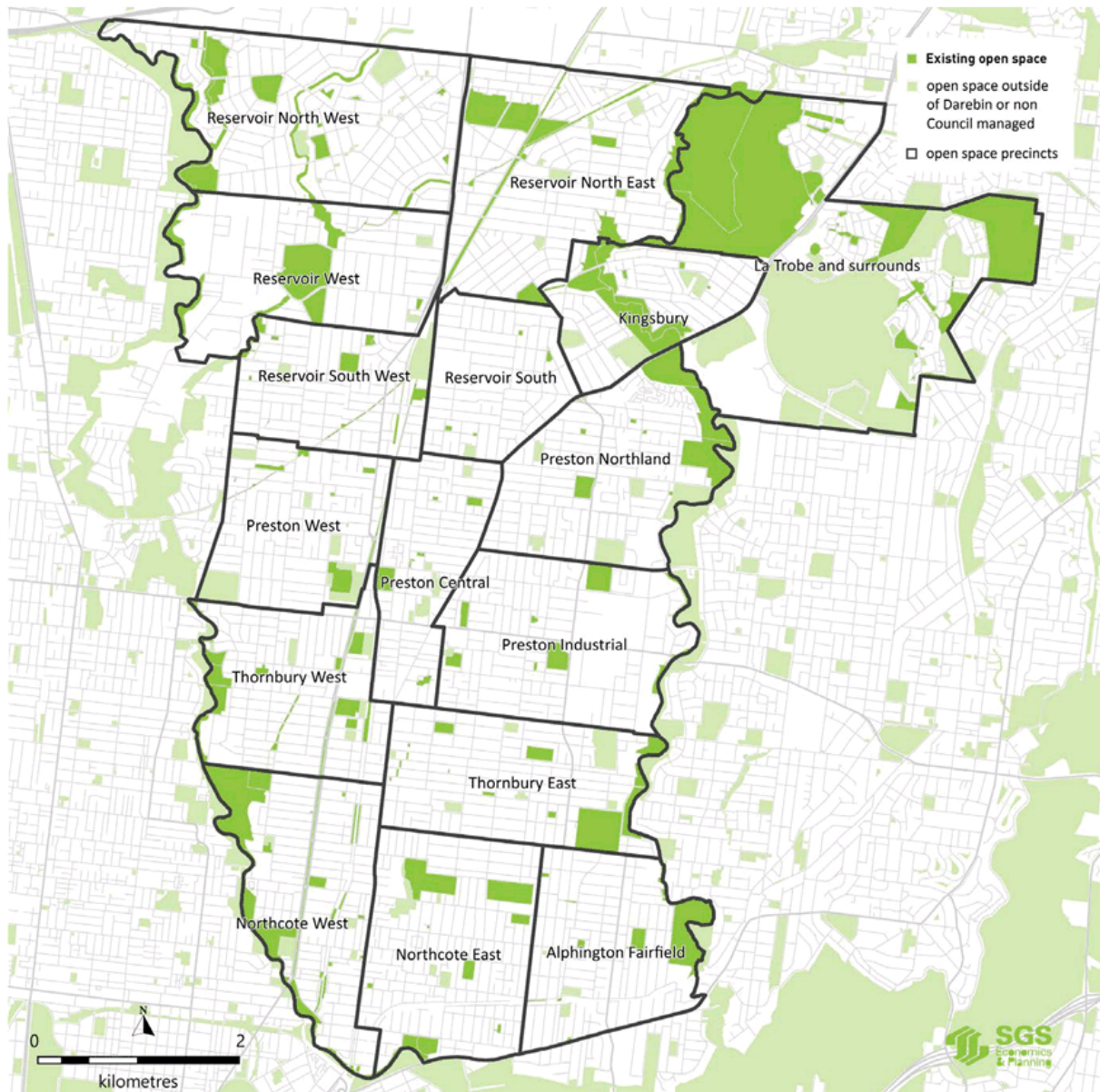
4.3 Existing open space network

There are over 750 hectares of open space in Darebin, including local and district parks, nature reserves, creek corridors, community gardens, large regional parks and sporting reserves. The existing open space network is illustrated in Figure 8.

The traditional approach to classifying open space is to consider its primary purpose - for example: conservation, recreation, scenic amenity or formal garden. In this strategy, to align with the diversity of roles and benefits of open space, all open spaces are considered opportunities for recreation - both active and passive, contemplation, climate change mitigation and biodiversity protection.

Figure 8: Open space network

Source: City of Darebin, 2018

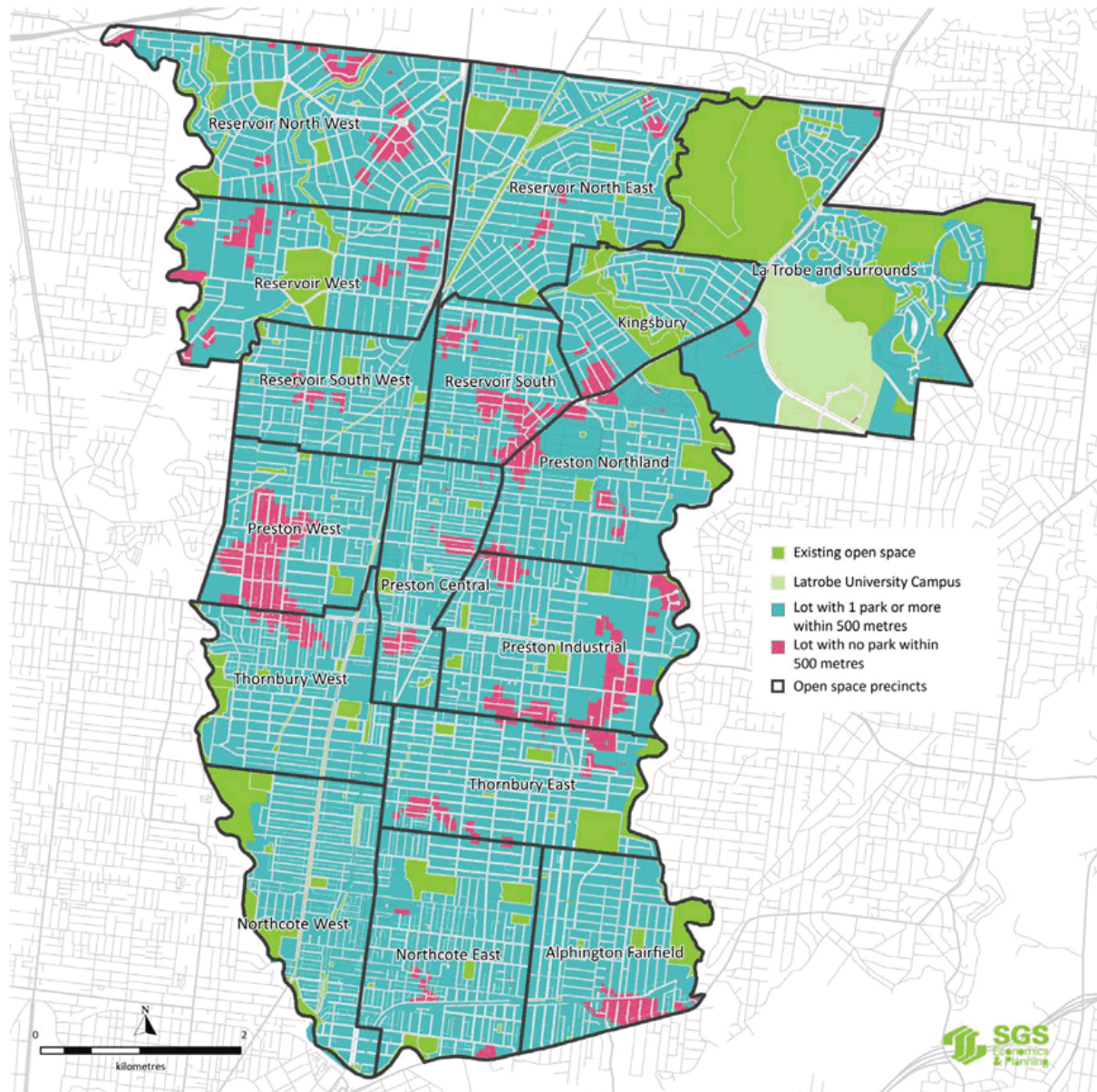


To aid in the planning of open space, parks in Darebin are classified according to their size and role. There are small *local parks* that meet the everyday needs of residents, usually located within 500 metres of their homes, *district parks* that provide a broader range of sport and recreation opportunities for residents at the suburb scale and large *regional parklands* that are enjoyed by all residents of Darebin, as well as visitors to the municipality. Regional public open spaces in Darebin include Edwardes Lake Park, Bundoora Park, John Cain Memorial Park as well as several golf courses and other active open spaces.

Residents in Darebin also have access to significant regional open space corridors that are located on the southern, eastern and western boundaries of the municipality, notably, the Darebin Creek Corridor and the Merri Creek Corridor. These regional open spaces are part of metropolitan level open space corridors along critical waterways and are popular walking and cycling routes.

Figure 9: Current variation in open space access (2018)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2018



4.4 Current access to open space

While overall provision of open space is important, the access that households have to open space must also be considered.

Pedestrian catchments for the open spaces in Darebin have been analysed to identify the number and location of households which can access a public open space within 500m⁷.

This includes access to Council managed and/or publicly accessible open spaces within Darebin. Golf courses, schools and conservation reserves with limited public access are excluded from the analysis. Open spaces in neighbouring municipalities are also excluded⁸.

Figure 9 illustrates the key findings of this analysis, showing concentrations of households with limited access to open space particularly in Preston and Reservoir as well as parts of Alphington. There are also pockets which have limited access in all other precincts, excluding Northcote West which has significant open space assets. Table 2 reveals these gaps in the open space network.

Areas with a high population density require more access to quality open space than areas of low population density, as there is generally less private open space in high density areas. This additional demand for open space can be provided by both increasing the overall quantum of open space and increasing investment in existing open space to increase and improve its quality.

Increased investment in quality amenities and facilities, such as lighting, planting, seating, shade trees and accessible toilets and pathways allows for open space to be used by a wider range of people, for a broader range of activities. This investment increases the quality of open space making it more desirable for use throughout the day and into the evening.

When considering the projected population increase for Darebin, it is clear that an increase in both the quantity of land for recreation as well as an increase in the overall quality of open space is required to meet the needs of the growing community.

7. Refer Council policy

8. Data limitations prevent inclusion of neighbouring open space

4.5 Biodiversity in Darebin

Darebin is home to a vast number of species – from treasured local fauna like the blue banded bee and the red rumped parrot to all kinds of flora, fauna, fungi and bacteria.

The devastating impacts of human settlement, urbanisation and densification mean that a complete recovery of local biodiversity is unattainable. Open space is nonetheless a key location for improving biodiversity and fighting against local extinctions.

The integrated planning and management of biodiversity has not traditionally been a core function of local government, and land with biodiverse attributes is managed by a complex array of agencies, including Melbourne Water, Vic Track, Latrobe University, Parks Victoria and Management Committees for Darebin and Merri Creeks.

While floral and faunal species do not recognise anthropogenic boundaries in the landscape (boundaries defined by humans), there are numerous significant species found in cities that can be managed to improve local and regional biodiversity.

Because of the number of species existent in any area, it is not practical to prevent extinction in all categories. Instead, it is more feasible to focus efforts on species that are important, threatened or unique to the area and to take steps to increase habitat and protect those key organisms.

Table 2: Gaps in open space network

Source: GGS Economics and Planning, 2018

Open Space Precinct	% of all households which don't have access within 500m
Reservoir North West	5.6%
Reservoir North East	2.1%
La Trobe and surrounds	8.4%
Reservoir West	8.7%
Kingsbury	15.3%
Reservoir South West	3.8%
Reservoir South	17.1%
Preston Northland	6.9%
Preston West	25.4%
Preston Central	7.1%
Preston Industrial	10.5%
Thornbury West	4.4%
Thornbury East	8.7%
Northcote West	0.0%
Northcote East	2.5%
Alphington Fairfield	9.5%
City of Darebin	7.4%

Significant plants and animals in Darebin include:

- 179 species of significant plants and animals
- 51 sites of local significance
- 24 sites of regional significance
- 2 sites of regional-state significance
- 34 sites of state significance
- 2 sites of regional-national significance
- 26 sites of national significance.

Areas of high conservation value include:

- Merri Creek
- Darebin Creek
- Cherry Street Reserve
- Forensic Drive Reserve
- Ngarri-djarrang Grasslands
- Edgars Creek
- Bundoora Park.

Specific threats to biodiversity in Darebin include:

- Urban development encroaching on natural areas, e.g. housing and development along creek corridors including Merri Creek, Darebin Creek and Edgars Creek
- Pest animals including domestic cats and dogs
- Weeds and habitat loss
- Pollution of air, water and land
- Fractured habitat - natural heritage in Darebin currently provides habitat stepping stones for flora and fauna rather than a connected network
- Lack of community awareness: community engagement and education is needed to mitigate negative community behaviours that threaten and harm natural heritage sites
- Cost of resourcing natural heritage protection activities needs to be balanced against Council's other priorities
- Impacts of climate change including declining rainfall, increasing temperatures and increasing intensity and frequency of storm events

Darebin as an urban ecosystem

Urban ecosystems are dynamic hybrid systems that encompass all living organisms (including humans), the natural environment and the built environment. Understanding Darebin as an urban ecosystem allows for locally indigenous plants and animals to be protected, while recognising the role of native and exotic trees and shrubs in providing habitat for local wildlife. An urban ecosystem approach also recognises the importance of open space to people, the role of open space in urban food production, the value of culture and design, and that open space can fulfil a range of needs and activities.

4.6 The community's views on open space

Community consultation analysis

It is important that community members see themselves in their open spaces. To begin the process of understanding how individuals perceive and experience their open spaces, Council undertook a municipal wide survey in March 2018. The survey was released simultaneously with an Expression of Interest for the Darebin Nature Trust.

From the responses, it is overwhelmingly clear that Darebin residents value their open space and, for many, engaging with nature forms a positive part of their lives. Passive or informal recreation such as the use of a playspace, socialising, walking, cycling, dog walking, jogging, contemplation and exercise featured prominently as the main activities that drew people to Darebin's open spaces. Respondents valued a place rich in natural bushland character, habitat for native plants and animals, trees, an escape from the built environment and a place to relax and unwind. Parks that offered a diversity of uses as well as un-programmed spaces rated as some of the most preferred.

Broadly, areas identified for improvement included provision of a consistent level of maintenance in all open spaces throughout the city; ensuring a standard level of basic amenities such as seating, bins and drinking fountains; improving the quality of footpaths as well as increasing the amount of tree planting and the quality of garden beds. There was also a clear concern expressed by the rapid growth, change and development that many saw throughout the municipality.

Many respondents noted a gap in provision of natural, bushland reserves and reserves with a natural character for passive recreation. Spending time outdoors with pets, particularly dogs, ranked as important for many residents with people reporting that dogs enabled and supported exercise, socialisation and as a reason to get outside and engage with nature. Conversely, not all responses around dogs were positive, with some residents reporting safety concerns for themselves and their families around off lead dogs.

Open space is highly valued by Darebin's diverse community for a wide variety of reasons and this strategy is guided by these initial conversations.

Darebin Nature Trust

In 2018 Council established the Darebin Nature Trust, made up of a group of knowledgeable and skilled local experts from nature-related fields. This group will provide invaluable ongoing advice and expertise as the strategy is translated into management practice, as well as influencing a broad range of Council plans, strategies and actions, big and small.

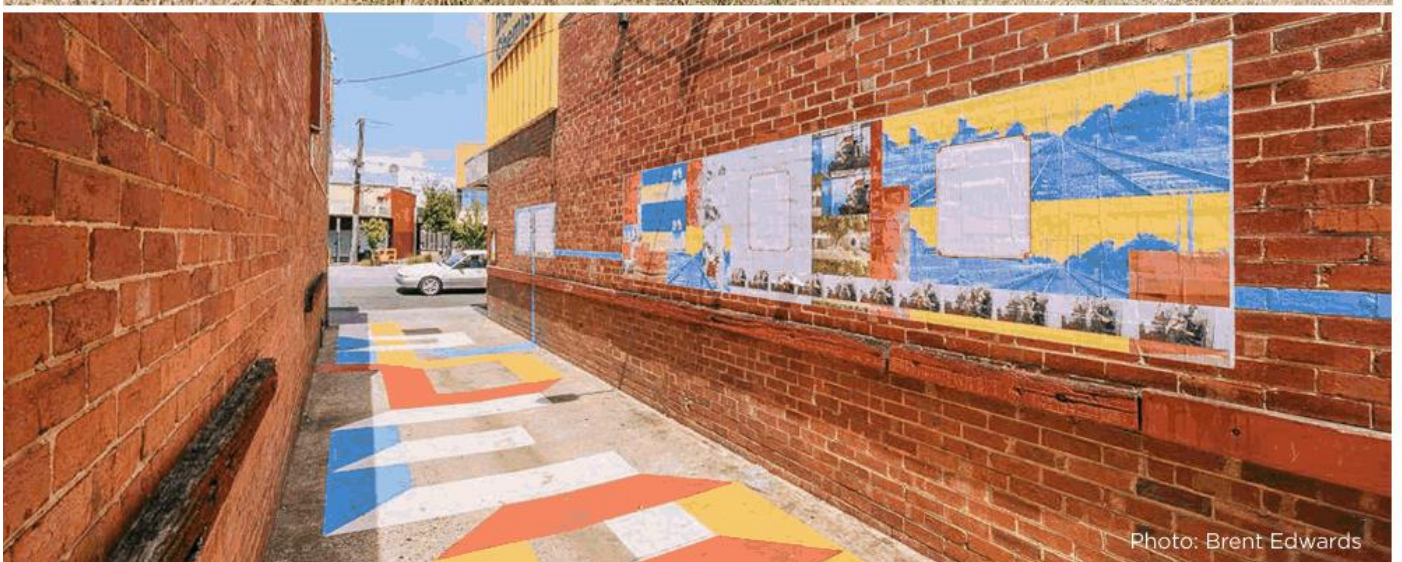


Photo: Brent Edwards

05

Growth and change



Darebin has experienced major change in recent years and will continue to grow, urbanise and change. Without significant action, our communities will have less access to quality open space and our ecosystems will suffer. *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* is a central strategy for Council in being able to protect quality of life and natural systems, encompassing human, plant and animal communities, as the city grows.

This section outlines the drivers of change, need and demand.

5.1 Rapid population growth

Population growth is a key driver of demand for open space. The City of Darebin is forecast to be home to approximately 196,000 people in 2028. This is an increase of more than 35,000 people from the 2018 population of approximately 161,000 and represents population growth of approximately 21 per cent. On average, this is 2 per cent growth annually. The distribution of both the current population and projected growth across the municipality is uneven, as illustrated below in Table 3.

This future population growth will generate additional demand for open space, delivered through a combination of more open space and improvements to existing open space. The strategy will outline the approach which is based on current levels of access and current open space conditions.

Table 3: Projected population growth: 2018–2028

Source: City of Darebin, 2018

Open Space Precinct	2018	2028 (projected)	2018–2028 projected change	2018–2028 % projected change
Reservoir North West	10,565	11,322	757	7.2%
Reservoir North East	15,172	17,140	1,968	13.0%
La Trobe and surrounds	8,933	11,807	2,875	32.2%
Reservoir West	7,320	8,544	1,224	16.7%
Kingsbury	5,831	6,913	1,082	18.5%
Reservoir South West	7,936	8,765	830	10.5%
Reservoir South	6,938	9,140	2,202	31.7%
Preston Northland	10,229	13,275	3,047	29.8%
Preston West	9,736	13,560	3,825	39.3%
Preston Central	9,472	13,972	4,500	47.5%
Preston Industrial	7,394	9,926	2,531	34.2%
Thornbury West	10,755	13,011	2,256	21.0%
Thornbury East	11,949	13,716	1,767	14.8%
Northcote West	13,942	16,998	3,056	21.9%
Northcote East	16,116	17,328	1,212	7.5%
Alphington Fairfield	8,962	10,318	1,356	15.1%
City of Darebin	161,249	195,736	34,487	21.4%

5.2 Provision of open space

There are areas in Darebin which currently have limited access to open space, and many of these areas are projected to accommodate high levels of growth. If no additional open space is acquired, the overall provision rate of open space will decline.

Table 4 provides an overview of the current provision rate of open space across Darebin, and the likely future rate, assuming no additional open space is provided.

Only open spaces that are publicly accessible and have a primary purpose for recreation are included in the analysis.

Excluded from this analysis are the regionally significant open spaces at Bundoora Park and John Cain Memorial Reserve, conservation areas such as Gresswell Forest Wildlife Reserve, golf courses and open space located in road reserves and along creek corridors where one or more of the following applies: they are not owned or managed by council, have restricted access or require a paid membership.

Table 4 shows that overall in Darebin, in the future, there will be approximately 16.2 square metres per capita of open space, if no additional open space is provided. This is well below the commonly accepted benchmark of 30 sq. m per capita. It also shows that there are multiple areas which will have a shortage in open space provision in the future, based on projected population growth.

Table 4: Access to open space per capita (2018 and projected)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

Open Space Precinct	2018 open space (ha)	2018 open space per capita (m ²)	2028 projected open space per capita (m ²)	2028 projected open space provision
Reservoir North West	52.7	18.6	17.3	Undersupplied
Reservoir North East	61.1	24.2	21.4	Minor undersupply
La Trobe and Surrounds	326.4	18.9	14.3	Undersupplied
Reservoir West	46	37.7	32.3	Well supplied
Kingsbury	37.6	63.7	53.7	Well supplied
Reservoir South West	10.2	10.2	9.3	Undersupplied
Reservoir South	1.3	1.9	1.4	Undersupplied
Preston Northland	43.3	31.0	23.9	Minor undersupply
Preston West	9.9	8.0	5.7	Undersupplied
Preston Central	6.4	6.7	4.6	Undersupplied
Preston Industrial	18.3	20.9	15.6	Undersupplied
Thornbury West	28.8	19.3	15.9	Undersupplied
Thornbury East	36.2	5.6	4.9	Undersupplied
Northcote West	56.5	19.1	15.7	Undersupplied
Northcote East	30.4	17.7	16.5	Undersupplied
Alphington Fairfield	25.4	28.2	24.5	Minor undersupply
City of Darebin	790.4	19.6	16.2	Undersupplied

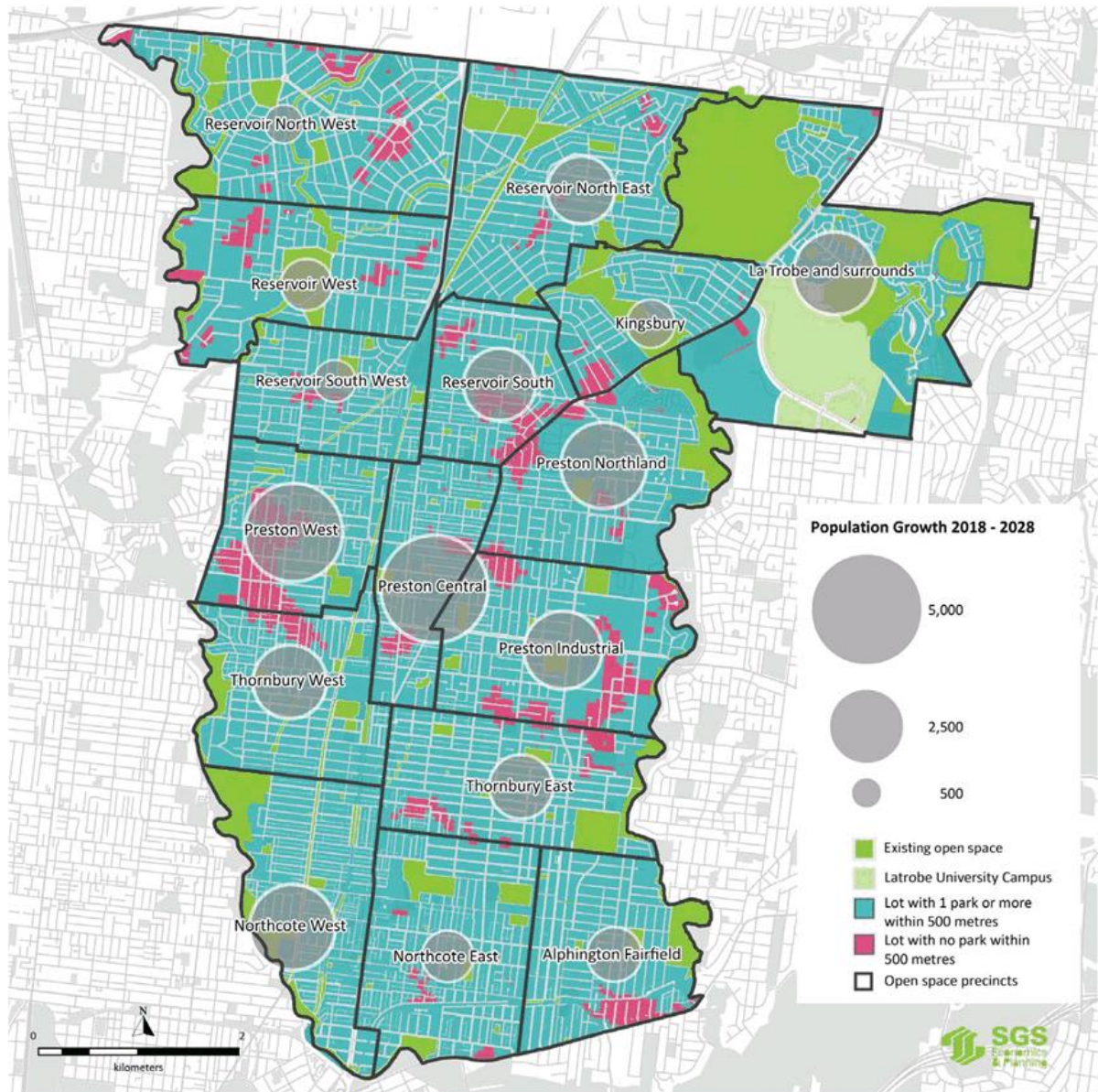
5.3 Access to open space

There are areas in Darebin which currently have limited access to open space.

Figure 10 shows how the areas where there are gaps are often aligned with areas that are anticipated to experience major population growth. Of particular note, are the Preston precincts, which currently have significant gaps in access to open space, and are forecast to experience significant population growth.

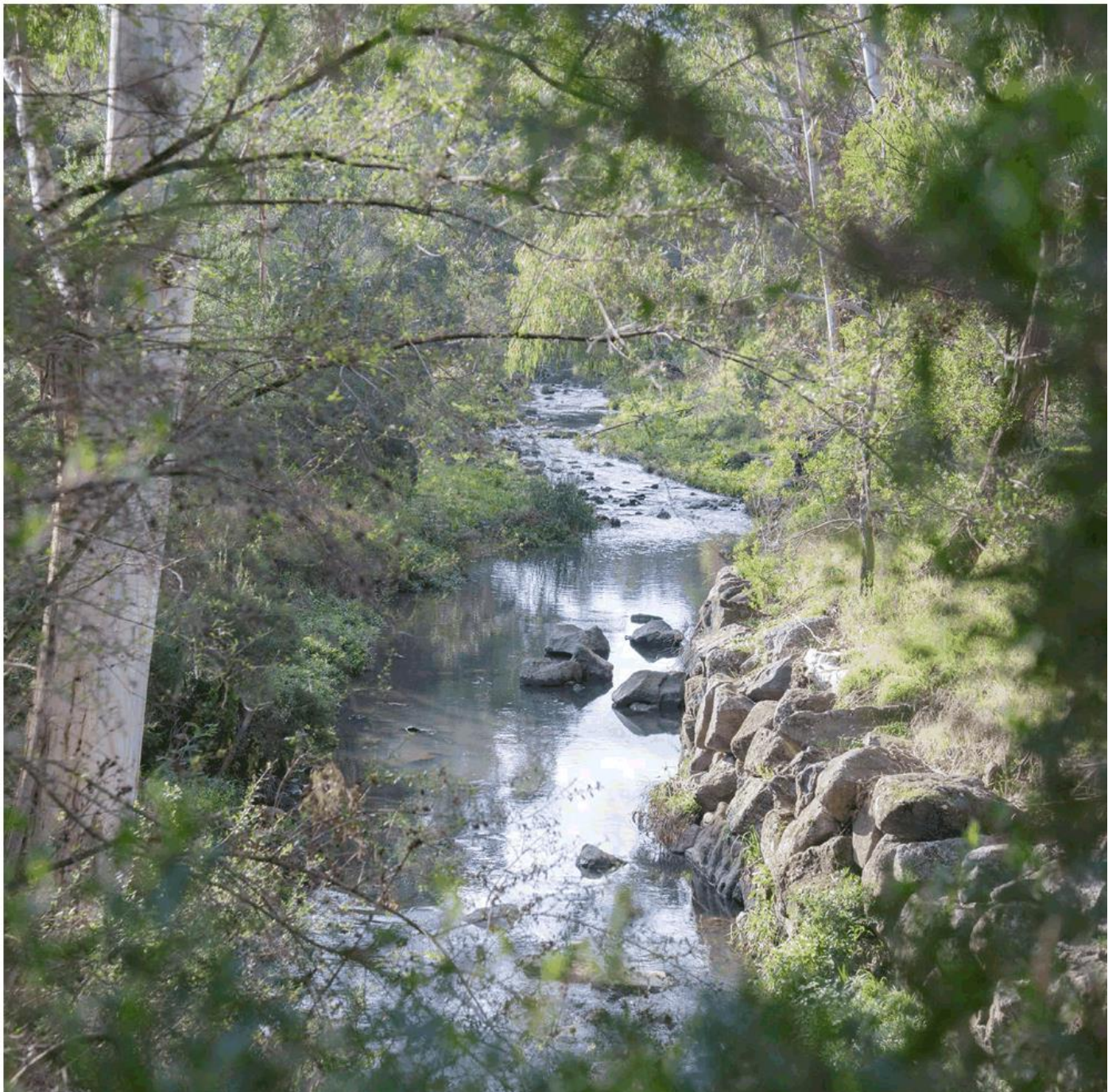
Figure 10: Current variation in open space access and projected population growth (2018)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2018



06

Shaping
the future



Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is a far-reaching and ambitious strategy. It recognises that significant action, investment and time will be needed to realise the vision of more and better open space. The strategy identifies a framework of approaches and actions to achieve it.

6.1 Introduction

The overarching theme of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* is responding to the climate emergency.

Within this context, the strategy provides a vision, directions, objectives, strategies and actions for open space in Darebin arranged in the following way:

- The vision statement identifies the desired future
- The key directions identify the areas of impact
- The objectives outline what is to be achieved
- The strategies identify how to meet the objectives
- The actions are the specific steps that need to be taken

6.2 Vision Statement

We see a future city that has more and better open space. Where we share multifaceted, contemplative, biodiverse, inspiring and active spaces that promote health, wellbeing, and social and cultural connections. Our streets, reserves, nature strips and medians are lush and rewilded with bushland trees, flowers and plants.

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy seeks to achieve a place where we work together to protect local species, celebrate our unique natural character and where everyone in the community feels a deep sense of ownership and responsibility towards our beautiful natural world.

6.3 Quality and quantity of open space

The strategy will achieve its vision of more and better open space through increasing the quantity of open space by working towards all residents having access to open space within 500m of their homes and improving the quality of open space to meet the three key directions of the strategy:

- Meeting community open space needs
- Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity
- Creating a Green Streets Network

6.4 Increasing the quantity of open space

In order to work towards all of Darebin's residents living within 500m of open space, more open space will need to be added into the network. This can be achieved through a number of means including purchase, joint user agreements and partnerships with private and public entities.

Acquisition of open space

The following should be considered when planning for the acquisition of new public open space:

- Does it fill a gap in the open space network?
- Is it in an area of high population density?
- Is it in an area of projected growth?
- Does it contain remnant vegetation or biodiversity values?
- Is it/can it be habitat for a protected species of flora or fauna?
- Does it make a connection in habitat, active transport etc?
- Does it make an existing open space or habitat corridor larger?
- Does it make access to an existing open space or transport corridor easier?
- Is it within 100m of a creek system?
- Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance?
- Is it nominated in a council strategic document?
- Would it make a connection in the Principal Pedestrian Network?
- Does it provide green public open space in commercial or retail areas?
- Does it service a population likely to be experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or poor health, such as older people, social housing tenants or newly arrived migrants?
- Is it good value?

For each open space precinct, parcels or locations for land acquisitions will be identified in the proposed Strategic Land Acquisition Plan.

Traditional owners will be engaged meaningfully in the planning and design of upgrades and new open spaces in areas of cultural significance.

Potential Sources of funding

As shown in Figure 10, there is a distinct gap in the amount of open space we have, compared to what we are projected to need.

To help close this gap, and improve the quality of existing open spaces, there are a number of potential funding sources to acquire new and improve existing open space.

These include but are not limited to:

1. Government grants
2. Council funds
 - i. Capital works, and asset management program budgets
 - ii. Other internal sources such as community grants/sport programs targeting users
 - iii. Land sales
3. Philanthropic trusts/foundation grants/bequests etc.
4. Reinvestment of funds generated from use of council facilities
5. Joint access arrangements, developments and partnerships with schools, peak bodies, other public agencies
6. Public Open Space Contributions from developers triggered by subdivision (levy)
7. Development contributions
8. Public open space provided by other Government bodies or agencies, on their landholdings

6.5 Improving the quality of open space

The quality of an open space is often a key factor in determining how much positive benefit that a particular open space can offer to the community that uses it and to the natural systems that depend on it to survive and thrive.

To achieve this increase in quality, all open spaces have been assigned a hierarchy and a type. This classification system correlates to a matrix (see Figure 11) for the provision of assets, amenity and service for each park. Hierarchy and type are explained in section 6.6.

Quality open space includes the following:

- Maintenance: Good maintenance practices include activities required to keep an open space functioning optimally such as regular mowing and weeding. It also includes replacing parts and assets that are worn and past their useful life expectancy such as replanting trees, repairing paths and replacing benches.
- Sustainable infrastructure and good design: Sustainable infrastructure selection and well considered design provides numerous environmental and cost benefits. Selecting locally made, sustainable, robust and easily maintained open space assets (play equipment, benches, bins etcetera) leads to a longer life for assets and increased enjoyment and use by the community. Good design ensures that consideration is given to layout, circulation, neighbourhood character and aesthetics and ensures that all assets are fit for purpose.
- Biodiversity: All open spaces should contribute to the biodiversity of Darebin. This is accomplished through appropriate plant selection, increased canopy cover, a clear network of paths that allows areas to regenerate and through the purposeful creation of habitat. High quality open spaces support local flora and fauna while simultaneously providing people with the opportunity to connect with and integrate into the natural environment. Planting should be suited to the local microclimates and be selected to thrive.
- Universal design and inclusiveness: Well considered open spaces are welcoming and inclusive places. They are inviting and accommodate a variety of uses for all people regardless of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic conditions, disability, etcetera.
- Service provision: A high quality network of open spaces contains a variety of uses including conservation, organised sport, active transport, food production, passive recreation, contemplation and habitat. Every space does not need to contain every service, however the network as a whole should have a fair and equitable distribution of activities. Available services should be in proportion with the intended use and the number of users of the open space.

- Character and distinctiveness: A successful green space will promote and reflect the identity and culture of a local community and create a sense of place. High quality open spaces contribute positively to the economic growth of an area and add to neighbourhood character.
- Wayfinding and navigation: Signage, landmarks and visual cues should be prevalent and prominent. This will allow users to confidently and safely navigate the space and to understand what is available within and around the area.
- Connectivity: The network of open spaces should be integrated into the surrounding urban fabric with well defined access points. Integrated, safe and attractive routes should link the network of green spaces and local services encouraging the use of active transport.
- Accessibility: Well planned open spaces are easily accessible where the individual open space and the wider network considers accessibility as a default.

Figure 11: Open Space Matrix

■ Should have
 ■ May have
 ■ Should not have

Basic Minimum Requirements	Hierarchy Type	Regional			District			Local			
		Regional	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Public toilet		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Lighting		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Internal path network catering for a range of users		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Path connections to surrounding footpaths		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
BBQ		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Picnic tables		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Bike racks		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Drinking water		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Shade structure		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Seating		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Fitness equipment		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Formal sporting facilities (suitable for organised sport)		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Informal/casual sporting facilities (including basketball half-courts)		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Playground		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Public event space (min. 100m ² gathering space)		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Canopy trees		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Garden beds		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Areas of irrigated mown grass (including playing surfaces)		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Unique elements that enhance the visitor experience and contribute to identity of the reserve (such as artwork or other design elements)		May have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Car parking		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have
Car share and electric car charge points (with solar panels on shelter/s)		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have	Should not have

6.6 Classifying open space

Planning for the future open space network will be informed by a classification system that considers both the overall catchment and role of the open space as well as the type of infrastructure that is required.

In developing responses to these future challenges, it is useful to classify open space based on the population it serves. This is done using two frameworks: one which addresses the geographic scale of the catchment that an open space serves (local, district and regional) referred here as 'hierarchy' and a second which is based on the density of population within the open space's geographical catchment referred here as 'type'. The two concepts are conceptually illustrated in Figure 12.

The underlying assumption of this approach is that areas of higher density require a higher level of open space services, due to increased demand.

The hierarchy is determined by the geographical catchment of visitors. Regional open spaces draw visitors from across the municipality and beyond. District parks draw visitors from surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance, while local open space draw visitors who are within walking distance, or suburbs that are directly adjacent. Examples of different hierarchies are shown in Figure 13.

The type (or level of amenity) of open space required is determined by the population density around the open space. The measure for population density is the number of people who live around the open space.

The recommended type for an open space provides guidance on the mix of infrastructure and facilities and level of maintenance that should be provided within them. Parks with more people living nearby have higher minimum requirements. Examples of different types are shown in Figure 14.

For each type, a basic minimum requirement is identified. Type A open spaces provide a high level of open space services, Type B provide a medium level of open space services, and Type C provide a lower level of open space services.

To identify the appropriate type (level of open space amenities provided) for each local open space, the population within 500 metres walking distance is identified. For each district open space, the population within the open space precinct is identified. Regional Parks and Corridors (such as Bundoora Park, Edwardes Lake Park and Merri Creek Corridor) are used by the entire municipality and beyond so are not distinguished within Figure 12.

This approach means that local parks with a large number of people living nearby require a higher level of service than local parks with fewer people living nearby. District parks in open space precincts with large populations require a higher level of service than those located in precincts with smaller populations.

The population density associated with each type of open space are described below.

Park hierarchy and type are used to set a proposed level of amenity provision. This will be explored later in the strategy.

Local Parks

Type	2018 population located within 500m
Type A	10,000 plus people
Type B	7,000 to 10,000 people
Type C	Fewer than 7,000 people

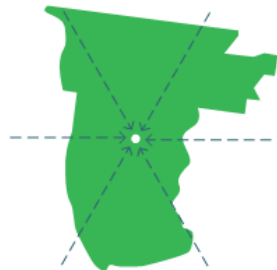
District Parks

Type	2018 population within open space precinct
Type A	12,000 plus people
Type B	9,000 - 12,000 people
Type C	Fewer than 9,000 people

Figure 12: Open space classification framework

Hierarchy

'Hierarchy' is determined by catchment - the distance from which the reserve is able to (or should be able to) attract visitors.



Regional
Draws visitors from/has significance across the municipality and beyond.



District
Draws visitors from/has significance to surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance.



Local
Draws visitors from/has significance within walking distance from the location suburb, or suburbs directly adjacent.

Type

'Type' is determined by population density around the reserve - how many people the reserve needs to provide 'services' to. Different types require different capital cost and maintenance inputs.



Type A
High level of provision of capital expenditure and maintenance. These reserves are relied upon to provide a variety of services and are of significant importance within their catchment.



Type B
Medium level of equipment and maintenance. These reserves are relied upon to provide a few different services and have a supporting role within the catchment.



Type C
Lower level provision of equipment and maintenance. These reserves are supplementary to other reserves in the catchment, and may cater primarily for opportunistic or limited use.

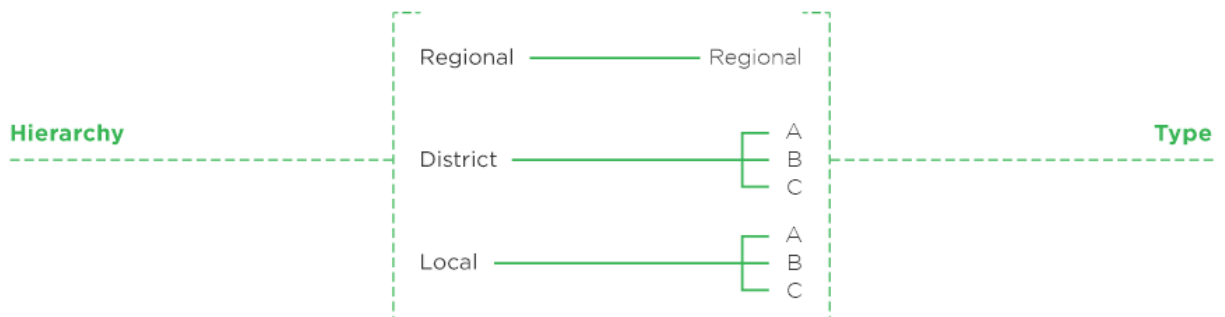


Figure 13: Hierarchy — benchmarking

Regional

Draws visitors from / has significance across the municipality and beyond.



Bundoora Park, Bundoora

- Approx. 190 ha.
- Urban farm, cafe and multiple playgrounds.
- Incorporates multiple separate uses such as golf course and river red gum preservation area.



Booran Reserve, Glenhuntly

- Approx. 18 ha.
- High quantity and variety of equipment, including water-play. Shade and seating also provided.

District

Draws visitors from surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance.



Hayes Park, Thornbury

- Approx. 3 ha.
- Parks with an oval automatically achieve district status due to increased catchment size.
- Playground with medium provision of equipment.
- Other features and facilities: picnic tables and BBQ, open lawn, seating, vegetation.



All Nations Park, Northcote

- Approx. 13 ha.
- Multiple separate spaces, including two playgrounds.
- Open lawn areas, small lake, tree plantings.
- Picnic facilities.
- Toilets, continuous path.

Local

Draws visitors from within walking distance from the location suburb, or suburbs directly adjacent.



University Square, Parkville

- Approx. 2 ha.
- Shade, seating, plaza areas, open lawn areas, vegetation, water feature, public art.
- A local space designed to cater for passive recreation. This type of space is particularly suited to servicing open space needs of residents in higher-density developments.
- Can accommodate events and large numbers of people.



Doug Hannan Reserve, Reservoir

- Approx. 0.67 ha.
- Mini skate park, half-court, playground.
- Drinking fountain, seating and picnic table.
- Open lawn area, trees and garden beds.

Figure 14: Type — benchmarking

Type A

High level capital cost and maintenance requirements.



All Nations Park, Northcote

- Approx. 13 ha.
- Multiple separate spaces, including two playgrounds.
- Open lawn areas, small lake, tree plantings.
- Picnic facilities.
- Toilets, continuous path.



University Square, Parkville

- Approx. 2 ha.
- Redevelopment, to be funded by City of Melbourne, the State Government and Melbourne University.
- Shade, seating, plaza areas, open lawn areas, vegetation, water feature, public art. Built partially over a car park.
- Additional space created by road closures.

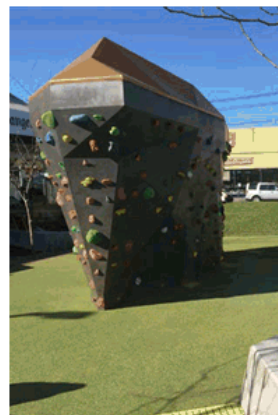
Type B

Medium level capital cost and maintenance requirements.



Batman Park, Northcote

- Approx. 1.6 ha.
- Sizeable playspace
- Picnic shelter and barbeque.
- Public toilet.
- Tree plantings, lawn area and ornamental garden beds.
- Formal path network
- Entry signage.



Wilson Avenue, Brunswick

- Approx. 0.05 ha.
- Bouldering wall.
- Seating.
- Shade trees and small raised lawn area.
- Feature paving and artwork.
- Area created by closing off road.

Type C

Lower level capital cost and maintenance requirements.



Bracken Avenue Reserve, Thornbury

- Approx. 0.93 ha.
- Shared path.
- Green link across several blocks with trees, seating and signage.



Foch Reserve, Reservoir

- Approx. 0.14 ha.
- Playground.
- Seating.
- Lawn area, trees and garden beds.

07

Key Direction 1:
Meeting
community
open space
needs



7.1 Objective 1:**Make the distribution of open space equitable**

Providing access for all residents of Darebin to open space within walking distance (500m) of their house will ensure the whole community can enjoy the benefits of open space. Council is committed to providing a strong open space network, and to deliver a net gain of open space across Darebin. The population of Darebin is expected to grow rapidly over the next 10 years and there are areas which will accommodate high housing densities. These areas will require high performing open spaces that support intensive use by the local community.

Strategies

- S1.1 Work towards all Darebin residents having quality public open space within 500m of their homes.
- S1.2 Over time, plan and deliver new open space where there are identified gaps in the open space network and where there is the greatest need.
- S1.3 Increase funding for new and improved open space needs generated by population growth via an increased open space contribution rate delivered through the Planning Scheme.

Actions

- A1.1 Acquire additional open space. This may be through purchase, joint use agreements and/or partnerships with public and private entities.
- A1.2 Implement a higher open space contribution rate as a schedule to Clause 53.01 in the Darebin Planning Scheme, across all land uses.
- A1.3 Create a strategic land acquisition plan that contains a decision making framework to guide selection of open space referencing section 6.4 of this strategy.
- A1.4 Review the Darebin Planning Scheme to ensure public open space is correctly zoned in accordance with the use of the land.

Gender-inclusive spaces

Public open space encompasses places for social encounter and exchange, and participation in public life. In its physical design and its uses, open space reflects our shared social values; it is shaped by and in turn further shapes and reinforces social hierarchies and norms. The accessibility, use and experience of open space differ for all of us since gender, class, age, race and ethnicity, sexuality and dis/ability contribute to shaping our experiences of it and our possibilities to use it.

However, a city inclusive of its open space is not gender-neutral. In some cases, the organisation or use of space unconsciously or unintentionally reflects traditional or outdated gender roles and unequal power relations between women and men. The design of spaces can either facilitate or impede inclusive use by individuals of all genders.

For example, in a park, young girls may gather together under a certain tree and watch young boys play soccer in a field. As this process continues, the space under the tree will become understood as a "girl's space" and the soccer field will become understood as a "boy's space". But public space should belong to everyone and everyone should have a right to use it. All genders should feel safe and free to use the soccer field just as everyone should feel free to sit under the tree.

Women are more likely to express greater fears for their personal safety in urban open environments (and parks are a prime example) than do men. A space that is untended, appears to be abandoned, is riddled with graffiti, is dark or has areas that are not visually permeable will impact how people choose to use or not use the space. Women in particular may choose not to use public space both in the day but more so at night because they fear for their safety. In effect, this reduces the amount of public open space available to women and girls.

It is important that everyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, socioeconomic conditions, dis/ability, etc. has a right to enjoy open space. Design of Darebin's public open space must reflect this in partnership with registered Aboriginal parties and the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Council (DAAC).

Council recognises that gender is not binary – and that people who are transgender or gender-non-conforming experience added barriers and discrimination.

7.2 Objective 2:**Recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, particularly traditional owners**

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters now called Darebin, have lived here for thousands of years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more generally have maintained a strong physical and cultural presence in Darebin in the face of displacement, disenfranchisement and policies of assimilation. Meaningfully engaging with the traditional custodians and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding the naming, planning and design of open spaces is a step towards recognition. Respecting Aboriginal cultural rights (as posited in section 19(2) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities) is also crucial.

Strategies

- S2.1 Meaningfully engage with traditional owners and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the naming, planning and design phases of open space provision.

Actions

Identify priorities and actions for open space in Darebin in partnership with Registered Aboriginal Parties and the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Council (DAAC). This could potentially include:

- A2.1 Naming at least 50% of new public open spaces for significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, figures, symbols or items, with particular attention to Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners
- A2.2 Engaging with Registered Aboriginal Parties when creating strategies and master plans on culturally significant land
- A2.3 Designing public open spaces and streetscapes to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage
- A2.4 Further developing existing and new Aboriginal tourism experiences including the Spiritual and Healing Trail, Merri Creek, the Koori Mural, the site where the Batman "Treaty" was first "signed", and contemporary experiences, in consultation with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders particularly DAAC.

7.3 Objective 3:**Designing for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities**

Open spaces are natural equalisers – something we all have in common – and present an opportunity to reflect the diversity of Darebin's residents. Open spaces will be designed and programmed to be welcoming, inclusive and safe places for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. This goes beyond taking steps to increase the equity in the quality and quantity of open spaces throughout the municipality. It intends to strengthen and reflect the cultural identities of the community and create opportunities for meaningful interaction across all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, for the Darebin population both new and old.

All residents, from newly arrived migrant families to families that have called Darebin home for many generations, should feel safe, welcome and included in their public open spaces including streets, parks and urban spaces.

Strategies

- S3.1 Consider diversity and CALD users when designing open spaces through meaningful engagement and understanding how different cultural and ethnic groups use, navigate and interpret open spaces.
- S3.2 Design public open spaces that are welcoming, safe and easy to access.
- S3.3 Engage thoroughly and equitably on improvements and changes to public open space with specific emphasis on understanding and incorporating the needs of CALD communities.

Actions

- A3.1 Undertake research to identify and understand the cultural and linguistic groups surrounding areas of open space being considered for improvements, and ensure engagement activities to plan these improvements reach these groups.
- A3.2 Name at least 25% of new public open spaces for significant members, figures, symbols, items or terms of CALD communities.
- A3.3 Work with the University of Melbourne's Designing for Difference program to deliver a pilot project which addresses the intersections of cultural and ethnic difference in public space and the development of design and policy toolkits to optimise diverse public space use.
- A3.4 Create and implement strategies around best practice engagement with CALD communities.
- A3.5 Include a reflection of the cultural make up of an area in all master planning and open space design.
- A3.6 Ensure that wayfinding signage is clear and usable to individuals of CALD backgrounds. This can mean translation information, infographics or easily understood icons.
- A3.7 Include a variety of seating and gathering area types, layouts and configurations in designs and upgrades to open spaces to allow for CALD communities to choose the areas that most appeal to them. These areas should be identified through inclusive engagement.
- A3.8 Identify universal activities like play and exercise, and design for diversity in these spaces to appeal to a wide user base.
- A3.9 Ensure that community engagement is done in Darebin's top languages inclusive of print materials and translation services for all District and Regional major park upgrades.
- A3.10 Celebrate diversity in open space by programming open spaces to reflect the community's unique make-up. This can include art, music, food, storytelling or celebrating culturally significant dates.

7.4 Objective 4:**Reflect diverse needs**

Darebin is an inclusive community, and all residents are entitled to open spaces they can safely access and that meet their needs. This includes residents with a disability, elderly people, children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, LGBTIQ people, as well as homeless people. Delivering an open space network that reflects the breadth of the Darebin community also requires meaningful engagement with the community in the planning, maintenance and design of open space.

Strategies

- S4.1 Engage with users, residents and community groups to help inform the design, planning and management of open space with particular emphasis on diverse communities.
- S4.2 Enhance women's visibility and representation in open space.

Actions

- A4.1 When planning and designing new and upgraded open space, include safe and equitable access for all residents, particularly those with a disability, older people, children and young people and gender diverse residents.
- A4.2 When planning and designing new and upgraded open space, utilise Principles of Universal Design, the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities Framework and all relevant Australian Standards regarding accessibility.
- A4.3 A safety and gender-based audit should be conducted where possible engaging a user based community group to assist in the design and planning of equitable open spaces.
- A4.4 Develop an intergenerational playspace with equipment, activities and amenities specifically targeted at all ages in an area of high population density.
- A4.5 Incorporate a purpose built space or area for youth in all upgrades to district and regional parks. This space will be gender inclusive and include a youth focused consultation process to understand what infrastructure the user groups needs.
- A4.6 Update the Civic Recognition Policy to ensure the contributions of diverse individuals in the municipality are reflected in the names of Council assets, open spaces and memorials.
- A4.7 Achieve gender parity in the naming of open spaces as quickly as possible over the course of this strategy (and beyond) through naming at least 80% of new public open spaces (and renaming existing spaces where appropriate) for significant women.
- A4.8 Reflect the community profile and diversity notably of the contribution of the elderly, children, the LGBTIQ community and people with a disability in the naming of open spaces.
- A4.9 Reflect the community profile and diversity on all community reference groups or advisory committees.

Actions from other plans

Other actions articulated in other plans relevant to this objective:

- Undertake gender-based audit of open spaces in Darebin as outlined in "Safer City for Women" action in Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021.



7.5 Objective 5:**Provide facilities that make open spaces more appealing and useable by more people**

Darebin is an established area experiencing significant population growth, including an increasing number of people living in apartments with limited private open space. Therefore existing open spaces play the role of private open space for many residents. As a result, existing open spaces, and new open spaces need to provide a range of quality facilities to support higher levels of use.

Strategies

- S5.1 Over time, plan and deliver open space improvements where there are gaps in the current level of service/amenity provision.
- S5.2 Reduce the dependency on single use plastic by providing increased access to freely accessible drinking water in open spaces.
- S5.3 Remove barriers to accessing open space through improvements to public toilets, lighting and the path network.
- S5.4 Improve public open spaces to increase tourism particularly in high profile parks and streetscapes.
- S5.5 Increase the provision of rubbish and recycle bin suites in public spaces.

Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains are important infrastructure in public open spaces. They encourage walking and cycling, and provide equitable access to clean water for people and animals reducing dependency on single use plastic bottles.

Council has committed to increasing the provision of drinking fountains across Darebin's open space network and their installation will be considered in all future open space projects.

Free public Wi-Fi

In a modern society, the internet provides social connectivity, navigation, information and communication for many people. Financial or cultural barriers and homelessness can be barriers for many to have access to the internet which may result in social, employment and educational consequences. To counter this, Darebin will increase the provision of free Wi-Fi hotspots which will be clearly signposted and be associated with accessible public infrastructure such as seating, shade and sealed paths. These hotspots will be clearly identified on maps available both online and through Council's customer service centres.

Safety in open spaces

Council's approach to community safety is from a health and wellbeing perspective and is informed by evidence and best practice in crime prevention research. While Council works across the spectrum of crime prevention to enhance community safety and support the reduction of crime, one of the areas where Council can have the most influence and greatest impact is through Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

CPTED is a framework of best practice principles applied to urban design which seeks to reduce the likelihood of crime occurring. This may include increasing passive surveillance, improving lines of sight, activating unused spaces, or defining boundaries between private and public spaces.

Women feel less safe than men in open spaces. There is also evidence that people from a non-English speaking background, young people and adults over 60 are more likely to feel unsafe in open spaces (Darebin Community Survey; Collins 2016). Open spaces will be designed to be gender-sensitive and inclusive.

Lighting upgrades have been shown to sometimes decrease crime and reduce fear of crime. However whole of place upgrades, or upgrades that incorporate CPTED are more effective than lighting upgrades alone. Lighting does not prevent crime in isolation, but may be effective when the purpose is to increase visibility at night, and activate an open space and support natural surveillance.

Actions

- A5.1 Over time, upgrade open spaces in need of safety, quality and amenity improvements.
- A5.2 Install water fountains at key nodes such as trail junctions and key destinations along all major cycling trails and walking paths throughout the municipality including as a priority the Darebin Creek Trail, Merri Creek Trail and St Georges Road Shared Path/Northern Pipe Trail.
- A5.3 Include a water fountain with dog bowl (where appropriate) in the design for public spaces particularly around sports pavilions, playspaces and BBQ areas.
- A5.4 Identify sites in Type A and B parks for the provision of BBQ areas. Priority should be given to parks adjacent to existing high population hubs.
- A5.5 Identify sites in Type A and B parks for the provision of outdoor gym areas/circuits. Priority should be given to parks adjacent to existing high population hubs.
- A5.6 Include provision of rubbish and recycle bin suites in the design for parks and open space.
- A5.7 Create an improvements program to ensure all dog off lead areas have at least one rubbish bin at the entrance to the park closest to the off lead area spots in public open spaces.
- A5.8 Identify locations and install free public Wi-Fi hot spots. Seating, shade, sealed paths and wayfinding signage should accompany the hot spot. Priority should be given to regional parks.
- A5.9 Review and update current maintenance standards for all open spaces.
- A5.10 Review Council's Open Space Asset Management Plan to include a clear table of responsibilities, action plan and service level agreements regarding maintenance.
- A5.11 Design paths to safely accommodate a range of users in terms of surface materials, width and location. Paths should be fit for purpose.
- A5.12 Undertake landscape improvement works to raise the profile, activity offerings and amenities in the Bundoora Park Precinct, All Nations Park, Darebin Parklands, Edwardes Lake, Darebin and Merri Creeks, and major retail precincts.
- A5.13 Create a plan to identify opportunities to partner with businesses and organisations to activate street frontages in retail activity precincts.
- A5.14 Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles such as encouraging increased activation, passive surveillance and the thoughtful provision of lighting to increase perceptions of safety.
- A5.15 Adequately maintain all shared paths, footpaths and trails within public open space to be in line with maintenance standards.
- A5.16 Incorporate cycle parking in all park upgrade works where demand exists.
- A5.17 Continue to implement the Joint Community Infrastructure Plan for the La Trobe National Employment and Innovation Cluster.
- A5.18 Improve relationships and co-working with non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to identify opportunities for joint projects.
- A5.19 Continue to implement the Darebin Public Toilet Strategy.
- A5.20 Increase the total percentage of tree canopy cover on public land to 25 per cent over time.

Actions from other plans

Actions articulated in other plans (Darebin Public Toilet Strategy 2015–25) relevant to this objective:

- Conduct annual physical condition audit to determine renovation, repair or replacement of Darebin's public toilet network.
- Ensure that public toilet facilities are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and repair.
- Assess provision of public toilets throughout the municipality to determine gaps in the public toilet network. Use this data to inform capital works process.

7.6 Objective 6:**Balance the needs of different users**

Population growth and an increasingly diverse community mean that most open spaces must cater to not just one use but many uses. Some uses for open space are not always compatible and require design and management consideration to ensure the best outcomes for the whole community.

Strategies

- S6.1 Provide open spaces, both green and urban, that are accessible, welcoming and multipurpose that accommodate passive, active and contemplative pursuits.
- S6.2 Include nature as a stakeholder in the management and improvement of open spaces.
- S6.3 Adequately plan for the provision of dog on and off lead areas in Darebin's open spaces.

- S6.4 Consider all users when designing and maintaining shared paths.
- S6.5 Improve connections for active transport by reducing the number of 'missing links' in the walking and cycling network.
- S6.6 Increase the number of urban food production opportunities.
- S6.7 Recognise the importance of productive food plants in addressing climate change, greening the municipality and connecting people to nature.
- S6.8 Activate and revitalise degraded or underutilised public open space through community gardens and other types of community based food growing.

Dogs

As Darebin grows, there will be more pressure on open spaces to be multifaceted and cater for a variety of uses simultaneously including some that may be in conflict. For many dog owners, their pet opens the door to a wealth of activities and provides an outlet for social interaction, encourages people to be more physically active and provides comfort and companionship. On the other hand, some may feel threatened by unleashed dogs in open space and can be fearful for their own or their family's safety. Older people or those with mobility issues may feel particularly vulnerable. Dogs can also be disruptive around roadways, near a shared or cycle path or near a protected or regenerated habitat area.

According to the Domestic Animals Act, dogs are required to be on lead unless council has identified an area as being a dog off lead area. At present, Darebin has 36 designated dog off lead areas within parks and reserves. These areas are identified through signage and on Council's website.

Where user conflict exists in a dog off lead area, Council will facilitate the community to identify a code of conduct for park users that specifically addresses dog behaviour. These types of codes of conduct are most adhered to where members of the community feel a sense of responsibility to each other, particular given the limits to how far these behaviours can be policed by Council or any other agency.

Dog off lead principles

Some parks or areas within parks are not suitable for dogs to be off lead including:

- Where the area is within 10m of cycling paths, 20m of playspace or a shared path, or 30 meters of a BBQ area. If there is not enough space in a park for this to occur, dogs should be on lead.
- Where there is significant cultural, biodiversity or habitat value.
- In environmentally significant areas along the Darebin, Merri or Edgars Creek ecosystems unless specifically signed.
- While formal active sport is in session.

Actions

- A6.1 Identify opportunities that enable diversification of public space types to meet the needs of a diverse community within a growing urban setting.
- A6.2 Create a plan to ensure equitable access is provided across streetscapes and open spaces through a connected path network, provision of disabled parking and clear wayfinding for all users over time.
- A6.3 Explore the opportunity to provide designated times of day for dogs to be off-lead, to ensure Darebin's space is accessible to multiple users.
- A6.4 Review the provision of dog on and off lead areas in parks across the municipality to determine suitability of existing network in consultation with community and in line with the dog off lead principles.
- A6.5 Undertake a review of signs in all dog off lead areas to ensure it is correct and clear.
- A6.6 Ensure that all dog off lead areas are clearly identified in Council's website.
- A6.7 Consider separating uses which can conflict with cycling as part of the design process.
- A6.8 Consider adding cycling links through key open spaces, where it can improve the network of off road cycling paths.
- A6.9 Where public open space connects to or is directly adjacent to the Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN), prioritise pedestrian connections from the open space to the PPN and identify opportunities for improved crossing facilities.
- A6.10 Develop a register of 'missing links' of existing paths and trails within existing public open spaces (e.g. based on customer requests, clearly identified desire lines, etc).
- A6.11 Develop a method of prioritising missing links for further design investigation/delivery.
- A6.12 Implement wayfinding signage and user etiquette messaging along shared paths over time.
- A6.13 For shared paths within open space, develop a level of service, which includes elements such as path/pavement width and construction material, linked to the function of the open space and intended use of the path.
- A6.14 Design new and upgraded paths as low-stress environments for all path users, and where high volume travel is expected, consider separation of pedestrians and cyclists.
- A6.15 Create a species palette of hardy plants including perennial productive food plants.
- A6.16 Consult with the Aboriginal community regarding opportunities and concepts for growing indigenous foods.
- A6.17 Identify opportunities to collaborate with community groups on urban food production projects, including mentoring programs.
- A6.18 Continue to implement actions from the Darebin GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy and Urban Food Production Strategy.

Actions from other plans

Actions articulated in other plans (Darebin Walking Strategy, 2018-2028) relevant to this objective:

- Deliver a connected walking network.
- Provide lighting and opportunities for passive surveillance on walking and cycling paths along the Principal Pedestrian Network PPN as appropriate.
- Provide facilities which encourage cycling.

7.7 Objective 7:

Make all open spaces multi-use

Activating open spaces through making them multi-use has many benefits including increasing passive surveillance, providing a drawcard for people to gather, increasing the chance that they will make social connections, and increasing physical activity.

Strategies

- S7.1 Activate retail streetscapes and open spaces to help support and enhance local businesses.
- S7.2 Seek opportunities to partner with schools and other private land owners to provide increased access to open space.
- S7.3 Limit the number of single-use public open spaces.
- S7.4 Ensure some open spaces remain 'wild' to provide users with the experience of nature in the city.
- S7.5 Incorporate a variety of vegetation types and species in open spaces to provided for multiple uses including human comfort and habitat.

Actions

- A7.1 Use vacant sites and other temporary spaces for pop ups as a tool for consultation or space for public art.
- A7.2 Test goods and services associated with open space through a social procurement rating with preference given to local providers and social enterprises.

- A7.3 Identify parcels of land owned by schools, government bodies and private land owners and develop partnerships with their owners to increase access to open space.
- A7.4 Minimise the fencing of public open spaces.
- A7.5 Use planting and other well placed barriers as boundaries to play spaces. Sections of fencing for playspaces may be considered along busy roads.
- A7.6 Make sporting grounds available for public use when games or training sessions are not in session.
- A7.7 Identify suitable places as 'wild spaces' and retain a natural character with no seating or pathways.
- A7.8 Incorporate bushland or 'wild' spaces in designs for park upgrades.
- A7.9 Increase seating, tree planting for shade and drinking fountains in retail streets to increase amenity and activation of the spaces.
- A7.10 Select a variety of tree species to provide for multiple uses including shade, habitat and urban cooling.

Partnerships with local businesses

One way to activate public space while encouraging the local economy is to support businesses to expand their service space into the public realm, or set up as a mobile premises such as at markets, food vans and other creative business opportunities.

As part of a campaign to activate retail streetscapes and open spaces, Council will investigate innovative ways to work with businesses/organisations that have a street frontage to help create and enhance Council's Green Streets vision and actions. Many businesses have street frontage and underused open space at the front of their businesses. Opportunities to consider are a street fair or market; planter boxes installed by Council and maintained by local businesses; permanent or temporary pause points or seating nodes in underutilised parking spaces or parcels of land or increased tree planting in retail strips.

Partnerships with schools

Increasing access to non-Council owned public open space is a way to immediately and cost-effectively add more public open space into the usable network for Darebin's community. Depending on the site and community need, this could include developing a playspace or building a community garden on Department of Education land that is jointly used by the school and the Darebin community outside of school hours. In each case, Council, the school and the community should all come together to develop, build, fund and maintain the space.

7.8 Objective 8:

Make open spaces places for expression and art

Public open spaces inclusive of streetscapes and parks should be places where Darebin’s diverse community can come together to freely and safely express themselves, whether it be through a gathering, performance, protest or physical work of artful expression. Art is a form of expression that both reflects and unites cultural groups and can foster feelings of community and connectedness.

Strategies

- S8.1 Utilise Darebin’s parks and gardens, natural heritage assets, tracks and trails for public art and expression.
- S8.2 Increase the amount of art and places for expression in Darebin’s public open spaces.

Public Art

Public open spaces should be places where expression is supported and encouraged. Public art and artful objects (seats, signs, cycle hoops etcetera created by artists) should be designed into parks and streetscapes. Un-programmed gathering spaces should accommodate public meetings and community engagement should be varied and creative. Local artists, children and cultural leaders should be part of the consultation process to identify and commission works of art in public spaces.

Action:

- A8.1 Commission works of public art from local artists in Darebin’s streetscapes and parks as part of a consultative design process.
- A8.2 Use public art as a placemaking tool to create iconic places within Darebin.
- A8.3 Use art as a consultation tool when designing for open spaces.
- A8.4 Develop the following precinct plans (refer Table 5):
 - A premier arts precinct at Darebin Arts Centre including Ray Bramham Gardens.
 - A premier arts precincts at Northcote Town Hall and Bundoora Homestead.
 - A landscape upgrade plan for Northcote Town Hall including Civic Square.
 - A landscape plan for premier events spaces at Edwardes Lake Park, All Nations Park, Ray Bramham Gardens and TW Blake Reserve.
- A8.5 Create a booking policy inclusive of a fees and charges schedule for all arts facilities, sites and places.

Table 5: Arts precincts and policies

Precinct/policy	Plan content
Darebin Arts Centre including Ray Bramham Gardens	A conscious focus on all aspect of the arts including performance spaces, display spaces, affordable housing and access to public transport. This plan should include a landscape upgrade plan for Ray Bramham Gardens as well as a clear plan outlining how the built form will reflect support for the arts.
Bundoora Homestead	Ways to integrate the Homestead into the adjacent parkland with performance and display spaces purpose built to support a variety of uses in line with the Bundoora Park Master Plan.
Northcote Town Hall	How to integrate the building and outdoor spaces into the streetscape of High Street Northcote to allow for multipurpose indoor/outdoor use of the forecourt and interior spaces.
Booking policy	Costs and allowable usage for spaces within arts precincts and premier events sites as well as conditions for the use of spaces and consequences for damage to a site’s landscape or infrastructure (Darebin Arts).

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Key Direction 2: Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity



8.1 Objective 9:**Increase appreciation for biodiversity**

Increasing appreciation of and respect for urban biodiversity will lead to greater community support, awareness and commitment to biodiversity protection. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for children and adults to engage with nature and providing biodiversity education and training opportunities.

A biodiverse bushland character may be perceived as less well maintained, however through education and exposure, this thinking can be changed to recognising the Australian landscape as beautiful.

Nature Play

As the desire for children to experience nature in the city becomes more prevalent, current conservation parkland and conservation bushland sites will be put under increased pressure. The development of nature play areas in open spaces will bring this experience to a greater number of young people.

These nature play areas should have a natural character but should not be located in areas of natural significance so as to prevent over-use and damage of ecologically significant vegetation.

Strategies

- S9.1 Improve understanding of biodiversity across Council and the community.
- S9.2 Utilise advocacy and education to engage the community and permit improved co-existence with Darebin's natural heritage, flora and fauna.
- S9.3 Increase the opportunities for children to engage with nature.
- S9.4 Deliver a whole of ecosystem approach to biodiversity recognising the importance of diverse urban ecosystems.
- S9.5 Increase prevalence of native and indigenous plantings in prominent locations.

Actions

- A9.1 In open space designs, include areas of native and indigenous plantings to increase contact with nature.
- A9.2 Include edible trees and vegetation as part of an integrated ecosystem approach to designing parks and open space.
- A9.3 Deliver education and training initiatives to Council and community focussed on increasing understanding of biodiversity values.
- A9.4 Join the Gardens for Wildlife program.
- A9.5 Increase the provision of purpose built nature play and bush kinder areas throughout the municipality.
- A9.6 Develop community science projects to engage and educate the community and to foster custodianship.

8.2 Objective 10:**Protect local species**

Darebin is an urban ecosystem, and all public open space has the opportunity to enhance biodiversity. This may be accomplished through protecting and maintaining existing biodiversity areas, planting indigenous plant species in open spaces, streetscapes and water sensitive urban designs, and rewilding open spaces. Increasing the size of existing biodiversity assets through targeted land acquisitions will also increase their quality and richness.

Strategies

- S10.1 Increase biodiversity in Darebin.
- S10.2 Improve land management practices.
- S10.3 Minimise requirements for ongoing maintenance including weed management including a reduction of chemical usage.
- S10.4 Increase vegetation cover inclusive of trees, shrubs and groundcovers.
- S10.5 Consideration for and decision making about biodiversity protection and enhancement must be integrated across council.
- S10.6 Protect and improve sites with high or important biodiversity values.
- S10.7 Maintain and improve the quality and extent of indigenous vegetation, flora and fauna.
- S10.8 Increase uninterrupted larger areas of biodiversity through acquisition of strategic connections.
- S10.9 All new land acquired by Council for open spaces must contribute to increasing biodiversity in Darebin.
- S10.10 Place the needs of natural ecosystems and managing climate change at equal prominence with the needs of the community.
- S10.11 Work towards no local extinctions of indigenous plants and animals within the selected key species.
- S10.12 Provide increased habitat extent and protection for bees and insects.
- S10.13 Increase use of indigenous plant species within open spaces and streetscapes and water sensitive urban design.
- S10.14 Maintain some places within Darebin as 'wild' spaces with areas identified for conservation.
- S10.15 Improve relationships and co-working with non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity beyond Darebin's borders.
- S10.16 Recognise a reduction in rainfall due to climate change as a threat to biodiversity.
- S10.17 Increase the prevalence of water sensitive design across the municipality.

Actions

- A10.1 Conduct a full biodiversity survey and develop a Biodiversity Management Plan (refer break out box on page 60) which identifies a street tree and open space plant palette.
- A10.2 As part of the implementation of the Biodiversity Management Plan, develop an action plan which covers all relevant activities of Council to ensure integrated planning, and identifies priorities for protection of biodiversity sites.
- A10.3 Encourage optimal biodiversity outcomes at revegetation or rehabilitation sites.
- A10.4 When designing open spaces consider the impact of infrastructure such as lighting and paths to native flora and fauna.
- A10.5 Prioritise conservation and enhancement of sites with remnant biodiversity values.
- A10.6 Develop and implement a land management plan over time.
- A10.7 Investigate other resourcing arrangements (capital and recurrent) in relation to indigenous vegetation cover.
- A10.8 Hire a biodiversity officer.
- A10.9 Select key species to preserve and protect following a review of the existing flora and fauna audit.
- A10.10 Habitat for bees and insects should be reflected in designs for open spaces and considered in land management practices.
- A10.11 Prioritise the acquisition of biodiverse remnant sites.
- A10.12 When planting indigenous vegetation, use plants of local provenance where available.
- A10.13 Limit unchecked access of domestic animals and unmanaged spread of introduced species.
- A10.14 Minimise requirements for ongoing maintenance including weed management through good design, reduction in edges and effective use of surface materials.
- A10.15 Increase investment for remnant site management, revegetation programs and weed control guided by the following order of site priority as per the Natural Heritage Strategy:
 - Remnant vegetation sites of national and state significance.
 - Remnant vegetation sites of regional and local significance.
 - Revegetated sites.
 - Degraded sites, noting that additional resources for ongoing maintenance would also be required.

Improving biodiversity

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- A10.16 Where water quality can be improved (especially along waterways), reintroduce fauna species through habitat creation to form more permanent populations.
- A10.17 Use smaller areas of open space as building blocks towards connectivity, especially where there is re-introduction of indigenous vegetation.
- A10.18 Actively engage non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to identify joint projects that enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity beyond Darebin's borders.
- A10.19 Set out a buffer of 100m from creeks. In these locations, ensure the use of indigenous vegetation is used in new developments and encourage its use in existing situations with the exception of productive gardens in a contained environment.
- A10.20 Create a strategic land acquisition plan that contains a decision making framework to guide selection of open space for biodiversity referencing section 6.4 of this strategy.
- A10.21 Decrease dependency on potable water for landscape maintenance through increased use of recycled water and stormwater as well as appropriate species selection and management.
- A10.22 Reduce amount of exposed hard surfaces through an increase in canopy cover.
- A10.23 Continue to implement and maintain WSUD throughout the municipality.
- A10.24 Investigate a developer contribution scheme for off-site stormwater management on council land in lieu of providing a stormwater management system on private land for sites that must meet planning scheme requirements for WSUD and integrated water management.

Actions from other plans

Actions articulated in other plans (Natural Heritage Strategy, 2017) relevant to this objective:

- Create participatory programs like Open Indigenous Gardens to encourage local heroes to open their gardens to the community.
- Create an indigenous botanic showcase garden to physically illustrate the types of planting methods and ways that indigenous plants can be used in backyard gardens.
- Create a program to harness the power of citizen science and encourage community engagement with indigenous ecosystems.
- Undertake or update a detailed flora and fauna audit or study to understand what the protected or target for return species are in Darebin.
- Actively engage non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to create yearly actions to enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity beyond Darebin's borders.

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Biodiversity Management Plan

Proposed scope

As a preliminary step to a Biodiversity Management Plan commission a specialist ecologist to conduct a full biodiversity survey in Darebin to identify:

- Areas of high biodiversity value to protect.
- Threatened remnant sites suited to acquisition.
- 'At risk' or key species to prioritise for protection in 'no local extinctions' strategy.
- Management and maintenance practices to protect and enhance biodiversity on Council land, including recommendations for specific sites.
- Priority areas for revegetation and restoration.
- Approaches to managing threats to biodiversity.
- Planning controls that could be implemented to protect biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Management Plan will also:

- Build on the principles of the Darebin Natural Heritage Strategy 2017–2027, Darebin Heritage Study (2011) and Darebin Natural Heritage Plan (2011).
- Direct and inform street and park tree selection.
- Identify and develop initiatives to work with stakeholders (e.g.. private landholders) to move towards a more holistic landscape management approach.
- Identify cross council working groups to ensure biodiversity outcomes are considered in planning, management and upgrade of all Council assets.
- Include a comprehensive and integrated plan to guide open space acquisition and management programs and ensure biodiversity has linkages to the multiple other assets and interests under council's management (e.g. open space; streetscapes, street trees and nature strips; roads; drainage; stormwater and integrated water management; recreation and more).
- Consider a street tree and open space planting palette.



8.3 Objective 11:**Engage the community as partners
in biodiversity protection**

Residential gardens, commercially owned land and school and university grounds take up large tracts of Darebin. They represent a major opportunity to enhance and protect biodiversity. Council can provide support for the local community and land owners in becoming stewards, planting native and indigenous trees and vegetation, strengthening habitat corridors and increasing tree canopy cover.

Strategy

- S11.1 Support the community to plant native vegetation and get involved in preserving, protecting and enhancing their open space.
- S11.2 Create opportunities for the community to engage and participate in the design, planning and use of their open spaces.
- S11.3 Encourage stewardship to develop the community's sense of connection to, and protection of, their local open space.

Actions

- A11.1 Create a program where Council subsidises planting of native gardens and trees on school grounds and private land.
- A11.2 Continue to provide community planting days.
- A11.3 Engage with community and advisory groups in the planning and design of biodiverse open space.
- A11.4 Commit resources to support the founding, development, programming and longevity of community stewards to identify local projects, 'get their hands dirty' and make a positive change locally.
- A11.5 Work with communities who want to increase the open space on their streets. This could include removal of on street parking, a lane of travel and upgrading nature strips.
- A11.6 Use all forms of art as a way to activate open spaces, create a sense of connection to place and as an education tool.

Biodiversity planning

An integrated approach to planning for biodiversity is required, given flora and fauna species do not recognise anthropogenic or man made boundaries in the landscape.

Darebin has a varied distribution of biodiversity values from remnant vegetation (in areas such as Bundoora Park and along the Darebin Creek) to landscapes dominated by exotic plant species. Acquisition of sites is one important response to improve biodiversity values and sound, skilled and well-informed management of biodiversity sites and values within open space is imperative to their retention and re-creation.

While it will mean different things for different species, (e.g., connectivity for flying vs non-flying species, under/over-road passes or reintroductions might be necessary for some species), overall and in principle, resilience of biodiversity will be improved by increasing habitat area, connectivity and vegetation cover and quality.

When planning for biodiversity:

- It is easier to maintain a remnant than to restore it, available remnants should be protected and such land brought into public ownership wherever possible.
- Water availability and water quality are both critical to sustaining biodiversity.
- Indigenous vegetation is most likely to increase biodiversity (compared with native or exotic).
- Uninterrupted connectivity between larger areas of biodiversity is a long-term objective and ideal, but in the meantime smaller areas of open space can have an important role as building blocks towards connectivity, especially where there is re-introduction of indigenous vegetation.
- Sound, skilled and well-informed management of biodiversity sites and values within open space is imperative to their retention and re-creation.
- Acquisition of sites is one important response to improve biodiversity values across open space.

Management of biodiversity has not traditionally been a core function of local government and the activities that do exist have been inadequately funded. There are however opportunities for local government to increase biodiversity and improve management of biodiversity resources.

8.4 Objective 12:**Make native bushland character****the default choice**

As part of a commitment to biodiversity and responding to the climate emergency, the default landscape of Darebin is recognised as native bushland or grassland.

This challenges the status quo where turf and ornamental trees are the default and parks are primarily for recreation. Instead, the strategy refocusses open space planning on the natural environment, where bushland is the default choice of character, while still allowing for alternative uses such as recreation, sport, urban food production and play. Increasing the prevalence and size of landscape with a bushland character will contribute to increasing biodiversity as it will provide more habitat for native flora and fauna.

Strategy

S12.1 Plan new and upgraded open spaces as partially or wholly native bushland or grassland, unless a clear demand for alternative uses is established.

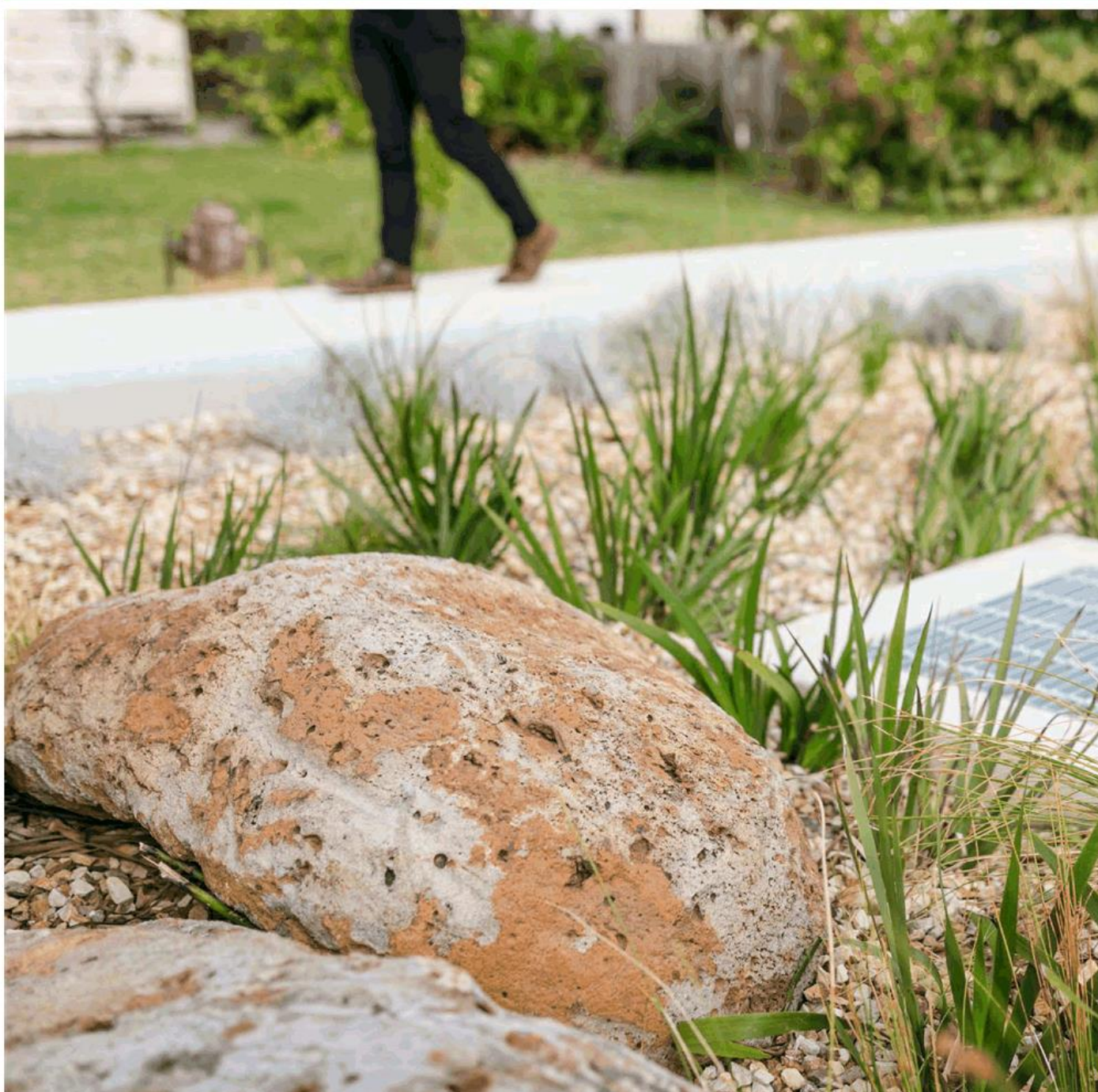
Actions

A12.1 Consider indigenous vegetation ahead of native or exotic vegetation where possible to improve complexity and recover biodiversity, including in water sensitive urban design treatments.

A12.2 Increase the use of indigenous vegetation when planning new open spaces.

09

Key Direction 3:
Creating a
Green Streets
Network



9.1 Objective 13:**Develop a network of green streets in Darebin**

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy combines the intent and vision of the Greenstreets Streetscape Strategy and the Darebin Walking Strategy's Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) to create a series of green links connecting Darebin's public open space, pedestrian/cycling corridors and biodiversity. The Green Streets Network is the result.

The network will increase access to open space, cool the city, foster sustainable transport use and enhance habitat connectivity and ecological resilience.

Strategies

- S13.1 Create a Green Streets Network.
- S13.2 Increase the total percentage of tree canopy cover on public land to 25 per cent over time.

Actions

- A13.1 Identify the priority streets and develop a delivery plan for the Green Streets Network using the:
- Darebin GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy.
 - Darebin Walking Strategy.
 - Darebin Natural Heritage Strategy.
 - Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin.
 - Proposed biodiversity strategy.
- A13.2 Ensure a minimum of 25 per cent of land is planned to be covered by tree canopy.
- A13.3 Seek opportunities to put power lines underground as part of public or private development works.
- A13.4 In consultation with council advisory committees, create a list of preferred trees and plants to be used in the Green Streets Network which prioritise shade provision, and include indigenous and drought tolerant tree and plant species.

- A13.5 Plant the largest tree possible.
- A13.6 Prioritise infill planting on the Principle Pedestrian Network.
- A13.7 Audit existing water sensitive urban design projects for effectiveness and use lessons learnt to improve future projects.
- A13.8 Improve water quality in creeks and water bodies through increased use of WSUD on streets.
- A13.9 Employ passive irrigation measures to water 50 per cent of street trees planted.
- A13.10 When designing the Green Streets Network, focus on sustainable technology, skills and actions.
- A13.11 Increase urban food production through fruiting trees in streetscapes and open space upgrades.

Actions from other plans

The Council Plan 2017–2021 provides an overall strategic direction for Darebin. It includes:

- Increase our tree canopy and urban forest to make Darebin a city in the trees.
- Grow urban forest by 7,600 trees to increase tree coverage on public land by 25% (a goal in Greenstreets Streetscape Strategy and Darebin Urban Forest Strategy).
- Install rain gardens/water sensitive urban devices to improve the condition of our waterways.

Primary elements of a green streets network include:

- Continuous canopy cover for shade
- Extensive garden beds
- Habitat creation through use of a variety of types and layers of vegetation
- Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and passive irrigation
- Footpaths that are at a minimum 1.8m wide
- Street reconfigurations to allocate more space for people and vegetation
- Underground powerlines where feasible
- Safe crossing points such as kerb outstands and raised crossing points to minimise conflict between different road users
- Space for multiple modes of transport particularly active transport
- Directional and wayfinding signage
- Pause points at strategic locations to include seating, drinking water, rubbish bins

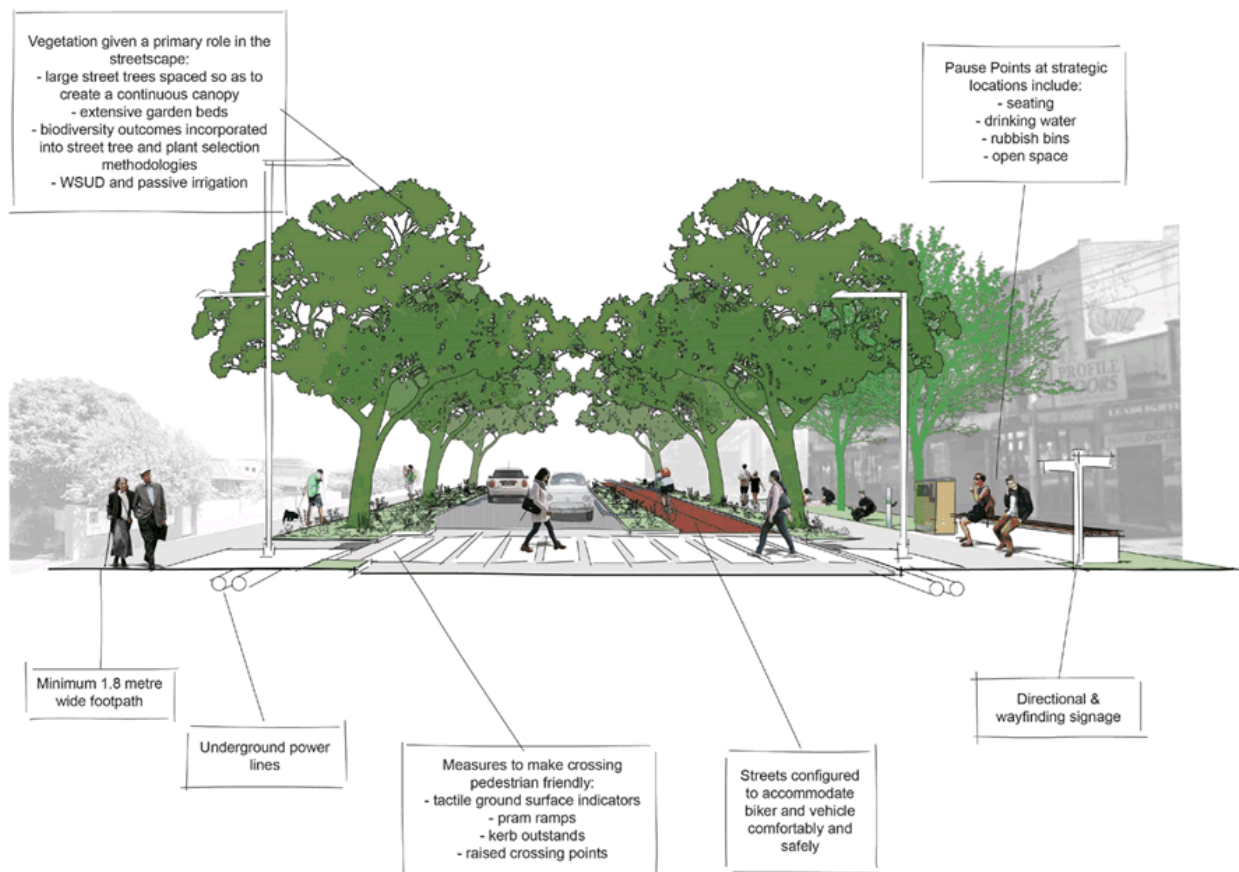
The long-term goal is a network of streets that are accessible, increase active transport and improve biodiversity as illustrated in Figure 13.

Urban hotspots

Many parts of Darebin have limited tree canopy cover, and these areas are more vulnerable to climate change. Key urban spots (areas that are notably hotter than others) include buildings which have expansive roofs that reflect not absorb heat: for example Northcote Plaza, Darebin International Sports Centre, Latrobe Retirement Village, Preston Market, Bundoora Extended Care Centre, Melbourne Water Reservoir and Reservoir industrial area. While the strategy cannot address roof treatments on private property, it can prioritise increasing tree canopy cover in these areas.

The condition of grass and turf in exposed areas appears to have a substantial impact on surface temperature, with areas of dead grass and turf having very high surface temperatures (often higher than adjacent paved areas), for example at Bundoora Park Farm.

Figure 13: Primary elements of a green streets network



9.2 Objective 14:**Enable walking and cycling**

Darebin City Council recognises that a quality walking and cycling environment is critical to the success of a sustainable, functional and liveable place. This environment aims to promote and facilitate walking and cycling for a range of outcomes, including leisure and recreation, physical activity and wellbeing, social interaction, economic gain, improved community participation in public spaces, and transport.

To ensure that public open spaces are available and are appropriately designed for all of Darebin's broad community, it is fundamental to ensure that such infrastructure caters for the most vulnerable members of our community including older people, children, and people with reduced mobility.

Strategies

- S14.1 Increase use of active and sustainable transport
- S14.2 Apply the principles from The GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy, The Darebin Walking Strategy and the Streets for People Strategy in delivering the Green Streets Network.
- S14.3 Continue to invest in the Streets for People Program.
- S14.4 Ensure that public open spaces are accessible and all users are considered in the design.
- S14.5 Improve access and safety across Darebin's creek trails and shared paths.

Actions

- A14.1 Increase the use of sustainable and active transport through the design and implementation of the Green Streets Network.
- A14.2 Enhance bicycle links through the creation of on and off road trails, additional bike racks and improved bicycling connections at intersections.
- A14.3 Ensure clear delineation of spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers including clear line marking.
- A14.4 Increase standard of maintenance on walking and cycling paths.
- A14.5 Increase the number of safe crossings across Darebin's creeks to ensure a cohesive and integrated network for cyclists and pedestrians.
- A14.6 Improve passive surveillance along shared paths particularly creek trails through rear interface treatments.

10
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Build best practice



10.1 Objective 15:**Build best practice across Council,
the community and public asset owners**

Realising the actions of this strategy will require careful and considered collaboration between Council, the community and public asset owners.

Internally, Council teams have come together to identify the challenges and opportunities of the strategy and own its implementation across multiple areas of Council's work.

Council teams will continue to work together using a place-based approach to take advantage of opportunities created through co-located capital projects or upgrades. Further, staff in key areas including transport, bushland, environment, engineering, design, capital works and maintenance must have the appropriate skills and expertise. This will result in the strategy's key directions, objectives, strategies and actions being implemented while responding to the climate emergency.

Relationships and partnerships with non-council stakeholders including schools, VicTrack, VicRoads and Melbourne Water must be built and managed to create a holistic approach to land management in Darebin.

Strategies

- S15.1 Ensure Council staff are appropriately trained to deliver the three key directions of the strategy.
- S15.2 Create an environment for Council staff to work collaboratively across teams using a place-based approach.
- S15.3 Create and manage collaborative and productive relationships with community as well as non-council land and asset owners.

Actions

- A15.1 Provide relevant training to all teams whose work plan includes delivery of actions in the strategy.
- A15.2 Build capacity within Council for design, review, auditing and maintenance of green infrastructure including water sensitive urban design, passive irrigation as well as the management and regeneration of biodiverse landscapes through training opportunities.
- A15.3 Provide time for collaborative working across teams responsible for delivering the strategy.
- A15.4 Develop and maintain working relationships with entities like VicTrack, Vic Roads, Melbourne Water, schools and private land owners.

11

Open space
precinct
summaries



11.1 Darebin's precincts

This section provides an overview of each open space precinct in Darebin (see Figure 15). It includes a discussion on the character of each precinct, including housing density and the provision of open space. It also describes existing and projected population growth, and assesses access to open space. These precincts are not meant to define how open space is used or the role it plays, instead they are intended to divide the municipality into manageable areas for the purpose of reference and planning.

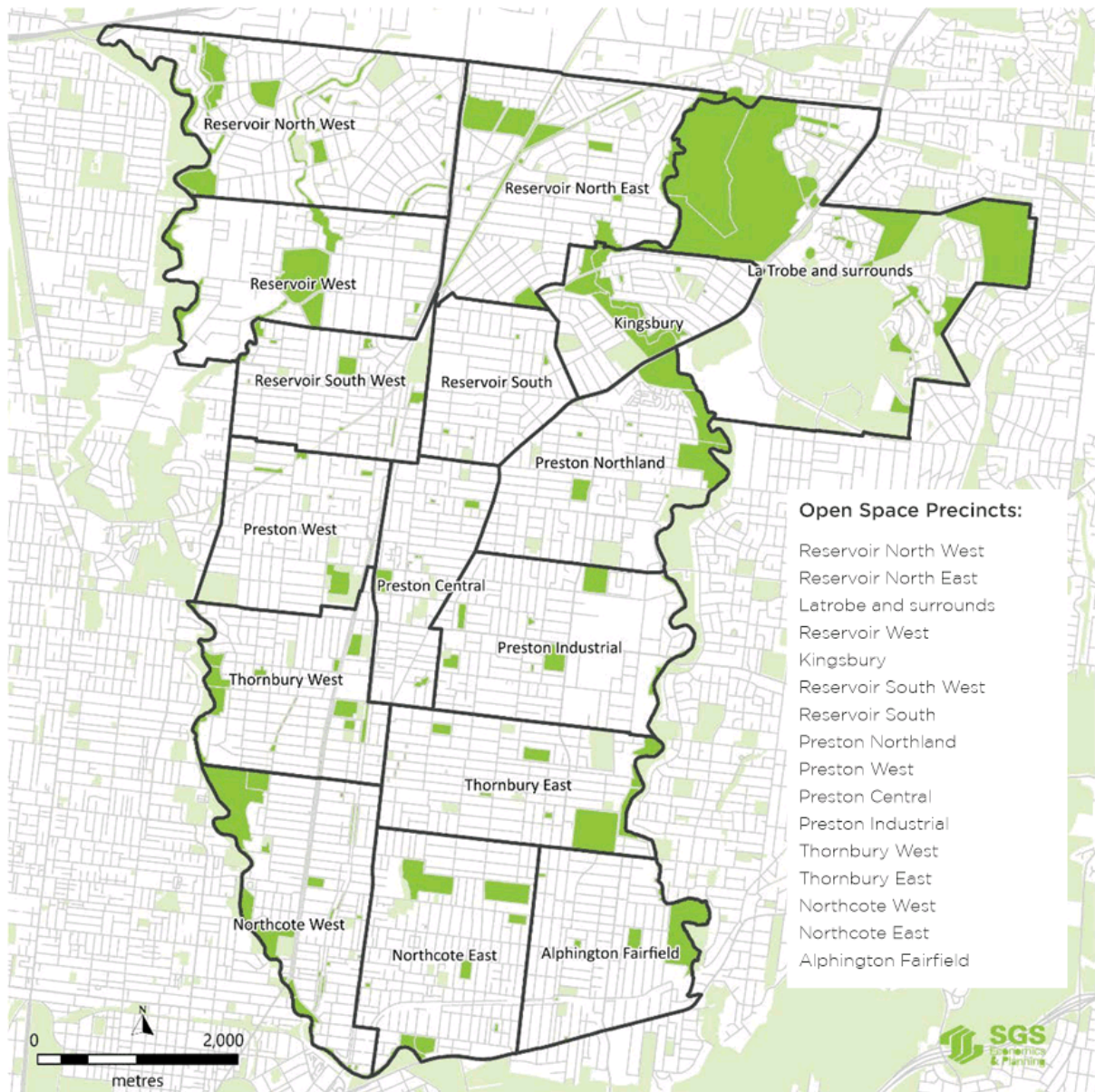
Based on the population densities around local and district open spaces, a type (level of amenity) is recommended. The recommended type will provide guidance on upgrades and improvements to open space, however site specific assessments for open spaces will be required to confirm the level of amenity that is suitable.

For example a small linear local park that is recommended as type A and used as a walking and cycling connection would not be a suitable space to provide all recommended infrastructure and facilities such as a grassy area for informal sport.

A series of recommendations for each precinct is provided to inform future planning of site specific open space upgrades and land acquisitions.

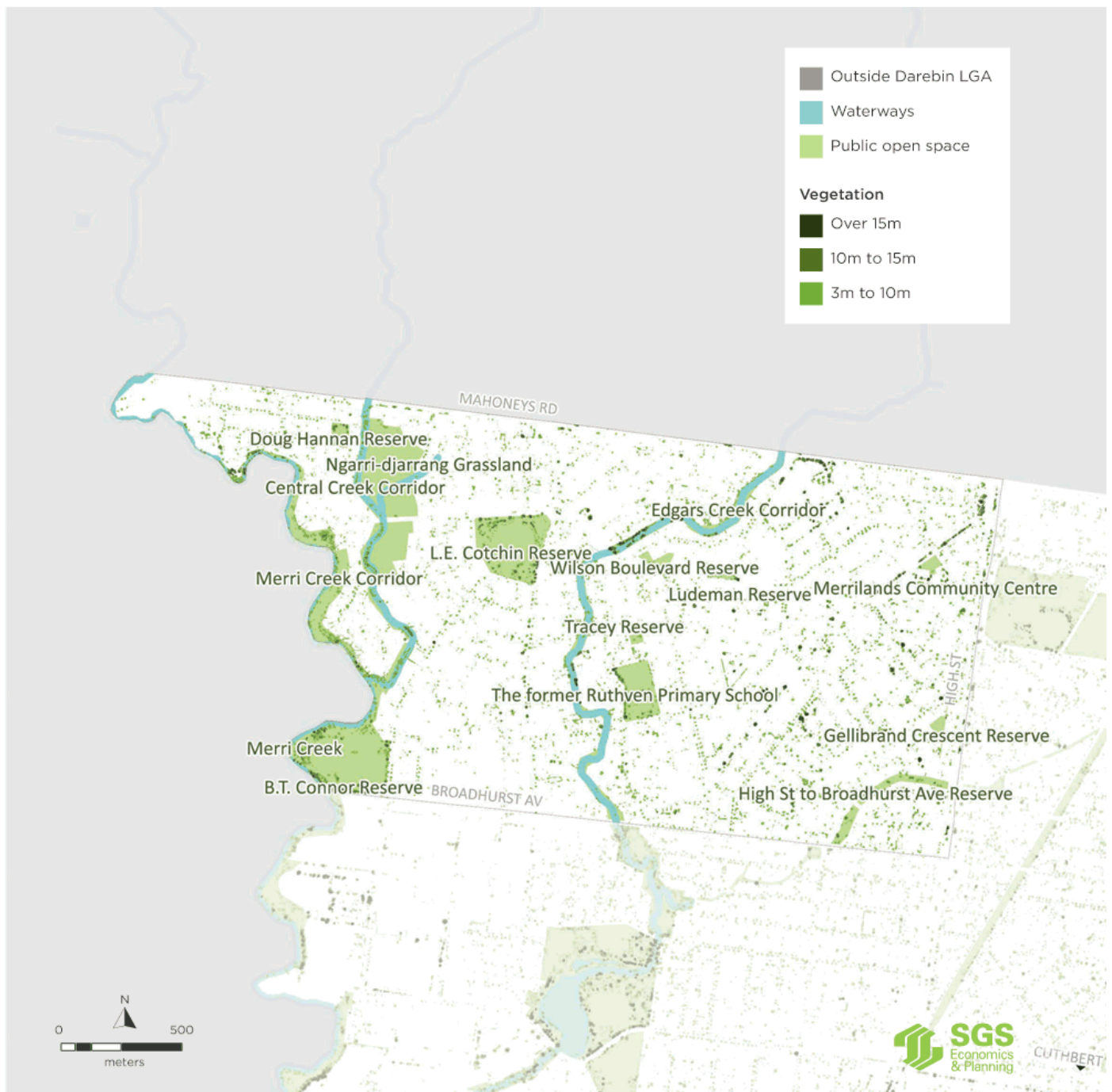
Figure 15: Open space precincts, Darebin

Source: City of Darebin, 2018



Precinct

Reservoir North West



Precinct character

Reservoir North West is a low density suburban area characterised by large lots and detached dwellings.

Merri Creek Corridor and Ngarri-djarrang Grassland run along the western boundary of the Reservoir North West precinct and are nationally significant Natural Heritage areas. Edgars Creek runs through the centre of the precinct. The Merri Creek runs along the west boundary of the precinct. The Merri Creek is well vegetated with trees and shrubs, while Edgars Creek has a mown interface with surrounding residential areas and sporadic tree coverage. B.T Connor Reserve and L.E Cotchin Reserve provides district sporting facilities, along with some informal leisure opportunities.

An electricity power line easement runs diagonally through the municipality anchored by a series of open spaces. Stretches of Hughes Parade include a large central median strip, and the roundabout of Botha Avenue and Hughes Parade includes a large open space of approx. 0.25 hectares.

The Council plan includes the action to create a new park and upgrade the site of the former Ruthven Primary School in Reservoir.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor and Ngarri-djarrang Grassland are nationally significant Natural Heritage areas.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
B.T. Connor Reserve	7.54	District	Type B
Central Creek Corridor	3.72	Regional	Regional
Doug Hannan Reserve	0.67	Local	Type C
Edgars Creek Corridor	7.45	Regional	Regional
Gellibrand Crescent Reserve	0.42	Local	Type B
High St to Broadhurst Ave Reserve	1.88	Local	Type B
L.E. Cotchin Reserve	6.48	District	Type B
Ludeman Reserve	0.22	Local	Type C
Merri Creek	2.38	Regional	Regional
Merri Creek Corridor	7.84	Regional	Regional
Merrilands Community Centre	0.38	Local	Type B
Ngarri-djarrang Grassland	9.77	Regional	Conservation area
The former Ruthven Primary School	3.05	District	Type B
Tracey Reserve	0.19	Local	Type C
Wilson Boulevard Reserve	0.67	Local	Type C

Access to open space

6 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres. Most of those households are located close to the Botha Avenue and Hughes Parade intersection.

Despite low levels of population growth, this area is anticipated to have an undersupply of open space, with 17.3 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 10,565

Projected 2028 population: 11,322,

Growth rate 7.2 per cent (lowest in municipality).

Population density

Lowest housing density in Darebin, typically between 10 to 15 dwellings per hectare. Future housing expected to be separate houses and some villas/townhouse developments.

Implications for open space planning

With the lowest growth rate in the municipality and little medium or high-density development, intensification of use of the public open space in Reservoir North West is expected to be less than in other precincts. As a result non-regional reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type B or C. No Type A reserves are recommended.

Land (with emphasis on the area near the Botha Avenue/ Hughes Parade intersection) should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. There is potential to make use of additional space provided by the median strip and roundabout. As in other precincts, improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Landscape works and revegetation along the creek corridor within this precinct have been minimal in comparison to others within the municipality. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space. The power line easement also provides this opportunity.

The ecological values of the Ngarri-djarrang Grassland should be considered for enhancement. Increasing public appreciation of the grassland by improving its landscape setting and upgrading interpretive signage should be considered.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Reservoir North East



Open space precinct summaries

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Precinct character

Home to regional sporting facilities at J.C Donath & I.W. Dole Reserves which make up the majority of open space in the Reservoir North East precinct.

Much of the council owned public open space is located along Cheddar Road and Tunnelley Parade in large central road reserves which have access and amenity issues.

The eastern boundary interfaces with Bundoora Park along the Darebin Creek Corridor. Road reserve corridors and the Bundoora Park boundary include off road cycling and walking trails.

There is extremely limited tree canopy cover over 10 metres outside of J.C Donath and I.W. Dole reserve.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of State and National Heritage Significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Beenak/McMahon Reserve	5.34	District	Type A
Cheddar Road Reserve	4.83	Regional	Type A
D.R. Atkinson Reserve	2.4	District	Type B
Daleglen Street Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Darebin Creek Corridor/ Bundoora Park interface	14.26	Regional	Regional
Frank A.A. Dunstan Reserve	0.29	Local	Type A
Frank A.A. Dunstan Reserve - Link I.W. Dole Reserve	0.15	Local	Type C
Fyfe Reserve	0.36	Local	Type A
I.W. Dole Reserve	4.57	District	Type B
J.C. Donath Reserve	20.04	District	Type A
Leslie Reserve	0.7	Local	Type A
San Leandro Reserve	0.09	Local	Type B
T.W. Andrews Reserve	2.72	District	Type A
Tunaley Pde - Cheddar Rd Reserve	5.25	Regional	Type A

Access to open space

Only 2 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Despite low levels of population growth, this area is anticipated to have a minor undersupply of open space, with 21.4 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 15,172
Projected 2028 population: 17,140
Growth rate: 13 per cent

Population density

Low to medium housing density, with substantial quantities of villa style housing which increase housing density. Future dwellings anticipated to be a mix of separate housing and medium density housing, with little high density housing growth.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir North East has a low growth rate compared to most areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. Nonetheless eight reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/ maintained as Type A, and four as Type B.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing within the south-east part of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the Darebin Creek corridors and the Cheddar Road Reserve should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space. The Cheddar Road Reserve should be considered to become an important public open space stretching from the southern to the northern boundary of the precinct, providing a link as well as other open space services.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

La Trobe and surrounds



Precinct character

The La Trobe and surrounds precinct is home to the extensive Latrobe University campus and a number of nature reserves.

Many open spaces are not owned by Council, for example the cemetery, university campus, La Trobe Golf Course and sports reserves owned by the university. These are outside of the scope of the strategy.

The precinct is characterised by expansive nature reserves.

The university and major regional open spaces and conservation reserves enjoy extensive tree canopy cover, including those over 15 metres.

There are plans to improve trail connections for walking and cycling as per regional trails strategy.

Biodiversity

There are expansive nature reserves and non-council owned and managed biodiversity hot spots which are important areas to biodiversity conservation. This precinct has the greatest concentration of natural heritage assets in Darebin, with nationally significant sites in Bundoora Park and Gresswell Hill and Gresswell Forest Reserves.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Barlow Rise Reserve	0.53	Local	Type B
Bundoora Park	113.11	Regional	Regional
Bundoora Park Oval	3.2	District	Type C
Bundoora Park Public Golf Course	64.89	Regional	Golf Course
Cascade Link	0.04	Local	Type B
Cascade Park	2.36	District	Type C
Cascade Park Link	0.07	Local	Type C
Cascade Walk	0.04	Local	Type C
Cherry Street Reserve	6.51	District	Type C
Darebin Creek Corridor	3.27	Regional	Regional
Forensic Drive Reserve	2.36	District	Type C
Gonella Reserve	0.17	Local	Type B
Gresswell Forest Wildlife Reserve	63.8	Regional	Conservation area
Gresswell Grange Lakes	1.15	District	Type C
Gresswell Grange Reserve	0.76	Local	Type B
Gresswell Hill Nature Conservation Reserve	8.81	District	Conservation area
Gresswell-Cherry Reserve Habitat Link	0.24	Regional	Conservation area
Habitat Link	0.26	Local	Type C
Lancaster Gate Oval	1.02	District	Type C
Lancaster Gate Reserve	0.14	Local	Type B
Larundel Grasslands Reserve	0.34	Regional	Conservation area
La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary	28.92	District	Conservation area
Lelean Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Mount Cooper Reserve	2.18	District	Type C
Red Gum Reserve	0.77	Local	Type C
Springthorpe Village Common	2.86	District	Type C
Strathallan Golf Course	16.83	Regional	Golf Course
Sugargum Drive Reserve	0.73	Local	Type C
Summerhill Rise Reserve	0.55	Local	Type B
The Village Square	0.11	Local	Type C
Warramunga Reserve	0.23	Local	Type C
Woodland Reserve	0.09	Local	Type C

Access to Open Space

8% of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Well supplied with open space, however this is predominantly open space used for conservation, golf courses, and the Latrobe University Campus. Access to publicly accessible local and district public open spaces owned by council is low with 14.3 square metres per capita projected for 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 8,933

Projected 2028 population: 11,807

Growth rate: 32.2 per cent

Population density

Most of precinct is covered by La Trobe University and associated facilities, and significant conservation reserves. In the small areas that accommodate housing, density is low to medium, with few dwellings exceeding 30 dwellings per hectare.

Future dwellings anticipated to be predominantly high density housing - student housing and apartments to cater to students and staff at Latrobe University and Latrobe Employment centre.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 32.3%, the majority of that is expected to be high density student housing, therefore considerably higher use of the open space is expected. There is significant amount of open space within this precinct and all are categorised as Type B, C or regional. There are no category A reserves recommended.

Whilst a significant proportion of this precinct is accessible open space, the majority of it is privately owned and/or managed, including two golf courses, the open space at Latrobe University, or fenced off areas to retain and protect environmental values. The growth in population to this precinct is expected to be mainly tertiary students however the provision of publicly open space should allow for potential changes or reduction to privately owned open space. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to acquisition of land in the south and south west of the precinct to cater for the growth in population around the university.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.



Precinct

Reservoir West



Precinct character

Edwardes Lake Park is home to the second largest lake in metropolitan Melbourne and makes up the majority of open space in the Reservoir West precinct.

Almost half the precinct is industrial land. The industrial area has very little tree cover and there are poor links through it for pedestrians and cyclists. Edgars Creek Corridors link Edwardes Lake hydrological system south to join Merri Creek and then extend north.

The J.E. Moore Park supplies two large sporting ovals shaded along the perimeter by established trees.

Biodiversity

Edwardes Lake Park has natural heritage values of state significance, the adjoining Edgars Creek Corridor is of National Significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Broadhurst Ave to McFadzean Ave Reserve	0.62	Local	Type A
Edgars Creek Corridor	9.48	Regional	Regional
Edwardes Lake Park	22.13	Regional	Regional
J.E. Moore Park	5.19	District	Type C
Merri Creek Corridor	8.31	Regional	Regional
Whitby Reserve	0.26	Local	Type B

Access to open space

9 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

The precinct is well supplied with open space due to the large Edwardes Lake Park. It is anticipated that the precinct will remain well supplied.

Population growth

Current population: 7,320

Projected 2028 population: 8,544

Growth rate: 16.7 per cent

Population density

The precinct is characterised by low to medium housing density with some villa style housing

Future dwellings are anticipated to be predominantly medium to higher density. A 26 per cent increase in the 5 - 17 age group is expected with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir West has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. One reserve in this area is recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Although the size of Edwardes Lake Park means that no undersupply of public open space is projected from a quantity perspective, land should be considered for acquisition or repurposed to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts, improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

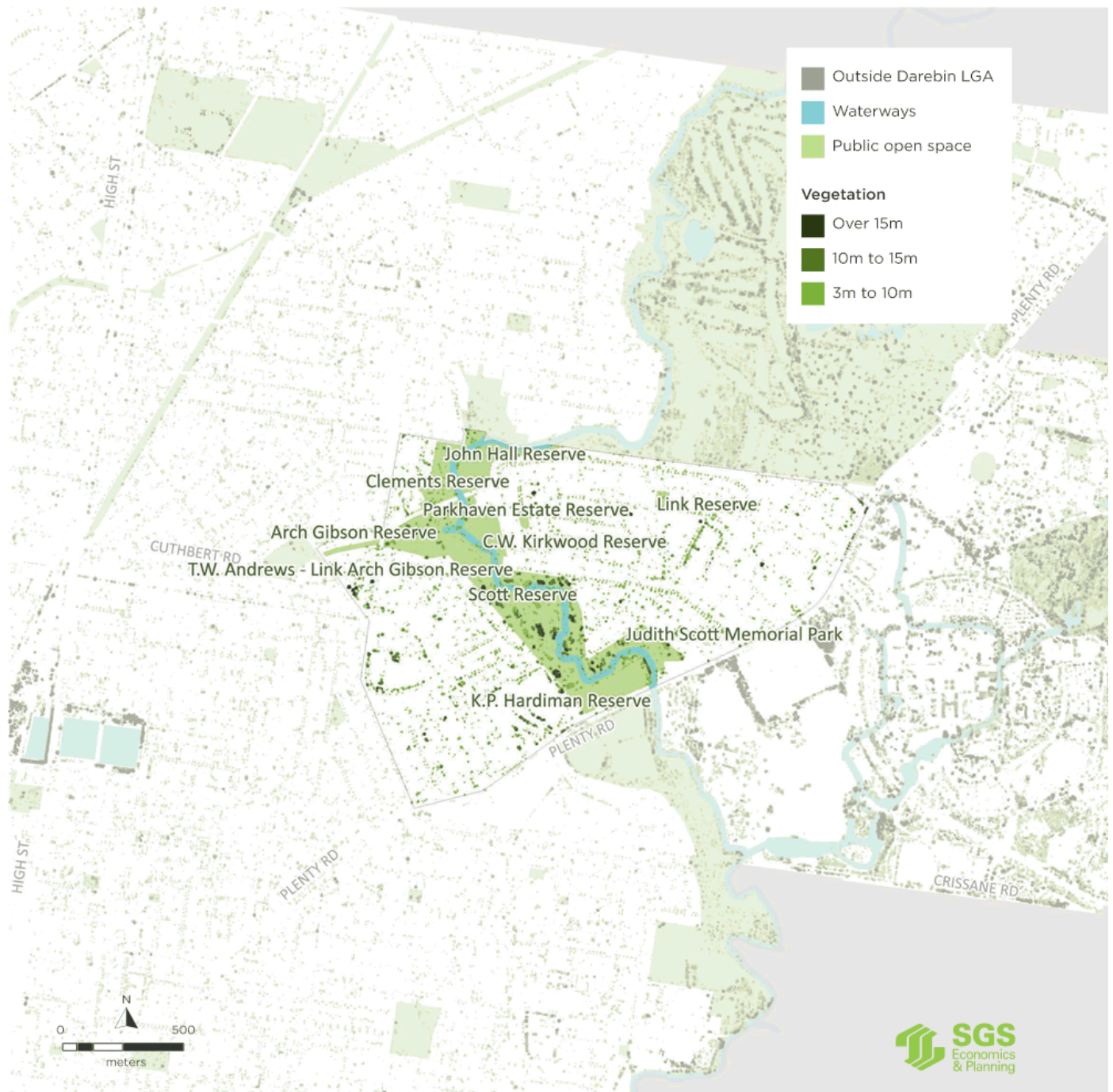
The Edgars Creek and Merri Creek corridors form an important part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase of 26% of children in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Kingsbury



Precinct character

The Kingsbury precinct is home to the K.P. Hardiman Reserve adjacent to Darebin Creek which runs through the centre of the precinct. The reserve is bordered to the south by the La Trobe University Hockey Club and the Darebin Community Sports Stadium.

To the northern end of the K.P. Hardiman Reserve is another large reserve, Arch Gibson Reserve, which houses a large lawn area and bowling complex. Over Dunne St is the John Hall Reserve which consists of a single oval backing onto Darebin Creek.

These three reserves make up the majority of the open space in the Kingsbury precinct.

There are several medium sized reserves across the precinct between 2.5 and 3 hectares and these include the Clements Reserve, C.W. Kirkwood Reserve (adjoins Arch Gibson Reserve), and Scott Reserve.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Arch Gibson Reserve	5.56	District	Type C
C.W. Kirkwood Reserve	2.51	District	Type C
Clements Reserve	2.84	District	Type C
John Hall Reserve	3.07	District	Type C
Judith Scott Memorial Park	5.28	District	Type C
K.P. Hardiman Reserve	14.83	District	Type C
Link Reserve	0.34	Local	Type A
Parkhaven Estate Reserve	0.3	Local	Type A
Scott Reserve	2.4	District	Type C
T.W. Andrews - Link Arch Gibson Reserve	0.47	Local	Type A

Access to open space

The precinct is well supplied with open space. Currently 15.3 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres. 53.7 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028. Considering the minimal population growth, it is expected Kingsbury will continue to be well supplied.

Population growth

Current population: 5,831
 Projected 2028 population: 6,913
 Growth rate: 18.5%

Population density

Kingsbury is characterised by low density housing between 10 - 15 dwellings per hectare. Future dwellings will also be predominantly low to medium density with limited higher density dwellings.

It is expected that Kingsbury will see the most demographic change in the 0 - 4 age group (42 per cent to 2028) and 5 - 17 age group (40 per cent) with families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 18.5% therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected. Three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/ maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the south of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m.

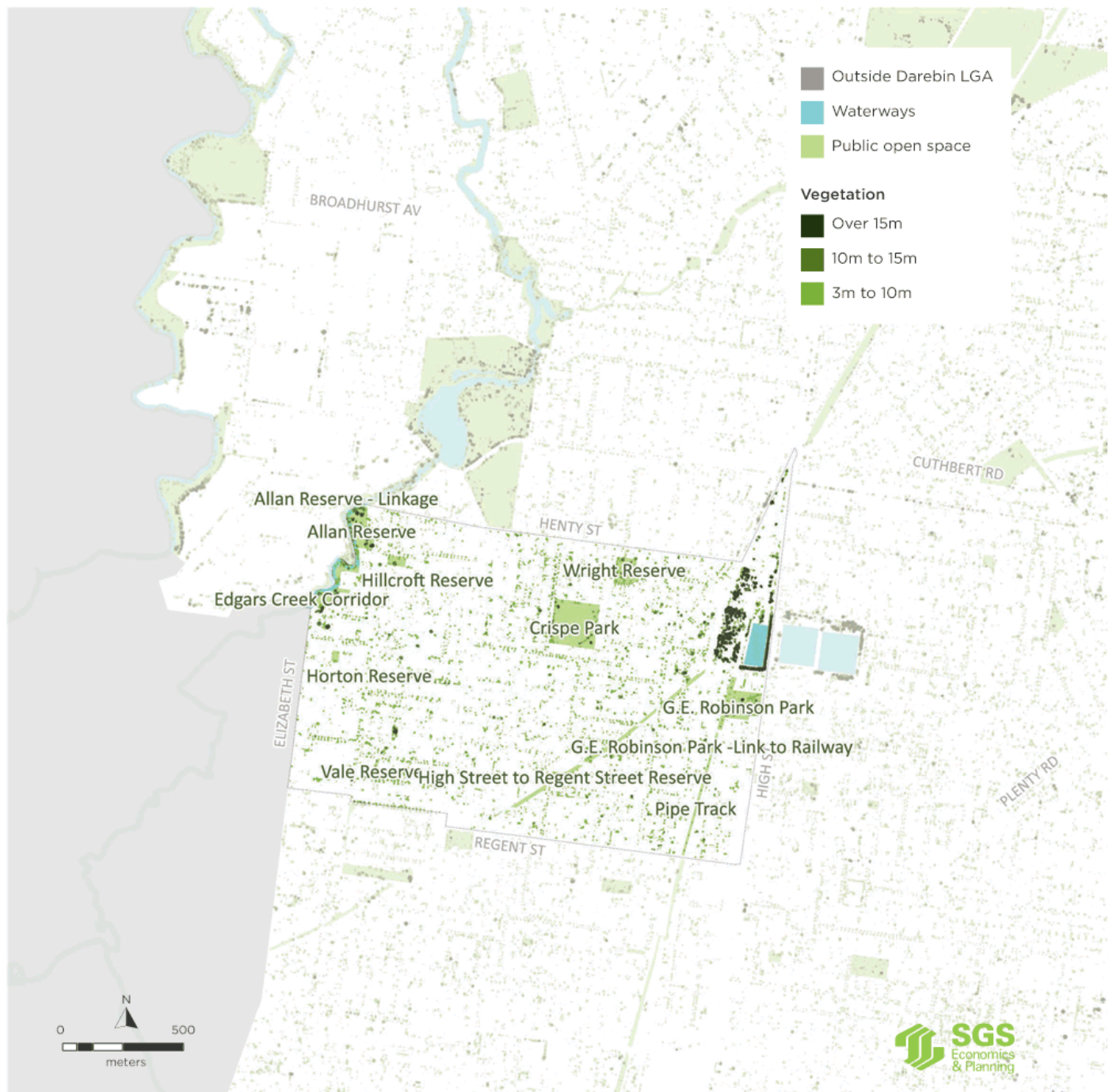
The Darebin Creek corridor is centrally located in this precinct, providing the vast majority of its public open space. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in 42% of children under 4 and a 42% increase in children 5-17 in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Reservoir South West



Precinct character

Reservoir South West is bordered by the Edgars Creek Corridor (link to Glenvale Rd; link to Kia Ora Road) which has a mown interface between residential properties and the creek border. To the west, outside of the precinct border is the Darebin Resource Recovery Centre which backs directly onto the creek.

The G.E. Robinson Park borders High Street to the south of a large area of inaccessible land owned and managed by Melbourne Water. Some tree canopy cover from established trees and landscaping is provided along the perimeter of the Melbourne Water land.

G.E. Robinson Park has some shade provided by established trees and a shared bicycle/pedestrian footpath through to Crawley Street, connecting with Regent Station. The park and link to railway are well maintained.

There is some poorer quality and underutilised open space in and around Regent Station from Henry to Stewart Street and a wide median strip with a shared bike path.

Crispe Park provides the precinct with a large sporting oval which is home to the Reservoir Football Club. The perimeter of the oval is shaded by established trees. There is a lack of east-west connection through the open space in and around the oval from Pine Street and Taylor Ave through to Gloucester Street.

Wright Reserve has a north-south pedestrian connection from Henty Street to Wright Street and is co-located with the World Manifest Ministries International church. The reserve has scattered established trees and two playgrounds.

There are several other smaller reserves and pockets of open space scattered across the precinct (see below).

Non council owned open space also includes the Reservoir West Primary School sporting fields.

Biodiversity

Edgars Creek Corridor includes areas of state natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Allan Reserve	1.23	District	Type C
Allan Reserve - Linkage	0.3	Local	Type C
Crispe Park	3.36	District	Type C
Edgars Creek Corridor	0.28	Regional	Regional
G.E. Robinson Park	1.82	District	Type C
G.E. Robinson Park -Link to Railway	0.09	Local	Type A

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
High St to Regent St Reserve	1.28	District	Type C
Hillcroft Reserve	0.28	Local	Type B
Horton Reserve	0.13	Local	Type B
Pipe Track	0.43	District	Type A
Vale Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Wright Reserve	0.93	Local	Type A

Access to open space

4 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Future undersupply is predicted. 9.3 square metres per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 7,936

Projected 2028 population: 8,765

Growth rate: 10.5 per cent

Population density

Reservoir South West is characterised by low density dwellings (detached housing) with most housing between 0 - 15 dwellings per hectare.

Future dwellings will continue to be low to medium density, only a small proportion of higher density is forecast for 2028.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir South West has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. Nonetheless three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing within the central south-west part of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

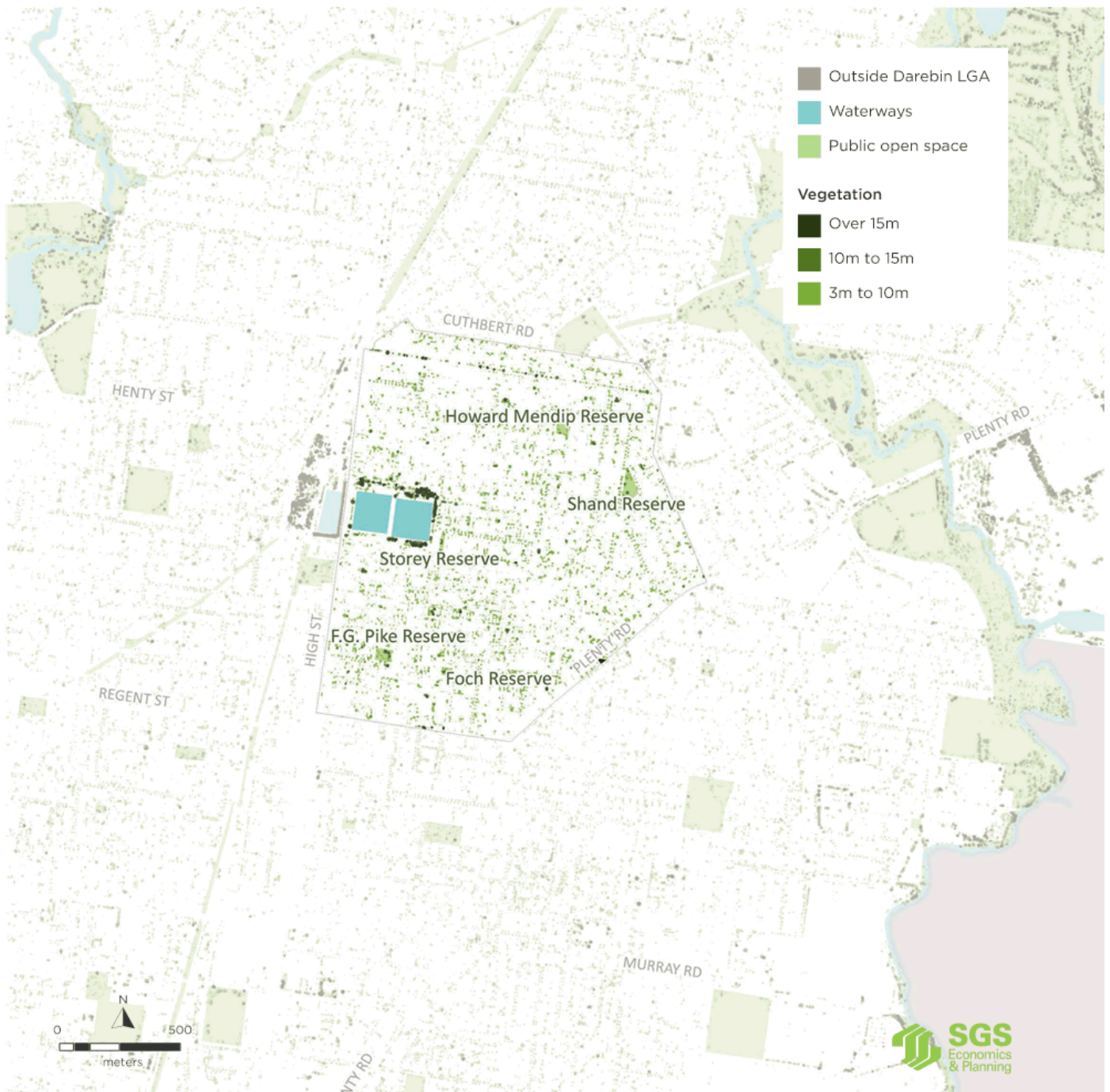
Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the Edgars Creek corridor and the linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Reservoir South



Precinct character

Reservoir South is home to five small reserves which are scattered across the precinct. Each reserve has a playground of varying scale, Shand Reserve also has a small basketball court. Most reserves also serve as pedestrian links. The Howard Mendip reserve is bordered by private properties.

Part of the precinct is covered by Melbourne Water Reservoirs, situated to the western side of the precinct boundary at High St.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity values are unclear and more information is required. The completion of a biodiversity audit will provide insight into existing biodiversity values

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
F.G. Pike Reserve	0.33	Local	Type A
Foch Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
Howard Mendip Reserve	0.21	Local	Type A
Shand Reserve	0.49	Local	Type A
Storey Reserve	0.12	Local	Type A

Access to open space

17 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Future undersupply is predicted. 1.4 square metres per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 6,938

Projected 2028 population: 9,140

Growth rate: 31.7 per cent

Population density

The precinct is characterised by low density housing, with some medium density villas and townhouses occurring along the High St border. Future dwellings are anticipated to be predominantly medium to higher density dwellings. A 40 per cent increase in the 5 - 17 age group is expected with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir South has a fairly high growth rate (31.7%), and new development is expected to be primarily medium and higher density, so considerable intensification of public open space use is predicted in this precinct. As a result all reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A. Careful consideration must be given when upgrading existing reserves to how much intensification of use is appropriate in reserves bordered by residential properties.

The typology of existing reserves within this precinct is extremely limited, consisting entirely of small reserves set within residential streets.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. Improvements are needed in both north-south and east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network. Consideration should be made in acquisition to broaden the type of public open space offered (for example near shops and/or linking to linear reserves and creek corridors in adjacent precincts).

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in 40 percent of children in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston Northland



Precinct character

Preston Northland is home to the Darebin Creek Corridor between Murray Road and Plenty Road. At the northern end of the corridor is the CT Barling Reserve which has football, soccer and cricket sporting fields. Further along the corridor to the south is the CH Sullivan Memorial Park which has a playground as well as outdoor gym equipment and three sporting grounds. At the southern Murray Road end of the precinct is the Darebin Creek Linear Reserve which backs directly on to the Northland Shopping Centre. The length of the trail has important shared paths for cyclists and pedestrians.

There are four smaller reserves with playground equipment scattered across the precinct. W.R. Ruthven V.C. Reserve is a larger reserve towards the centre of the precinct which provides football, cricket and tennis facilities as well as an outdoor exercise station.

The precinct contains a major shopping centre, the Northland Shopping Centre, one of the largest retail shopping centres in the north. The precinct is set to see substantial change with planning for the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct now underway.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
C.H. Sullivan Memorial Park	14.21	District	Type B
C.T. Barling Reserve	13.02	District	Type B
Darebin Creek Corridor	11.59	Regional	Regional
Greenbelt Reserve	0.15	Local	Type A
Highview Reserve	0.05	Local	Type B
McComas Reserve	0.28	Local	Type A
Nisbett Reserve	0.23	Local	Type A
Progress Park	0.14	Local	Type A
W.R. Ruthven V.C. Reserve	3.62	District	Type B

Access to open space

7 per cent of all households do not currently have access to public open space within 500 metres. Currently well supplied with open space per capita. It is predicted there will be a minor undersupply of open space with 23.9 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 10,229
 Projected 2028 population: 13,275
 Growth rate: 29.8%

Population density

The precinct is currently characterised by low to medium density housing with few dwellings exceeding 30 dwellings per hectares. Medium density dwellings are generally clustered to the north of the Northland shopping complex, in and around the CT Barling Reserve and to the west along the Plenty Road retail strip.

Significant growth in the number of medium to higher density dwellings is anticipated for Northland, with over 1,000 additional apartment dwellings expected by 2028. This higher density development will in part be accommodated by the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct development.

The precinct will also see an increase in the number of children and young people, with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 29.8%, with new development primarily expected to be medium and higher density, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result all local reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A, and all district reserves to Type B.

Public open space in this precinct is primarily located in the north-east, and associated with the Darebin Creek. Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the southern part of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m.

The Darebin Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor should be considered to improve its function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space. There is potential for revegetation works along the narrow section of the creek adjacent to Northland.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston West



Precinct character

Preston West is bordered by St Georges Road and is close to Preston Station and the Preston Market in the neighbouring Preston Central precinct. Significant education assets include the Melbourne Polytechnic Preston campus.

The Melbourne Polytechnic Preston campus backs on to the precinct's largest reserve (H.P. Zwar Reserve) which provides football and cricket sports ground and playground facilities as well as a playground in the adjoining Margaret Walker Reserve.

W.K. Larkins Reserve is one of the precinct's larger reserves and runs along the length of Dunstan Street and connects to the railway easement which runs diagonally through the precinct along the back of residential properties from Murray Street through to Regent Street.

J.S. Grey reserve is another smaller reserve which houses the J.S. Grey Kindergarten and provides an important through section from Regent St to Gilbert Rd and Gilbert Rd through to Sheffield St.

The Coburg Pine Ridge Cemetery, which takes up the far western corner of the precinct, is outside the scope of this strategy.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity values are unclear and more information is required. The completion of a biodiversity audit will provide insight into existing biodiversity values

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Asling Reserve	0.04	Local	Type A
H.P. Zwar Reserve	4.59	District	Type B
J.S. Grey Reserve	0.79	Local	Type A
Jacka Reserve	0.06	Local	Type B
L.W. Williams Reserve	0.65	Local	Type A
McNamara - Symons Pedestrian Link	0.04	Local	Type B
Murray & St. Georges Rd Reserve	0.03	Local	Type A
Paywitt Reserve	0.13	Local	Type A
Railway Easement (Murray St to Regent St)	1.07	District	Type A
Regent Street to Elizabeth Street Reserve	0.57	District	Type B
Spring Street Reserve	0.1	Local	Type B
St. Georges Road Reserve	0.48	Regional	Regional
Union Reserve	0.11	Local	Type B
W.K. Larkins Reserve	1.23	District	Type B

Access to open space

25 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres (the largest proportion of households without access of the precincts). The assessment of the future rate of provision sees the precinct undersupplied. 5.7 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 9,736
Projected 2028 population: 13,560
Growth rate: 39.3%

Population density

Preston West is characterised by medium to low density housing with most of the precinct housing between 0 - 20 dwellings per hectare. However, higher density housing, in the form of townhouses and apartments is beginning to appear along transport corridors such as St Georges Rd and in locations able to take advantage of access to Preston Station.

In the future, medium and higher density development will continue with an increase in the number of apartments.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a high growth rate (39.3%), with a lot of new development being medium and higher density, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result six reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Over a quarter of the population of Preston West currently doesn't have access to public open space within 500m so acquisition and/or repurposing of land in the centre and south-west of the precinct is vital to ensure an adequate amount of public open space is provided for the fast-growing population. There is potential to build on the connections to the adjacent Merri Creek corridor. Improvements are needed in both north-south and east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston Central



Precinct character

Preston Central is home to the High Street Activity Centre and Preston Market, a large fresh food market and visitor attraction.

Education assets include the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT). Preston Station and tram services along St Georges Linear Reserve make the precinct a highly accessible location by public transport.

The precinct has a limited number of council owned open space assets. These are limited to a handful of small reserves and the areas surrounding the civic buildings including the Municipal Offices, Darebin Civic Forecourt and Preston Court House surrounds.

The largest open space is the Preston City Oval, a VFL stadium which also has a grandstand with a capacity of 5,000.

Biodiversity

The Preston City Oval is of local natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
A.G. Davis Park	1.22	District	Type B
Adams Reserve	0.85	Local	Type A
Darebin Civic Forecourt	0.13	Local	Type A
Preston City Oval	3.68	District	Type B
Preston Library Forecourt	0.31	Local	Type A
Walter Reserve	0.19	Local	Type A

Access to open space

7 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

4.6 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028. Significant population growth and substantial higher density development indicates the future rate of open space will be undersupplied.

Population growth

Current population: 9,472
Projected 2028 population: 13,972
Growth rate: 47.5%

Population density

Preston Central is currently made up of low to medium density housing, with most of the precinct housing between 0 – 20 dwellings per hectare.

In future, Preston Central is anticipated to see the largest increase in higher density housing (apartments) of all the precincts, with over 2,000 additional dwellings by 2028. Much of the growth is expected to occur in and around the transport corridors and the Preston Market. Preston Central will also see most growth in the number of young children aged 0–4 (58 per cent increase) and for young people aged 5–17 (49 per cent).

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has the highest growth rate in the municipality (47.5%), with proposed high density development, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result four reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Acquisition and/or repurposing of land within this precinct is vital to ensure an adequate amount of public open space is provided within 500m for the fast-growing population. In some cases there is scope to acquire properties adjacent to existing reserves (for example Adams Reserve). A high proportion of the existing public open space is very small and/or urban in character so the focus should be on acquiring properties that broaden the offering. Improvements are needed in both north-south and east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in 58% of children under 4 and a 49% increase in children aged 5–17 in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston Industrial



Precinct character

Preston Industrial is characterised by large areas of big box retail and industrial land which borders the Darebin Creek corridor from Bell St to Murray Road. The industrial area has very little tree cover and there are poor links through it to the creek corridor and trail.

The Darebin Creek corridor is home to areas of state and national natural heritage significance and the length of the trail has important shared paths for cyclists and pedestrians.

H.L.T. Oulton Reserve and the T.W. Blake are larger open spaces with sporting ovals for football and cricket. The H.L.T. Oulton has a pavilion and greater tree coverage than the T.W. Blake reserve which has no shaded area.

The T.A. Cochrane Reserve serves the west of the precinct and abuts the Preston South Primary School. The reserve is home to a local tennis club with two courts and bordered by established trees. Other smaller reserves include Walsh Reserve which is well vegetated with a playground forming a pedestrian through link from Walsh to Mornane Street. Lahinch Reserve also provides a suburban through link for pedestrians and is bordered by private properties. It includes a playground and small basketball court is also available.

G.H. Mott Reserve is a larger linear reserve along the length of Patterson Street and is largely comprised of unshaded flat lawn with a playground and seating area which is shaded by established trees.

The precinct is set to see substantial change with planning for the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct now underway.

Biodiversity

The Darebin Creek corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Darebin Creek Corridor	2.77	Regional	Regional
G.H. Mott Reserve	1.85	District	Type C
H.L.T. Oulton Reserve	5.03	District	Type C
Lahinch Reserve	0.41	Local	Type A
T.A. Cochrane Reserve	1.85	District	Type C
T.W. Blake Park	6.1	District	Type C
Walsh Reserve	0.25	Local	Type A

Access to open space

11 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

A future undersupply of open space is expected. 15.6 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 7,394

Projected 2028 population: 9,926

Growth rate: 34.2%

Population density

Preston Industrial is currently comprised of low to medium density housing with most of the precinct housing between 0-20 dwellings per hectare. There is some medium density villa style housing close to the Preston South Primary school and along Bell Street.

Future dwellings are expected to be predominantly medium to higher density, which will in part be accommodated by the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct development. The precinct will also see an increase in the number of children and young people, with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a high growth rate (34.2%), with a lot of new medium and higher density development, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result two reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The industrial area currently forms a barrier between the residential area in the west of the precinct and the Darebin Creek, which forms the eastern border of the precinct. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Although the Darebin Creek corridor does form part of the public open space in this precinct the space between the creek and the property boundary is quite narrow in most places, with industrial buildings backing onto it, so under current conditions provides little opportunity for recreational use. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor should be considered to improve its function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Thornbury West



Precinct character

Thornbury West is a precinct with some existing industrial land and significant cultural assets including the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, Islamic Museum of Australia and Gertrude Contemporary.

The precinct includes Merri Creek Corridor link which houses A.H. Capp reserve. This stretch of Merri Creek is well vegetated with trees and shrubs which mark the interface between the creek and residential and industrial areas. The Islamic Museum of Australia is an important cultural asset accessible from the Merri Creek Trail (Fyffe Street/Normanby Ave). The Merri Creek Trail is an important pedestrian and bicycle link.

H. Swain Reserve is situated to the east of Merri Creek and provides a pedestrian connection from Oakover Road to Robeson Street and Burgess Street. At the centre is a small basketball court and playground. The reserve is relatively shaded and well vegetated in parts.

The Ray Bramham Gardens are in the far east of the precinct situated along St Georges Rd and co-located with cultural asset the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre and St Johns College. While close to Bell Station there is no direct connection or link to the gardens. The gardens are landscaped and are shaded by established trees.

Newman Park also runs along St Georges Road. While providing a connection, the pedestrian experience along St Georges Road is poor. The park includes playground facilities and is shaded by established trees. Nearby there are large tracts of undeveloped residential lots (to the west of St Georges Road) not accessible to the public.

Further south along St Georges Road is the St Douglas Nicholls Sporting Complex and Henderson Park. Henderson Park also has poor pedestrian pathways and interface with the road and limited landscaping.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor is home to areas of state and national natural heritage significance, and the Ray Bramham Gardens is recognised for its biodiversity values.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
A.H. Capp Reserve	3.54	District	Type B
Bracken Ave Reserve	0.93	Local	Type A
H. Swain Reserve	1.13	District	Type B
Henderson Park	1.07	District	Type B
Merri Creek Corridor	3.96	Regional	Regional
Newman Reserve	0.68	Local	Type A
Ray Bramham Gardens	2.65	District	Type B
Sir Douglas Nicholls Reserve	3.71	District	Type B
St. Georges Road Reserve	3.21	Regional	Regional
Strettle Reserve	3.75	District	Type B
Thornbury Railway Station	1.6	District	Type B

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Turner Reserve	0.39	Local	Type A
W.H. Robinson Reserve	2.21	District	Type B

Access to open space

The precinct is currently undersupplied with open space. 4 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

An undersupply is forecast with 15.9 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 10,755

Projected 2028 population: 13,011

Growth rate: 21.0%

Population density

Thornbury West is predominantly low to medium density with most housing between 0 – 20 dwellings per hectare.

Future dwellings are expected to be largely in the form of higher density apartments as well as more medium density townhouses and villas. It is worth noting the undeveloped residential land and the precinct's industrial land is located close to existing quality open space.

The demographic change in the area to 2028 is reasonably well balanced across each of the cohorts.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 21% therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected, although not to the extent of many other precincts in the municipality. Three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/ maintained as Type A and the remainder as Type B.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the central north of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m, and to an adequate area of public open space. The precinct has excellent north-south connectivity via the Merri Creek corridor and St Georges Road cycle path, however in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The Merri Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. The precinct also has the St Georges Road central median. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Thornbury East



Precinct character

Thornbury East shares its border with the Preston Industrial Area and has reasonable share of industrial land along the Darebin Creek Corridor between Darebin Road and Bell Street. The industrial area has very little tree cover and there are poor links through it to the creek corridor and trail.

The precinct is home to education asset Thornbury High School which holds a reasonable amount of the precinct's open space, in the form of sporting fields and outdoor sporting facilities. These areas are bordered by established trees.

The John Cain Reserve is the precinct's largest open space holding and is situated in the far east of the precinct, adjoining the Darebin Creek corridor and trail. The reserve houses several significant recreational and sporting assets, including the DISC velodrome, Darebin International Sports Centre, Darebin Bowls Club and Bowls Australia.

There are also a handful of smaller reserves across the precinct. Hayes Park is the largest of these and contains sporting grounds and a pavilion along the length of Flinders Street and backing on to residential properties. The interface along Flinders Street is of poor quality and there is currently poor access from the street.

Penders Park is a stand-alone, well vegetated park with some landscaped elements, bordered by Pender St, Tharratt Street, Collins St and St David Street. The park is within easy walking distance to the High Street tram and Thornbury Station and provides an important pedestrian through link. The park has opportunities for recreation with shaded picnic tables and areas, BBQ facilities and a playground.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Allan Sheppard Reserve	0.05	Local	Type A
Andrew Boyd Reserve	0.49	Local	Type A
Clyde Jones Reserve	0.43	Local	Type A
Darebin Creek Corridor	12.18	Regional	Regional
Harry Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
Hayes Park	3.27	District	Type B
John Cain Reserve - DISC	17.34	Regional	Regional
Jones Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
McDonald Reserve	0.07	Local	Type A
Olver Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
Penders Park	1.91	District	Type B
Roberts Reserve	0.08	Local	Type A

Access to open space

The precinct is reasonably well supplied with open space and includes recreational assets of regional significance. 9 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

An undersupply of open space in the precinct is forecast. 4.9 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 11,949
Projected 2028 population: 13,716
Growth rate: 14.8%

Population density

Thornbury East is predominantly low to medium density. Most of the housing is between 0-30 dwellings per hectare. Medium and higher density housing is clustered in the west of the precinct along Bell Street and in and around Penders Park and further to the south of the precinct along Clarendon Street.

Future dwellings are expected to be in the form of more medium density and some higher density housing. An increase is expected between the 5-17 age group as more families move into the area and take advantage of good access to primary and secondary education options.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 14.8%, with an increase in medium and high density development, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected, although not to the extent of many other precincts in the municipality. The majority of the reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the central north of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m, and to an adequate area of public open space. The precinct has north-south connectivity via the Darebin Creek corridor, however access is blocked on the north side of Darebin Road. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network. There is also an opportunity to improve the disjointed north-south link created by the five narrow reserves in the west of the precinct, and to better connect it to destinations such as High Street and All Nations Park.

The Darebin Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in children living within the precinct.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

PRECINCT

Northcote West



Precinct character

Northcote West has significant open space assets along the western border of the precinct, including the Merri Creek Corridor (Westgarth St/High St; Arthurton Rd/Beavers Rd). The corridor is well vegetated with trees and shrubs and is home to areas of state and national natural heritage significance. The trail has important shared paths for cyclists and pedestrians. Just outside the border of the precinct is the not for profit CERES Community Environment Park which covers 4.5 hectares of Merri Creek and draws visitors and tourists to the area.

Northcote Public Golf Club and the adjoining Mayer Park make up the largest council owned tracts of open space. The area is well vegetated with established trees and backs on to residential properties along Bird Avenue and Leinster Grove.

Northcote High School houses a large sporting field which back on to Merri Creek and Merri Park. Merri Park is densely vegetated and connects to the trail. An unsurfaced pedestrian walkway also winds through the area connecting from the Northcote High School to Arthurton Road.

Across the precinct there are several small open space reserves. The largest of these is Batman Park which is situated along the St Georges Rd transport corridor. There are several through connections from Elm Street to Arthurton Road and the park is collocated with Batman Park Kindergarten. The park has landscaped elements and shaded by established trees.

The precinct has open space at the Northcote Station Railway Easement which is currently underutilised.

There are large areas of privately-owned open space in and around the Greek Welfare Centre, Holy Monastery of Axion Estin and St Joseph's Home which are outside the scope of this study.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Allan Bird Reserve	0.06	Local	Type A
Batman Park	1.64	District	Type A
Bridge Park	0.21	Local	Type C
Caddayes Corner	0.2	Local	Type B
Green Memorial Reserve	0.97	Local	Type B
Grovesland Reserve	2.47	District	Type A
Mayer Park	3.98	District	Type A
Merri Common	0.68	Local	Type B
Merri Creek Corridor	2.22	Regional	Regional
Merri Creek Reserve	0.29	Regional	Regional
Merri Park	12.24	District	Type A
Northcote Civic Square	0.13	Local	Type B
Northcote Community Gardens Reserve	0.48	Local	Type B
Northcote Public Golf Course	24.34	Regional	Golf Course
Northcote Station Railway Easement	0.36	Local	Type B
Pearl Reserve	0.15	Local	Type A
Peters Reserve	0.17	Local	Type B
South Park Reserve	0.61	Local	Type B
Spencer Reserve	0.83	Local	Type A
St. Georges Road Reserve	3.0	Regional	Regional
Stott Reserve	0.71	Local	Type A
Woolhouse Reserve	0.72	Local	Type B
Zoe Reserve	0.02	Local	Type B

Access to open space

All households have access to public open space within 500 metres.

An undersupply of open space is anticipated. 15.7 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028. This is due to the levels of population growth and concentrated apartment development.

Population growth

Current population: 13,942

Projected 2028 population: 16,998

Growth rate: 21.9%

Population density

Northcote West is predominantly low to medium density (including 3-4 storey apartment complexes) with some higher density housing appearing in and around Northcote Station and the St Georges Road tram corridor.

Future dwellings are expected to be in the form of medium to higher density housing. The precinct will see a notable increase in the number of higher density housing in the form of apartments. Next to Preston Central, Northcote West has the second largest increase of higher density housing, with 1,047 new apartments forecast. There will be an increase in the number of young children and young adults between the ages of 0-17.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 21.9%, with an increase in medium and high density development, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected. The majority of the local reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type B, with four recommended to be Type A. District reserves are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that future residents have access to an adequate area of public open space. There is potential to repurpose the Northcote Public Golf Course to broaden the range of users. The precinct has excellent north-south connectivity via the Merri Creek corridor, St Georges Road median, and the rail reserve. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The Merri Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. The precinct also has the St Georges Road central median and the railway reserve. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in children living within the precinct.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.



Precinct

Northcote East



Precinct character

Northcote East is a well populated precinct which is home to the 12.19 hectare All Nations Park. The park is situated behind the Northcote Shopping Plaza and consists of landscaped areas and large lawn areas, play grounds, a skate park and opportunities for informal leisure activities.

In walking distance from the All Nations Park is the McDonnell Park and Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre. The park is comprised of two large sporting fields with perimeters shaded by established trees. The park is collocated with the Clifton Street Children's centre. The Rubie Thomson Reserve is to the south of the park over Separation Street and provides a pedestrian connection through to Main and Mitchell Street. The reserve is well vegetated with established trees and shrubs and has easy access from the street.

The Baden Morgan Reserve is close to High Street and includes lawn and landscaped areas as well as playground facilities. The reserve is backed by a higher density apartment complex.

Other open spaces not owned by council include the Northcote Cemetery and the sporting fields of Santa Maria College. There is also informal outdoor space outside of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church along High Street.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
All Nations Park	12.19	Regional	Regional
Baden Morgan Reserve	0.26	Local	Type B
Dennis St Pedestrian Link	0.02	Local	Type C
Derby Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Johnson Park	2.1	District	Type A
McAdam Reserve	0.34	Local	Type C
McDonnell Reserve	6.13	District	Type A
Merri Creek Corridor	1.78	Regional	Regional
Northcote Park (Bill Lawry Oval)	3.1	District	Type A
Oldis Gardens	2.63	District	Type A
Rubie Thomson Reserve	1.75	District	Type A

Access to open space

3 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

It is anticipated that Northcote East will be undersupplied with open space with 16.5 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 16,116

Projected 2028 population: 17,328

Growth rate: 7.5%

Population density

Northcote East is low to medium density with a high proportion of separate dwellings. Typically, between 10 to 15 dwellings per hectare on residential streets with far higher densities along High Street.

Future dwellings are expected to be in the form of more medium density and some higher density apartments. Demographics are expected to remain consistent out to 2028 with the largest change occurring in the 65+ cohort. Reasonably low levels of population growth are expected.

Implications for open space planning

At 7.5% Northcote East has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. However, the recent growth in residential apartments along High Street has increased pressure on open space. Five reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A, with the rest of the non-regional reserves designated Type B and C.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. Atypically for the municipality there is a strong east-west link on Dennis Street, however improvements are needed in north-south connections. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

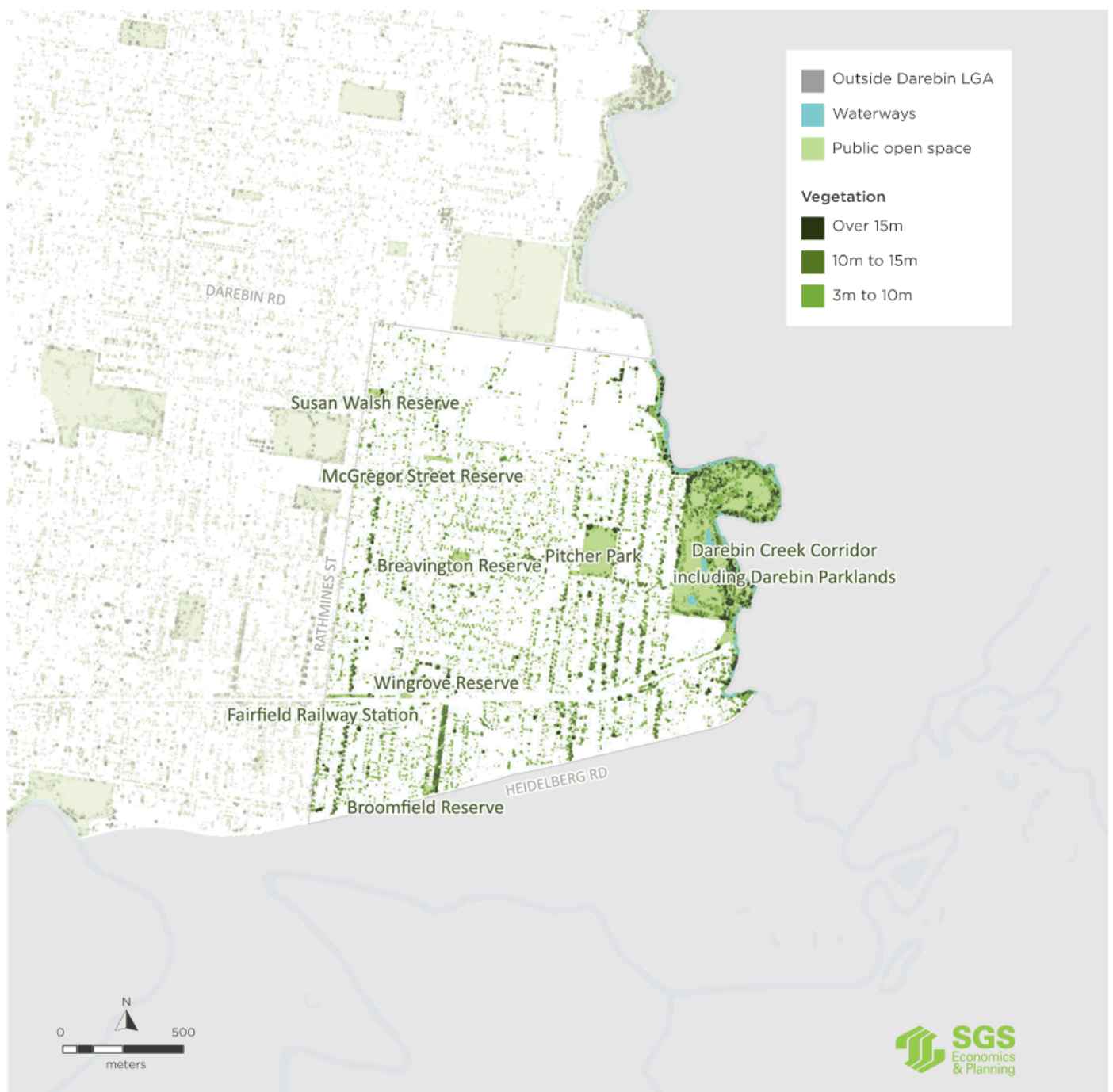
The Merri Creek corridors forms part of the southern border of this precinct. Improvements will be made to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor and pedestrian links to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy. The needs of a growing population of residents aged 65+ should be considered.

Precinct

Alphington Fairfield



Precinct character

Alphington Fairfield is home to the Darebin Creek Corridor between Heidelberg Road and Darebin Road. The corridor is the largest area of open space in the precinct, however, has less vegetation and canopy cover than stretches of the creek corridor further north. The southern end of the corridor includes the Darebin Parklands and a series of small dams/lakes. The area provides BBQ facilities and informal leisure opportunities.

Pitcher Park is to the west of the corridor and consists of a large sporting oval. There are some established trees clustered around the periphery and the space is relatively accessible from street level.

The precinct also has several smaller reserves, including the Breavington Reserve which provides an important pedestrian through connection.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Breavington Reserve	0.57	Local	Type B
Broomfield Reserve	0.14	Local	Type C
Darebin Creek Corridor including Darebin Parklands	21.03	Regional	Regional
Fairfield Station Reserve	0.27	Local	Type C
McGregor Street Reserve	0.18	Local	Type B
Pitcher Park	2.78	District	Type C
Susan Walsh Reserve	0.3	Local	Type B
Wingrove Reserve	0.14	Local	Type C

Access to open space

10 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

A minor undersupply of open space is anticipated. 24.5 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 8,962
Projected 2028 population: 10,318
Growth rate: 15.1%

Population density

Alphington Fairfield is characterised by low to medium density housing, with most of the housing between 0-30 dwellings per hectare.

Future housing is expected to be medium to higher density infill.

Demographics are expected to remain consistent out to 2028 with the largest change occurring in the 65+ cohort.

Implications for open space planning

At 15% Alphington Fairfield has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. Three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type B, with the rest of the non-regional reserves designated Type C.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. There is potential for a strong east-west link along the railway corridor. Improvements are needed in north-south connections. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The Darebin Creek corridor, including Darebin Parklands forms the eastern border of this precinct and comprises a significant part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor and pedestrian links should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy. The needs of a growing population of residents aged 65+ should be considered.



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8.3 PENDERS PARK DRAFT MASTER PLAN CONSULTATION**Author:** Landscape Architect**Reviewed By:** General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The draft Penders Park Master Plan (**Appendix A**) is a long term plan for the park designed to set a vision and chart a course for 20 to 30 years. It has been developed in close collaboration with a community advisory group (Pender Park Project Control Group (PCG)).

The draft Master Plan proposes a vision that *“Penders Park is a significant gathering place for our diverse and changing community. As a district park, it’s a place for play, celebrating, active and passive recreation and connecting with nature”*.

The PCG played a key role in engaging with the community including fostering ongoing discussions and leading an open air cinema event to demonstrate how the park could be used and to reach community members. The top themes from consultation were:

- Upgrading the play space,
- Management of dogs in an off leash park, and
- Amenity and landscape upgrades including the toilets
- Strengthen indigenous voice and recognition

These themes have been addressed in the draft master plan in a way that recognises the shared responsibility between Council and the community to make the park an inclusive shared open space.

The PCG responded to the feedback seeking an indigenous voice and recognition by organising targeted consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and are in a continuing conversation about a cultural overlay. The Master Plan seeks to ‘acknowledge and celebrate the park’s Indigenous and post European settlement history’ including by proposing to give the all-abilities play space an indigenous name in Woi-Wurrung language and locating a fire pit and indigenous plantings in the park.

A play space is central to the infrastructure improvements proposed in the draft Master Plan along with upgrading the toilet block to an accessible toilet with a Changing Places facility, and landscape improvements that enhance the diversity of ‘nature’ experiences. The master plan has been developed in parallel with some improvements in 2018-19 to the park:

- Gravel paths at the east and west ends creating a circuit path around the park
- New turf to central space at the west end of the park and mulching
- New recycling bins, bicycle hoops and dog bag dispensers

Design of the play space has also been completed in parallel. Council decided to proceed with construction of the play space in 2019-20 and has allocated funded in the 2019-20 budget for this.

Other improvements to the park outlined in the draft master plan would be referred to future budgets for consideration balancing needs across the City. Council and community could use the master plan as a basis for seeking grant funding for some of the initiatives.

Should Council decide to release the draft Master Plan for consultation with the broader community then consultation would open on 29 July and be widely promoted to the community. Feedback would then be incorporated and reported to Council for consideration.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1) Endorses the release of the draft Pender's Park Master Plan for consultation with the broader community.
- 2) Thanks the Project Control Group for their work, creativity and commitment through 2018 and 2019.

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

Penders Park is a long established a district park bound by Pender Street, St David Street, Tharratt Street and Collins Street, Thornbury.

The park caters for informal recreation needs of the local community such as walking, using the playground, access to picnic and BBQ facilities, parties and gatherings, use of the shelter and toilet facilities.

The park is informally used by various other users, including disability services groups, day care centres, and exercise groups and off lead dog play.

Park establishment and early history

- Penders Park was established in 1908 and has been providing for recreation needs of the community since the turn of the last century.
- In 1910 an Arbour Day celebration of tree planting was held in commemoration of the commencement of improvements in Penders Park.
- In 1927, the Town Clerk wrote "Parks are the lungs of a city; indeed they are more than this, as they provide for the recreation, rest and education of the citizens".

Decision to prepare a master plan and development

- On 27 February 2017 Council resolved to prepare a master plan for Penders Park.



- Keen to take a different approach to engagement with the community, Council endorsed the preparation of a community led design process for the master plan for Penders Park and for seeking an expressions of interest (EoI) for community representatives to join a PCG at its meeting on 20 November 2017.
- Council appointed eight community members to the PCG and endorsed the PCG terms of reference at a Council meeting on 26 February 2018.
- The PCG have been meeting fortnightly since March 2018 to develop the master plan and the first year of implementation.

Recent improvements at Penders Park

In parallel with developing the Master Plan, Council has invested in improvements in the park in 2018-19 including:

- Mulching around existing remnant and heritage trees and garden beds
- Landscape upgrades including installation of
 - New bin sets (waste and recycle bins),
 - New and relocated dog bag dispensers
 - Gravel paths at the east and west ends creating a circuit path around the park
 - Bicycle hoops
 - New turf to central space at the west end of the park

Commencement of construction of the all abilities play space planned for 2019-20

The design and documentation of the play space has been completed in parallel with master planning. Community feedback received has informed both development of the long term master plan and design of the play space.

As part of considering the 2019-20 budget, Council consulted on its plans to start work on the playspace and decided to proceed in 2019-20 to construct the play space. Works are planned to start in 2020 and would finish in the 2020-21 financial year.

Previous Council Resolution

At its meeting held on 27 February 2017, Council resolved:

'That Council'

1. *Notes the significant support for this project by residents, including many local families.*
2. *Commits to undertake a Master Planning Process in 2017/2018 in partnership with the community to upgrade Penders Park as a Major Neighbourhood Park, including the provision of a new playspace in 2017/2018 and possible landscaping works in this period and subsequent years.*
3. *Refers expenditure to the 2017/2018 budget process for the playspace and development of a Master Plan for Penders Park.*

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

External Consultation

- The PCG engaged broadly with the community to get a picture of how the park is used now and how it might be used in the future. The key engagement activities included
 - A mail out to 5000 households,
 - A community drop in session,
 - An inclusive community cinema event,
 - Targeted discussions with key stakeholders via email, phone or in person by a member of the pcg or a council officer and
 - An online survey and ideas wall supported by social media posts. The survey was made available in hardcopy and accessible at the drop in session. The penders park mp engagement report prepared by the pcg can be found at **Appendix B**.
- The Phase One Council-led community consultation in December 2017 captured over 200 comments. The PCG grouped the comments into eight themes with the play space the top theme, closely followed by a dog area and amenity upgrades.
- Phase Two of community consultation was led by the PCG and took place for eight weeks in July & August 2018, and included a drop in session in the park, an online survey and targeted discussions calling for comment on the vision and principles developed by the PCG.
- Findings from Phase Two of consultation showed a common concern about how the connection between dogs, children, picnickers and other users of the park will be managed. Key findings on this matter were:
 - The majority of people agreed they want the park to remain universally welcome to all dogs and people.
 - Some community members would like to see the play space fenced, equally, some would rather there be a fenced dog exercise area.
 - Others want to ensure the park remains as open as possible.
- Feedback from the consultation indicated a high number of community members felt five of the six design principles were relevant and important to them and their comments demonstrated a good understanding of what the vision and principles are aiming to achieve.
- The community had mixed views about the Distinctive Identity principle. It was suggested in the feedback that the description of this principle was either too vague or didn't resonate with some parts of the community. Others suggested that the park was lacking indigenous recognition at present but were encouraging of this being an important aspect to investigate in the development of the master plan.
- The PCG responded to the feedback on the Distinctive Identity principle by engaging with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on three occasions to date and are in a continuing conversation about a cultural overlay for the park. The discussions covered elements for inclusion in the park including a fire pit, indigenous plantings and interpretive signage / artwork and the naming of the play space with an Indigenous name.

- Demographics that were underrepresented in the initial consultation, such as young people have been addressed in the consultation undertaken by *Community Vibe* in the detailed design of the all abilities the play space design. The engagement sessions located in the park included preschool children who are current users of the park for a bush kinder and local primary and high school age children. *Penders Park Community Engagement Report Feb 2019* prepared by Community Vibe is attached as **Appendix C**
- Efforts were made to hear from a diversity of voices, including community members who are considered 'harder to reach' or might have a barrier to engaging. Aged, culturally and language diverse and disability groups were approached in the park or contacted directly by phone or in person. The focus of this engagement were local Senior citizens groups, aged care facilities members of the Darebin Disability advisory committee and the Carinya Society whose mostly non-verbal clients are regular users of the park.
- On 9 February 2019 an Inclusive Open Air Cinema event was held to provide a welcoming, accessible and inclusive event for the local and wider community. It supported community members with varied abilities an opportunity to contribute to the future of the park and the playspace. The event was opened with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony. The event was wheelchair accessible and transport and access services were provided. The event was a relaxed screening with, Auslan interpretation services, audio description services and audio described screen content, Captioned screen content and a chill out space for neurodivergent members of the community. An engagement report outlining the responses to the consultation can be found in *Penders Park Community Engagement Report Feb 2019* prepared by Community Vibe attached as **Appendix C**

Internal Consultation

- Consultation and design development for proposed improvements to the park have been undertaken with officers from across Council including:
 - Coordinator Public Places
 - Manager Parks and Vegetation
 - Coordinator Open space and Horticulture
 - Coordinator Aged and Disability
 - Manager Families, Youth and Children,
 - Coordinator Equity and Diversity
 - Coordinator Community Wellbeing
 - Team Leader Outreach and Community
 - Team Leader Access and Inclusion
 - Community Planner,
 - MetroAccess Officer (disability portfolio)
 - Aboriginal contact officer
 - Community Safety officer
 - Team Leader, Youth Services
 - Manager Creative Culture and Events
 - Coordinator Community Engagement and Demographics,

- Coordinator Community Participation and Development
- Diverse Communication and Engagement Advisor
- Senior communications advisor,
- Coordinator Facility Management
- City Works and Assets

Communications

The PCG developed the:

- *Penders Park MP Communications and Engagement Plan Appendix D* for the second round of engagement in July 2018 based on the DCC template.
- *Penders Park MP Engagement Report*, it can be found at **Appendix B**.

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 2 - Opportunities to live well

Council Plan Goal 2.2 Build or upgrade 24 playgrounds including one for all abilities in consultation with local children.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Improvements to Penders Park are supported by the *Resilience and Sustainability* principle developed by the PCG and include actions:

- When upgrading infrastructure relocate and reuse seats and play equipment within the municipality where possible
- Perform regular tree assessment, maintenance of tree health and succession planting of trees reaching maturity and those in decline
- Investigate opportunities to reuse the toilet block structure as part of upgrade to accessible toilets and a Changing Place facility
- Use rubbish and recycling stations and water dispensing areas as opportunities to educate the community about sustainable use of resources (posters, signage etc)
- Mulch around existing heritage trees and within garden beds
- Incorporate recycled materials where it is more sustainable than natural materials
- Provide bike hoops to encourage sustainable transport modes

There is a heritage overlay HO290 on the trees and path layout within the park. Improvements to the park will comply with heritage controls on areas of significance.

The sustainability and open space teams have been consulted during the development of the master plan and are supportive of the actions.

Climate Emergency

Climate Emergency has been considered in the master plan and will inform the implementation of the actions. The challenges of a warmer and drier climate and access to affordable water have been recognised and addressed in the master plan and are supported

by the *Natural & Built Elements* and *Resilience and Sustainability* principles. The actions outlined below play a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by direct and indirect means.

- Plant deciduous shade trees in the informal picnic area to increase the tree canopy cover and create an urban forest for passive recreation
- Perform regular tree assessment, maintenance of tree health and succession planting of trees reaching maturity and those in decline
- Mulch around existing heritage trees and within garden beds
- Incorporate recycled materials where it is more sustainable than natural materials
- Provide bike hoops to encourage sustainable transport modes
- Retain and protect remnant trees and indigenous grasses

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

Equity, inclusion and wellbeing considerations in Penders Park developed by the PCG are supported by the *Accessible, Equitable and Universal* principle and include actions:

- Design and deliver an all abilities play space and Changing Places facility
- Improve pathways for jogging, walking, wheelchair and pram access within and around the park
- Relocate the play space closer to the toilets to improve access for families with young children
- Install an accessible parking space adjacent to the all abilities play space
- Investigate opportunities to reuse existing play equipment in proposed all abilities play space
- Undertake a community safety audit to consider what factors make the community feel safe or unsafe.

The equity and inclusion team have been consulted during the development of the master plan and are supportive of the actions.

Cultural Considerations

Cultural considerations in Penders Park are supported by the *Distinctive Identity* principle developed by the PCG and include actions:

- Develop a suite of interpretative signage and art work to tell the story of Penders Park before and after European contact and the cultural diversity of current park users
- Protect, maintain and provide interpretation for areas with remnant Eucalypt trees and grasses
- Give the all-abilities playspace an Indigenous name in Woi-Wurrung language
- Consolidate the planting around the pergola covered entry on Collins Street, plant the grassed area between the car spaces with deciduous trees to highlight the entry.
- Engage with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to locate a fire pit and advise on indigenous plantings
- Incorporate local Indigenous stories, narratives and Indigenous place making elements within the park. e.g. kangaroo paw prints in the paths and a mural.

The aboriginal contact officer and the Wurundjeri land Council have been consulted during the development of the master plan and are supportive of the actions.

Economic Development Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact on economic development considerations.

Financial and Resource Implications

This master plan is designed to set a vision and chart a course for 20 to 30 years. Other improvements to the park outlined in the master plan would be referred to future budgets for consideration balancing needs across the City. Council and community could use the master plan as a basis for seeking grant funding for some of the initiatives.

In its 2019-2020 budget Council decided to allocate \$300,000 to start constructing the play space, which would be done over two years. Around \$300,000 is estimated to be needed in 2020-21 to complete construction of the play space.

Indicatively, implementing the other priorities the draft master plan identifies has been estimated at around \$750,000. This includes construction of accessible toilets, BBQ, nature play elements and outdoor recreation and fitness features.

The draft master plan also identifies opportunities for activities in the park similar to the open air cinema event and organised by the community. It is intended that the master plan would help inspire or enable uses by community, businesses and other third parties. It is not designed to imply that a program of events would be run by Council, although it would not preclude Council to choosing to do this in future.

Legal and Risk Implications

There are no factors in this report which impact on Legal and Risk Implications.

DISCUSSION

Draft Master Plan addresses key themes from community consultation

The top three themes that emerged from the consultation accounted for 70% of the feedback. In priority order they were:

- Upgrading the play space,
- Management of dogs in an off leash park, and
- Amenity and landscape upgrades including the toilets

These issues have been addressed in the draft master plan in a way that recognises the shared responsibility between Council and the community to make the park an inclusive shared open space in the following ways.

- We learned there was a common concern about how the connection between dogs, children, picnickers and other park users will be managed. The majority of people agreed they want the park to remain universally welcoming to dogs and people.

Community activities

- Establishment of an incorporated Pender's Park Friends Group
- Establish a park user's agreement with the community to identify the values and responsibilities of park users and their shared responsibility for ensuring compliance.

- Explore interest in community-based dog education sessions aimed at dog owners and kids to develop appropriate behaviours, interactions, and education to build relationships and how to be safe around dogs.

Council activities

- Construct a partially fenced all abilities play space that includes BBQ and picnic facilities to support families with young children to socialise away from dog play
- Retain the 10m on lead zone around the play space
- Acknowledge the need for dog play in the design of the areas adjacent to the playspace and provide a physical buffer between them

The common themes around amenity and landscape upgrades were upgrading the toilets, the central shelter, and additional tree planting, new turf, waste and recycle bins and paths to create a circuit path around the park.

Council activities

- New bins, paths, turfing and minor amenity upgrades were identified as 'quick wins' and have been undertaken in 2018-19 concurrently with the development of the master plan.
- Concept design for accessible toilets and a changing places facility have been prepared to inform design in future years. Council would consider funding for improvements as part of future year budgets.
- Design for extending and adding roofing to the shelter within the centre of the park and its construction is planned for future years

Community activities

- Investigate opportunities for an incorporated 'Friends of Penders Park' group to access local and state government funding and / or grants
- Community members to advocate for grant funding to support future improvements at the Park

Draft Master Plan seeks to strengthen indigenous voices and recognition

The PCG acknowledged the feedback seeking an indigenous voice and recognition by organising targeted consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on three occasions to date and are in a continuing conversation about a cultural overlay for the park.

- The master plan will seek advice from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to locate a fire pit, source and recommend indigenous plantings and design interpretive signage / artwork
- The play space will be given an Indigenous name in Woi wurrung language and an opening event will include a Welcome to Country and an invitation to local Aboriginal groups.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option One: Endorse the release of the Penders Park Draft Master Plan for consultation with the broader community. **Recommended**

Option two: Refer the Penders Park Draft Master Plan to additional revisions

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

Should Council endorse releasing the draft master plan for consultation with the broader community then consultation would open on 29 July and be promoted to the community.

Officers will update the master plan with final comments.

A report will come to Council seeking endorsement of the master plan at a future council meeting, in around September 2019.

Funding for improvements in future years would be considered as part of development of the budget each year, alongside other activities across the City.

Communication

Promotion of the consultation on the draft master plan would be communicated to the broader community as follows:

- Emails to all external stakeholders inviting people to provide feedback on the YourSay page, including link to the short video
- Postcard drop to 500m radius of park (5000 cards with a room for comments on the card and a link to the YourSay site)
- Posters in park, local shops and café's
- Social Media posts, which are automatically translated by social media platforms into other languages for other language speakers.
- YourSay page with a soft copy of the master plan available to read and opportunity to provide feedback.
- Hard copy master plan in Preston library with postcards to write feedback and a drop box

Timeline

Consultation will be open for three weeks from 29 July to 19 August 2019

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

Attachments

- Penders Park Master Plan (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)
- Penders Park Engagement Report (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)
- Penders Park Community Engagement Report (**Appendix C**) [↓](#)
- Penders Park Communications & Engagement Plan (**Appendix D**) [↓](#)

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.





CITY OF DAREBIN

"I love the amazing palms - majestic and resilient."

"I grew up in that park and have even written a song about it!"



PENDERS PARK MASTER PLAN | 1

"Penders Park was my little paradise when I used to walk through it to visit my grandparents everyday."

Established in 1908

Penders Park, Thornbury has been providing for the recreation needs of the community since the turn of last century.

In August 1910 an Arbour Day celebration of tree planting was held in 'commemoration of the commencement of improvements' in Penders Park.
- Northcote park's Council Minutes, 1st August, 1910.

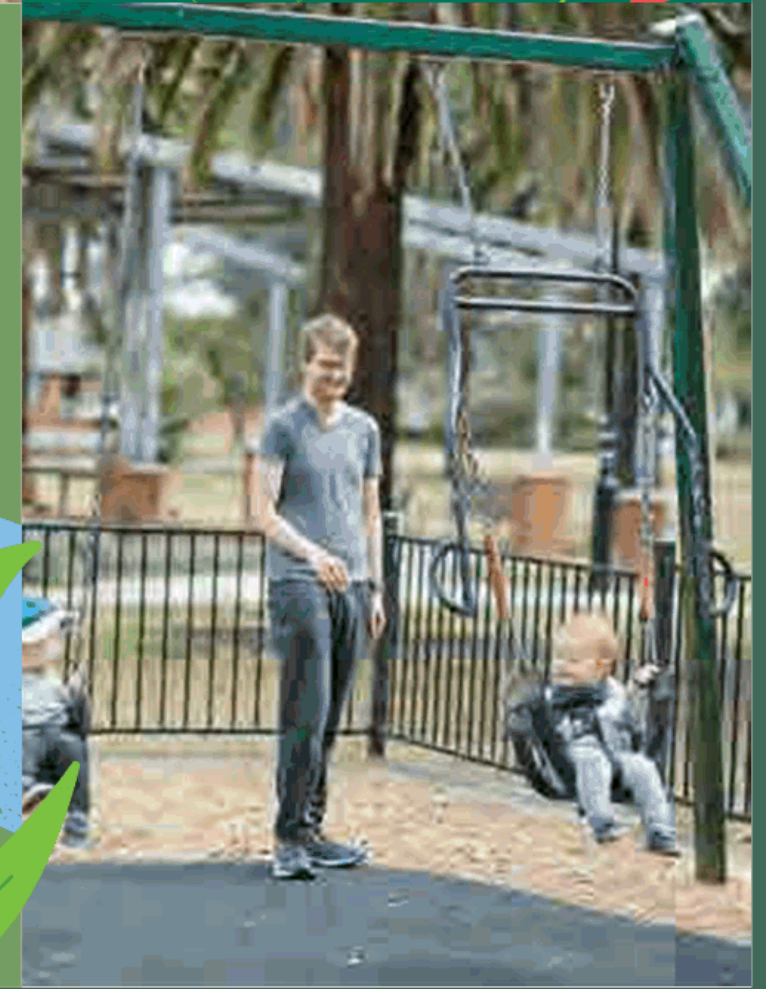
The parks importance was recognised in April 1927 when W.G. Swift the Town Clerk wrote:

Parks are the lungs of a city; indeed they are more than this, as they provide for the recreation, rest and education of the citizens.

The park has long been a place for weddings, picnics, community events and gatherings by a wide diversity of community members.

This master plan celebrates this much loved park and the important role it inhabits in the lives of the community and sets out the long term vision for its future.

"At the opening corner entrance on St David Street... I remember newlyweds use to take photos there."



About the Penders Park Master Plan

About the Park

Penders Park is a district park located in Thornbury, bound by Pender Street, St David Street, Tharratt Street and Collins Street. Located in the south of the municipality, it is one of over 170 parks and reserves set aside for recreation within the City of Darebin.

The park is a much loved open space with a friendly local feel. The park caters for informal recreation needs of the local community including walking, using the playground, access to picnic and BBQ facilities, parties and gatherings, use of the shelter and toilet facilities. The park is informally used by disability services groups, day care centres, exercise groups and off lead dog play.

What is the Penders Park Master Plan?

Darebin Council worked collaboratively with a community group made up of local residents to prepare a master plan for Penders Park. The master plan communicates a vision for the park that is inclusive, sustainable and welcoming in a way that is highly accessible and easily understood by a diverse audience.

Purpose

The Master Plan is intended to act as both a resource and an inspiration, to guide and challenge the community and Council to work collaboratively to rethink and reimagine how open space can provide ways of addressing:

- opportunities to improve the wellbeing of the growing population
- recognition and celebration of a growing and diverse community
- providing and maintaining 'green spaces' in a changing climate

Framework

The Master Plan framework is made up of four key parts:

-  **A VISION** which captures a vibrant picture of the park now and for the next 20 years
-  **DESIGN PRINCIPLES** written as goals to work towards and guide decision making and actions by people implementing the Master Plan
-  **BIG IDEAS** that underpin the design principles
-  **COUNCIL LED ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY LED ACTIVITIES** for the short, medium and long term to realise the vision

The vision, design principles and big ideas provide a framework for making decisions about the park as opportunities and challenges change over time.

Council and Community Roles

The Council has a formal role as the maintainer of the park. It manages open space across the municipality and each year considers its investments in improvements across the city. This master plan sets a vision that council will use to plan and deliver works in the park according to community aspirations.

The **council led activities** have been costed by council officers. The high priority projects are proposed to start in 2019–2020. Council can consider further improvements in future budget cycles.

The **community led activities** are a mix of ideas that could be taken up by a Friends of Penders Park group or 'anyone, anytime' ideas that we hope inspire community members and park users.



A vision that is inclusive, sustainable and welcoming

Features

- Ambitious and inspiring, shaped by the community and with broad ownership
- Focuses as much on park improvements as people, activity, growth and change, local pride and experiences
- A clear guide for detailed plans and projects to achieve the vision
- A staged implementation program with budget estimates
- An advocacy tool for Council and Community
- Big ideas that can be taken up by the community

How did we get here?

- A master plan for Penders Park was completed in 2002.
- The actions identified in the master plan were completed over the following 10 years.
- **DECEMBER 2016**
Council considered an upgrade of the play space to an all abilities play space.
- **27 FEBRUARY 2017**
Council resolved to review and revisit the master plan for Penders Park to direct future works in the park.
- **20 NOVEMBER 2017**
Keen to take a different approach to engagement with the community; Council endorsed the preparation of a community led master plan for Penders Park and sought expressions of interest from members of the community.
- **26 FEBRUARY 2018**
Council appointed eight community members to work collaboratively to advise and shape the master plan.
- **MARCH 2018 – JUNE 2019**
The community reference group (CRG) met fortnightly to carry out consultation, develop the master plan and set priorities for implementation.



Where are we in the process?



What are the challenges facing Penders Park?

- Managing interactions between families, children, dogs and other users of the park
- Pressure for access to open green space from an increasing and diverse community
- Resilience and sustainability in the context of a changing climate
- Community aspirations for improvements to infrastructure

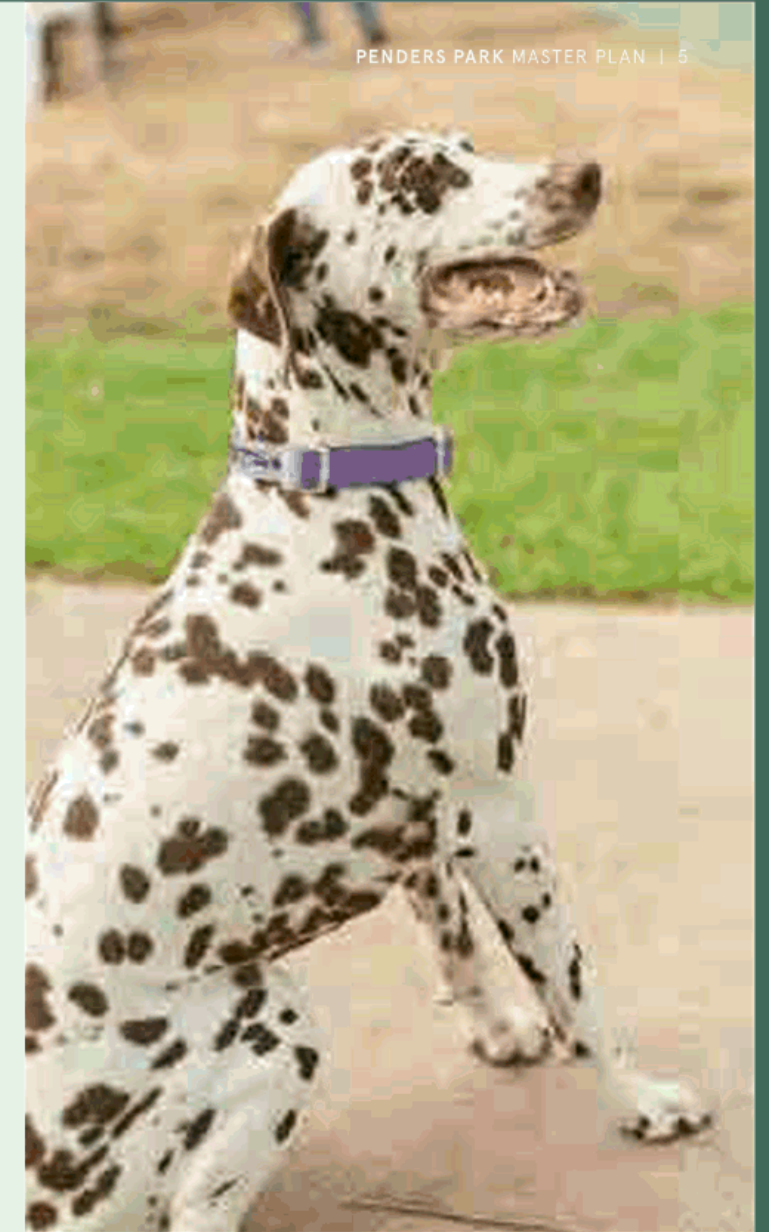
Who did we talk to?

Phase one Council led community consultation in December 2017 captured over 200 comments. The CRG grouped the comments into eight themes with upgrading the play space the top theme, closely followed by management of dogs in an off leash park, and amenity and landscape upgrades.

Phase two community consultation led by the CRG took place for eight weeks in July and August 2018, and included a drop in session in the park, an online survey and targeted discussions with park user groups calling for comment on the vision and principles developed by the CRG.

Overall, feedback from the second round of engagement showed that the community felt the key design principles were relevant and important to them.

Key themes from feedback captured from 2016 to now, clearly indicate that a new, all-abilities play space and accompanying accessible toilets are a priority for the community.



Phase two community consultation led by the PCG took place for eight weeks in July and August 2018

Next steps

Implementation of both council led activities and community led activities are essential to realising the vision and goals of the Master Plan. These may include:

- Targeted consultation and detail design of spaces within the park
- Establishment of an incorporated Penders Park Friends Group
- Community investigations and activations
- Capital works bids to deliver upgrades
- Funding and grant investigations and applications

Ideas from the community

More native plants Please make dogs inclusive - my dog and I love this park!
Community art A 'forrest' to explore, different plants and trees to play in, admire, hide in. We have no garden, so plants and playing in nature is everything
Community garden **Bird boxes**
Shade - more trees! **Improve toilets** Some areas with more lush plants would be nice - more invigorating for the eye and spirit
Native plants to attract birds **Better playground**
landscaping to create sheltered picnic areas **Exercise equipment** More shade areas when eating/barbequing - sun safe!
Wide perimeter bike bath **Bike parking** More Indigenous art/monuments
Sensory play area **Roofing over BBQ area**
Recycling bins **Community garden and nature play group :) Indigenous heritage**

Penders Park Vision

Penders Park is a significant gathering place for our diverse and changing community. As a district park, it's a place for play, celebrating, active and passive recreation and connecting with nature.



Penders Park Design Principles



DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY
Penders Park is a unique place with a character that everyone recognises and values. The park's identity is shaped by its Indigenous significance, heritage design and our culturally diverse community.



'PLAYFUL'
Penders Park is a shared space that offers a range of exciting 'play' opportunities for adults, children and dogs, while respecting the needs of everyone.



NATURAL AND BUILT ELEMENTS
Shade, shelter, lighting, seating and amenities are well designed, constructed and maintained. These elements encourage the community to meet, socialise and provide everyone with a feeling of safety and an enjoyable outdoor experience.



ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE AND UNIVERSAL
Penders Park is a welcoming and respectful place for everyone to enjoy. The design ensures that everyone can access the park and feel a sense of belonging, using the park and its facilities equitably.



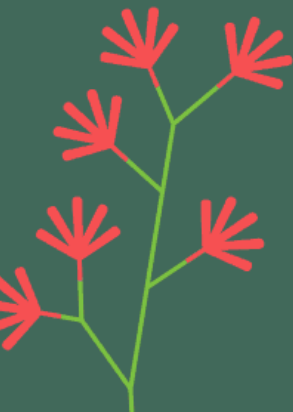
CONNECTION TO NATURE
In a highly urbanised neighbourhood, Penders Park is an oasis of green space for people to connect and experience nature.



RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY
The park's natural and built elements are robust, easy to maintain, and durable for the long-term to support current and future generations.

Distinctive Identity

Penders Park is a unique space with a character that everyone recognises and values. The park's identity is shaped by its Indigenous history, heritage design and its culturally diverse community.



"Aboriginal recognition of past and present relevance is most important to me."

Big Idea

Acknowledge and celebrate the park's Indigenous and post European settlement history and today's diverse community.

WHY THIS IDEA?

A distinctive identity and sense of place are central to creating a feeling of belonging.



Council Led Activities

- Develop a suite of interpretative signage and art works to tell the story of Penders Park before and after European contact and the cultural diversity of current park users.
- Protect, maintain and provide interpretation for areas with remnant Eucalypt trees and grasses.
- Give the all-abilities playspace an indigenous name in Woi-Wurrung language.
- Consolidate the garden bed planting around the pergola covered entry on Collins Street. Plant deciduous street trees to highlight the entry.
- Engage with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to locate a fire pit and advise on indigenous plantings.

- Incorporate local Indigenous stories, narratives and Indigenous place making elements within the park. For example kangaroo paw prints in the paths and a mural.

Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for a 'Friends of Penders Park' group to engage with Council and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to conduct ceremonies in the park marking significant events in the Indigenous calendar. For example including but not limited to NAIDOC week.

'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'

- Engage the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to connect the community with Country, people and identity.



"Would like to see greater connection with indigenous cultural heritage."



Community benefits

- Develop a stronger sense of appreciation and connection for the community to the park and its current and historical significance.
- Recognise the diversity of our suburbs and provide a place where everyone feels welcome, now and into the future.
- Provide opportunities to respectfully recognise the oldest living culture on earth and acknowledge that the land was never ceded.

Challenges

- Making sure we have a good way to collaborate and have the conversations.
- Ensuring our efforts respectfully engage with a diversity of community members.

Accessible, Equitable & Universal

Penders Park is a welcoming and respectful place for everyone to enjoy. The design ensures that anyone can access the park and feel a sense of belonging, using the park and its facilities equitably.

Big Idea

Incorporate accessible, equitable and universal principles to all aspects of park improvements, maintenance and activities.

WHY THIS IDEA?

An accessible park, inclusive of all, creates a caring community and emphasises community connection.



"I would like the park to become more of a 'community centre' that draws/attracts people of all ages and backgrounds to frequent and use."



Council Led Activities

- Design and deliver an all abilities play space, accessible toilets and changing places facility.
- Improve pathways for jogging, walking, wheelchair and pram access within and around the park.
- Relocate the play space closer to the toilets to improve access for families with young children.
- Install an accessible car parking space adjacent to the all abilities play space.
- Investigate opportunities to reuse existing play equipment in the proposed all abilities play space.
- Undertake a community safety audit to consider what factors make the community feel safe or unsafe.

Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for an incorporated 'Friends of Penders Park' group made up of park users and local community members to access local and state government funding or grants for all abilities facilities and improvements in the park.
- Investigate opportunities for 'Friends of Penders Park' to establish a park users agreement with the community. Use the park principles to guide the development of the agreement and identify the values and responsibilities of park users and their shared responsibility for ensuring compliance.

'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'

- Advocate for funds for all abilities facilities and improvements in the park.
- Advocate for the road crossing points on St David Street to be upgraded to pedestrian crossings (zebra crossing) by council and VicRoads.
- Advocate for a "Choose Tap" drinking fountain with dog bowl from Yarra Valley Water to be located away from the play space.

Community benefits

- Supports active and passive outdoor recreation and social interaction for all ages, abilities and cultures.
- Facilitates community connection and equity, while creating child and age friendly urban environments.
- Creating a space that enables all members of the community to feel 'at home' and safe in the park.

Challenges

- Identifying funding for infrastructure improvements.

Playful

Penders Park is a shared space that offers a range of exciting 'play' opportunities for adults, children and dogs, while respecting the needs of everyone.

Big Idea

Provide play opportunities for all ages and abilities.

WHY THIS IDEA?

Values the role of play in everyday life and its contribution to a healthy, happy, and vibrant community.



"Annual Penders Park Festival to bring community together."



"More community events, markets, music, pop-up coffee, outdoor cinema events in summer."



Council Led Activities

- Add BBQ and seating areas inside the play space to support families with young children to socialise.
- Provide outdoor exercise stations at the east end of the park adjacent to the circuit path for all ages to support active and healthy aging.
- Provide play opportunities for young and old community members to engage and interact such as chess tables and 'conversation' seating.
- Incorporate playful built elements in the park (For example stage area for community events, informal nature play rocks and logs).
- Improve grassed surfaces for people and dogs, including play and active and passive recreation.

Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for a 'Friends of Penders Park' group to explore partnerships with local businesses to develop events in the park that celebrate play.
- 'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'**
- Use the park as an inclusive event space for community based festivals, celebrations and activities.
 - Explore interest in community-based dog education sessions, aimed at dog owners and children to develop appropriate behaviours, interactions, and education to build relationships and how to be safe around dogs.



"Neighbourhood library. Lots of playing for older kids and adults."

Community benefits

- Playful urban environments have social, health and psychological benefits for local communities.
- The changing nature of suburbs has often reduced private outdoor space. Playful streets and public spaces ease the pressures of urban living.

Challenges

- Locating space throughout all days and seasons throughout the year for multiple play activities within the park.

Connection to Nature

In a highly urbanised neighbourhood, Penders Park is an oasis of green space for people to connect and experience nature.

Big Idea

Maintain and enhance the diversity of 'nature' spaces within the park to provide park users with choice.

WHY THIS IDEA?

Creates spaces that support the 'nature based' activities that might otherwise happen in people's backyards.



Council Led Activities

- Revitalise existing garden beds with plant palettes of bird and insect attracting native and hardy exotic plants that complement the heritage of the park.
- Include nature play and sensory elements within the play space (For example logs, water play, sand, dry creek bed and timber equipment).
- Explore informal nature play and interpretation and education opportunities within the areas of remnant indigenous grasses and Eucalyptus trees.

Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for a 'Friends of Penders Park' group to support the regular and ongoing maintenance of the garden beds in collaboration with the Council parks team.

'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'

- Develop community based events and activities that celebrate connection to nature and bring the community together around their diverse interests in nature. Self-guided nature walks telling story of the parks diverse and remnant plants, Solstice celebrations, food swaps, Indigenous planting days.

Community benefits

- Connection between neighbours, increased safety, and a happier, healthier community.
- Provide locations in which local kindergartens and schools can encourage children's interests in nature and care for the environment.
- More sustainable and resilient open space.

Challenges

- Locating space throughout all days and seasons throughout the year for activities within a highly used space.



"Make it a 'garden' for all those in the local area that no longer have a backyard."

Natural and Built Elements

Shade, shelter, lighting, seating and amenities are well designed, constructed and maintained. These elements encourage the community to meet, socialise and provide everyone with a feeling of safety and an enjoyable outdoor experience.



Big Idea

Improve and maintain all the park's facilities so it remains a much-loved meeting place and a comfortable green space for the community.

WHY THIS IDEA?

Provides a welcoming place for people to meet and enable strong community and nature-based connections.

Council Led Activities

- Provide a community noticeboard that welcomes people to the park explaining the diversity of use and park users (e.g. play space, quiet reflection, connection to nature) and provides details on community activities and the shared and agreed values for the park.
- Adapt roofing to the shelter within the centre of the park to provide more shade and protection from rain.
- Relocate a BBQ to the central shelter and upgrade the picnic tables and benches to provide a sheltered picnic space.
- Provide a small stage area to rear of the shelter under the existing trees for small community performances.
- Undertake landscape upgrades including relocating and installing new bins sets (including recycling bins) and additional dog bag dispensers.
- Reinstate turf to central grassed area to the east end of park for team games and family cricket matches.
- Provide formal and informal 'conversation seats' in current locations along the path and within the park.
- Plant deciduous shade trees in the informal picnic area to increase the tree canopy and create an urban forest for passive recreation.
- Create informal picnic area to reference the former play space, include new picnic tables, seats and shade trees.
- Assess current lighting levels within the park and determine if lighting levels are sufficient.

Community benefits

- Increased comfort, safety and amenity.
- Improved sanitation and recycling.
- Modernised infrastructure.
- Improved biodiversity.

Challenges

- Maintaining park infrastructure that is fit for purpose with increased usage of the park by a diverse and changing community.



Resilience and Sustainability

The parks natural and built elements are robust, easy to maintain, and durable for the long-term to support current and future generations.

Big Idea

Increase shade and shelter with natural and built elements and improve soil moisture retention to strengthen the parks resilience to the shocks and stresses of a changing climate.

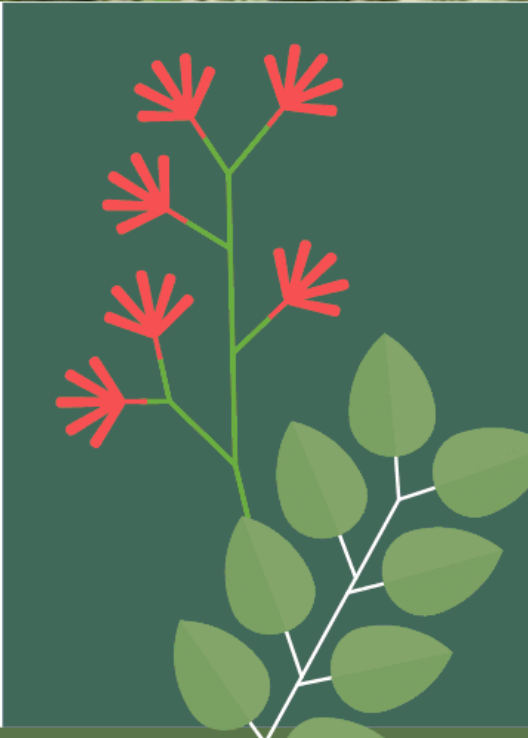
WHY THIS IDEA?

To future proof the park and its ability to adapt and transform to weather and climate changes and remain a comfortable green open space for the community for future generations.



Council Led Activities

- Perform regular tree assessment, maintenance of tree health and succession planting of trees reaching maturity and those in decline.
- Mulch around existing heritage and remnant trees and garden beds.
- Incorporate recycled materials where it is more sustainable than natural materials.
- Investigate opportunities to refurbish / reuse the toilet block structure as part of upgrade to accessible toilets and a Changing Place facility.
- Provide bike hoops to encourage sustainable transport modes to accommodate the increased usage of all abilities play space.
- When upgrading infrastructure, relocate and reuse seats and play equipment within the municipality where possible.



"...I like the idea of sustainability, the park should integrate water sensitive design... and be a good place to learn about sustainable design."



Community benefits

- Provides a real demonstration of living more sustainably as a community.
- Provides opportunities for connection with nature for current and future generations.

Challenges

- A warmer and drier climate and access to affordable water makes tree establishment more challenging and increases the years required to provide natural shade.

Landscape Master Plan



Council led activities and Community led activities locations by Design Principle

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | Distinctive Identity | | Connection to Nature |
| | Accessible, Equitable and Universal | | Natural and Built Environments |
| | Playful | | Resilience and Sustainability |

Legend

- 1 Multigenerational play space including green gym
- 2 Active play / dog play
- 3 All abilities play space with BBQ and picnic facilities
- 4 Accessible toilets and Changing Places facility
- 5 Informal picnic area with additional picnic tables and shade trees
- 6 Passive recreation, relaxation and contemplation
- 7 Informal nature play, indigenous interpretation and education
- 8 New turf for active play / team games
- 9 Accessible car space
- 10 Granitic gravel path to create park circuit
- 11 Extended shelter structure with BBQ, picnic facilities and community stage
- 12 Fire pit for Indigenous ceremonies and events (Final location to be confirmed with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation)

This Master Plan is a unique culmination of Community and Council working collaboratively to rethink and reimagine the potential benefits of open spaces in regard to climate, wellbeing and diversity.

Thank you

to all members of the Darebin community that have contributed to this unique project.

For any enquiries, please contact Darebin City Council on 03 8470 8888.

**PENDERS PARK
COMMUNITY
COMMITTEE**

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Penders Park Master Plan – Engagement Report Phase One & Two

Introduction

Background

- Summary of key results

How did we do it?

- Engagement overview and approach
- Initial community advocacy
- Creation of the Pender's Park PCG

Who we spoke to

- Key activities and reach

What we heard

- Vision and Key Design Principles
- Recommendations and next steps

Limitations

Engagement Summary to May 2019

Introduction

Community advocacy by local residents and users of Penders Park has seen a fresh, new design approach to create a master plan for the park in Thornbury.

A focus of the master plan is an upgrade of the playground to an all abilities play space and accessible toilet facilities.

In March 2018, Council established a community-led Penders Park Project Control Group (PCG) to undertake extensive consultation and lead the development of a master plan.

The PCG are now using the feedback from the consultations to inform the draft master plan, which will be presented to Council for endorsement in November 2018.

Background

Penders Park is a Major Neighbourhood Park that caters for informal recreation needs of the local community such as walking, using the playground, access to picnic/BBQ facilities, parties/gatherings, use of the shelter and toilet facilities. The park is informally used by various other users, including disability services groups, day care centres, exercise groups and off lead dog play.

Penders Park is now due for an upgrade to meet the needs of a growing, diverse and denser population by offering inclusive spaces that can accommodate changing needs and abilities.

Summary of key results

Here is a summary of the key results from the engagement activities:

- Community Petition – 375 signatures
- 300+ community members were consulted with via community events, online activities and targeted discussions.
- 41 community groups and organisations were engaged.
- 561 bits of feedback were captured at the community events.
- 131 people engaged online via the YourSay Darebin site, contributing 169 online comments/ideas/votes.
- 244 informed visitors
- 65% of online participants lived in Thornbury, 24% in Preston (*July/Aug 2018 consultation).
- Community members shared clear messages about the desire for an all abilities play space that is challenging and welcoming to all ages and abilities.
- Support for amenity upgrades to facilities such as the toilets was overwhelming (93% rated upgrades as Very important/Important).
- Locals value the park being an open, safe, green space to connect with nature.

How did we do it?

An overarching description of the key engagement activities and their reach are provided in the table below:

Activity	Description	Reach
Community drop-in sessions	Events were held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 December 2017 - Council led • 21 July 2018 – PCG led 	Dec 2017 – 150 attendees (approx.) 189 bits of feedback. July 2018 – 200 attendees (approx.), 372 bits of feedback.
Targeted discussions	Key stakeholders were invited via email, phone or in person by a member of the PCG. Groups included, local schools, seniors' groups, disability groups.	36 discussions, emails, phone calls.
Online survey/ideas wall	The YourSayDarebin site hosted the following online engagement activities: Dec 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas wall July/Aug 2018: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey 	Visitors to site: 1.2k (Dec 2017 – Aug 2018) Comments on ideas wall: 20 ideas (12 votes) Survey participants: 99 Survey comments: 149

Initial community advocacy

On 5 December 2016, a resident petition was tabled with Council, requesting an upgrade to the park into an All-Abilities Major Neighbourhood Park that meets the broader needs of the community. The petition identified that the park was a significant asset to the community, one of few larger parks available for passive and informal recreation, and that it no longer meets the standards and expectations. Council supported the petition and investigation was undertaken.

On 27 February 2017, Council unanimously agreed to upgrade Penders Park, allocating budget for design and planning.

On Saturday 9 December 2017, Council held a drop-in session at Penders Park for community members to provide their ideas about what they would like to see improved. Residents were also invited to register their interest in becoming a member of a community-led PCG to lead the development of the new Penders Park Master Plan.

Council received over 200 comments from the event and via the YourSay Darebin website.

Creation of the Penders Park Project Control Group (PCG)

The Penders Park PCG was established in early 2018 and includes eight local residents, a Ward Councilor and Council Officer that meet fortnightly.

The PCG used feedback from earlier consultations to develop a vision and some key design principles. Throughout July and August 2018, the PCG consulted with the community to ask for feedback on the vision and key design principles.

The community was asked to what extent they agreed with the vision and how important they felt the key design principles were. They were also invited to share any other ideas they had for the park.

Feedback was captured via:

- Community drop-in event – 21 July.
- Online survey.
- Emails and phone calls to key stakeholders.

Who we spoke to

Phase One Consultation (Petition/December 2017)

No specific demographics were collected at the drop in session in December 2017. Approximate attendance observed was 50-70 people over 2 hours.

Phase Two Consultation – July/Aug 2018

A snap shot of demographic data of the online participants is summarised below:

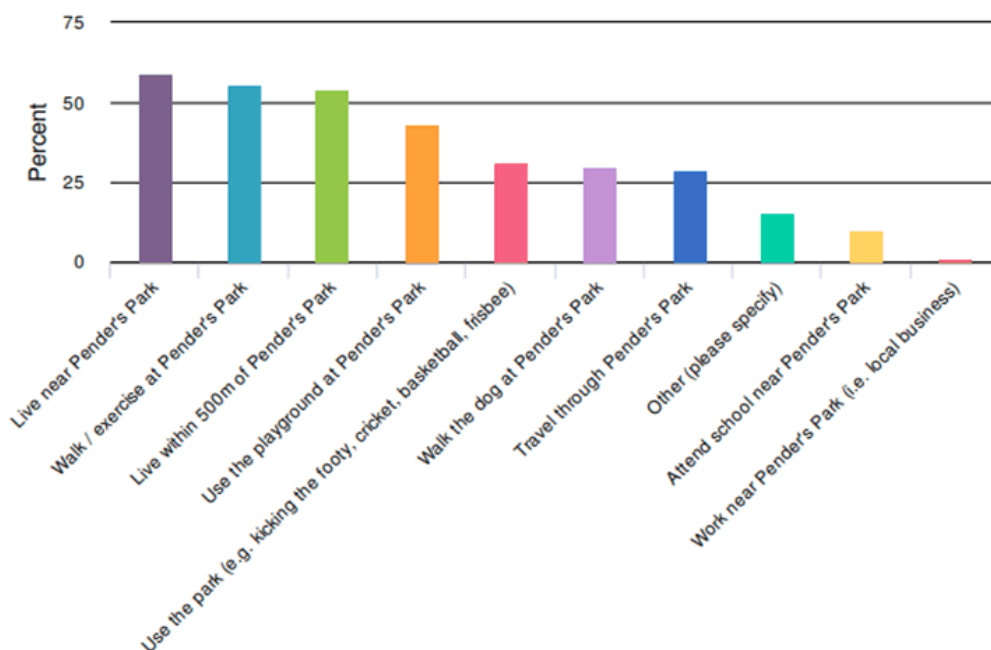
- 38% of online survey participants were aged 35-44 years old.
- 70% were female.
- 65% lived locally in Thornbury, 24% in Preston.
- Over 50% of participants lived within 500 metres of the park.

At the drop-in event we were unable to track the demographics of participants. Observations by the PCG suggest we spoke to a similar demographic that was represented in the online survey. We were able to capture comments from some young people between five and eight years old at the event.

"Today's response and attendance is a strong indication of how loved Penders is seen. Its communal friendliness and connection with young and old is the answer and value".

Conversations with local disability groups were also captured and considered.

The chart shows how online survey participants like to use the park:



Community groups & organisations engaged in this process included:

- Arlington Aged Care Facility
- Sapphire Care – Hill Top
- 26 local schools, day care centres and kindergartens
- Uniting Care
- Northcote Scouts
- Darebin Girl Guides
- Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Wurundjeri Land Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Corporation
- Aborigines Advancement League Inc
- Darebin Disability Advisory Committee
- Northern Support Services
- Active and Healthy Ageing Board
- Span Community house
- The Bridge Preston and Thornbury
- St Mary's Elderly Citizens Club
- The Salvation Army
- Crisalida Child, Adolescent, Adult and Family Therapy

Key activities and reach

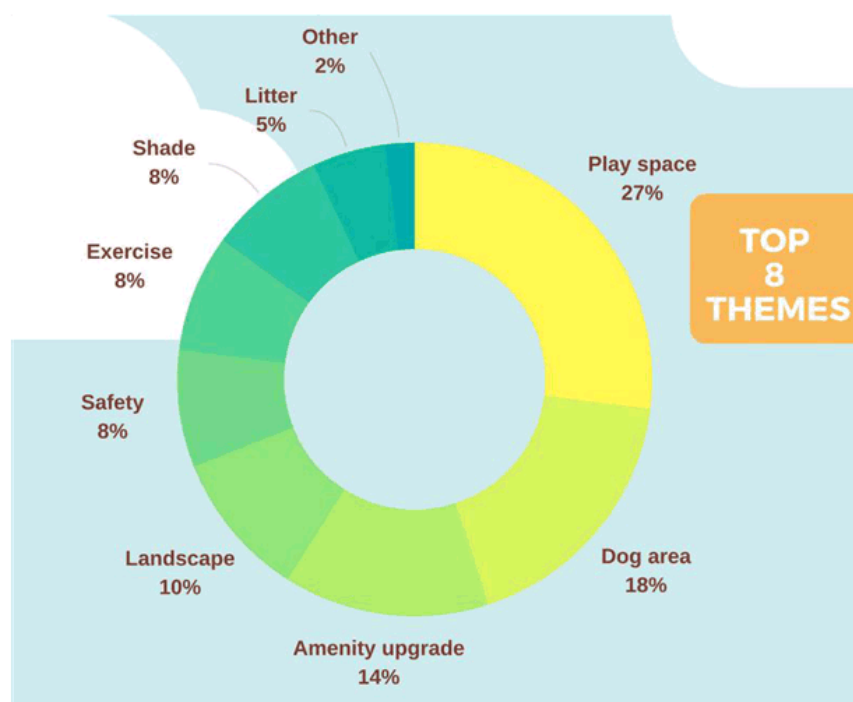
The following activities were conducted to ensure we informed a broad section of our community with information about the project and how to get involved.

Activity	Description	Reach
Darebin Community News	Aug / Sept 2018 Issue	Whole of Darebin
Media release	One	Darebin Website
Council newsletters	Disability Newsletter	
YourSay Darebin website	Fortnightly updates following PCG meetings were also published on the site	84 visitors
Social media	Facebook posts/event	33 went & 283 interested in event
Postcard	Local residents invite to Dec event Invite to July event	5000 5000
Posters	Distributed to local businesses and put up in local park	50
Darebin City Council website	Updates on Your say page	Not collated

What we heard

Over 200 comments were captured from the December 2017 consultation. The PCG grouped these into eight key themes (pictured) and used these to form the vision and key design principles. Here is a summary of the key results from the second round of consultation (July/August 2018):

- Over 70% of feedback strongly agreed with the vision (17% agreed).
- Over 80% of feedback rated five out of the six key design principles as 'Very important' or 'Important'.
- The Distinctive Identity principle received mixed results - 13% rating it 'Not at all important'/'Less important'. Despite this, 66% rated it 'Important' or 'Very important'.



Penders Park Vision

Penders Park is a significant gathering place for our diverse and changing community. As a major neighbourhood park, it's a place for play, celebrating, active and passive recreation and connecting with nature.

There was clear support for the vision, with over 80% of online participants expressing agreement with the statement.

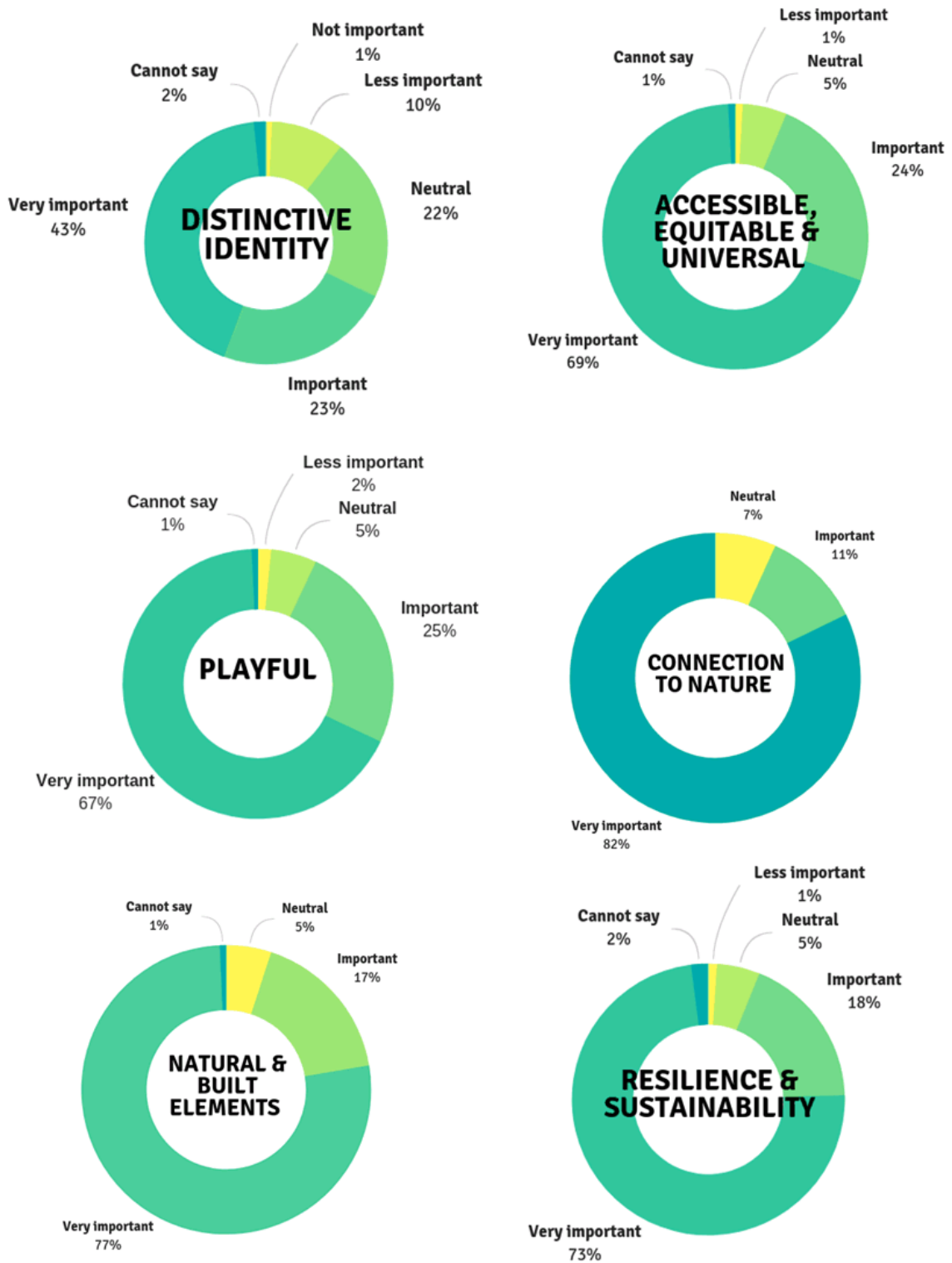
This was echoed in the feedback from the drop-in session where all but one comment expressed agreement. A number of comments emphasised the importance of maintaining an open space for a variety of uses.

"Yes the variety of uses of the space is and should continue to be varied and maintained".

"I love this vision! As our suburb becomes more high density our green spaces are ever more important for recreation, to meet and to come together as a community. Great job guys!"

Key design principles

The following charts show the extent to which the community felt the key design principles were meaningful or important to them.



Overall, feedback from the second round of engagement showed that the community felt the key design principles were relevant and important to them.

Of the feedback received for each of the principles, 40 to 80% rated them as 'Very Important'. Comments demonstrated a good understanding of what the vision and principles are aiming to achieve.

"Great job, this encompasses everything we want our park to be!"

Distinctive Identity

Penders Park is a unique space with a character that everyone recognises and values. The park's identity is shaped by its Indigenous history, heritage design and its culturally diverse community.

Locals had mixed views about the Distinctive Identity principle, with 13% rating it 'Not at all important' or 'Less important' and 22% feeling neutral towards it. This is notable when compared to the other key principles, which received very few not important/less important/neutral votes.

It was suggested in the feedback that the description of this principle was too vague or didn't resonate with some parts of the community. Others suggested that the park was lacking any indigenous recognition at present but were encouraging of this being an important aspect to investigate in the development of the master plan.

"Great principle. Would like to see greater connection with Indigenous cultural heritage."

Accessible, Equitable and Universal

Penders Park is a welcoming and respectful place for everyone to enjoy. The design ensures that anyone can access and use the park and its facilities equitably.

Locals were very supportive of the park being a welcoming and inclusive place for all ages, abilities and cultures, with 93% of feedback rating this principle as 'Very important/Important'. This highlights the importance of accessible facilities such as an all-abilities play space and Changing Places/accessible toilet.

"I would like the park to become more of a 'community centre' that draws / attracts people of all ages and backgrounds to frequent and use."

A common concern in the feedback was about how the connection between dogs, children, picnickers and other users of the park will be managed. Some community members would like to see the play space fenced, equally, some would rather there be a fenced dog exercise area, whilst others want to ensure the park remains as open as possible.

It's important to add that the majority of people agree they want the park to remain universally welcome to all dogs and people.

Playful

Penders Park is a shared space that offers a range of exciting 'play' opportunities for adults, children and dogs, while respecting the needs of everyone.

The Playful principle was popular amongst community members demonstrated by the number of comments we received both online and at the event (68 comments). This was echoed in the December 2017 consultation where 84 comments were collected.

A focus of many of the comments was an all abilities play space that includes nature play elements. Another common theme was exercise equipment for all to use.

"'Playful' and 'connection to nature' are areas that is (sic) lacking, need to be carefully considered. They can and should mean different things / activities to different age groups, physical capabilities and cultural backgrounds."

Connection to nature

In a highly urbanised neighbourhood, Penders Park is an oasis of green space for people to connect and experience nature.

The Connection to Nature principle was very popular with 82% of the feedback voting this as 'Very Important'. The 53 comments provided some useful ideas and considerations for types of planting and shrubs the community would like to see. A few participants would also like to see a community garden. Many comments confirmed the importance of retaining lots of open, green space for the community to enjoy.

As one community member said "Make it a 'garden' for all those in the local area that no longer have a backyard. Formal and informal areas, lots more plants."

Natural and Built Elements

Shade, shelter, lighting, seating and amenities are well designed, constructed and maintained. These elements encourage the community to meet, socialise and provide everyone with a feeling of safety and an enjoyable outdoor experience.

Again, there was clear support for this principle with 77% rating it as 'Very Important' (17% Important). Many locals expressed the importance of the park being a safe space and wanted to see improvements to the toilets, traffic management around the park and lighting.

"Agree. Toilets etc. important however safety is critical. They are a barrier. Children disappear from view behind them."

Resilience and Sustainability

The park's natural and built elements are robust, easy to maintain, and durable for the long-term to support current and future generations.

Locals expressed clear consensus on the importance of this principle with 73% of the feedback rating it 'Very Important' (and 18% Important). Suggestions were provided about how to achieve this outcome.

"...like idea of sustainability the park should integrate water sensitive design rain garden and be a good place to learn about sustainable design."

Recommendations and next steps

Accessible Play space and toilet facilities

Feedback captured from 2016 to now, clearly indicates that a new, all-abilities play space and accompanying accessible toilets are a priority for the community.

The overwhelming support for the Accessible, Equitable and Universal principle, which states, *“Penders Park is a welcoming and respectful place for everyone to enjoy. The design ensures that anyone can access and use the park and its facilities equitably”* highlights that a Changing Places/accessible toilet facility is essential to achieving our vision and must be considered alongside the play space design. We believe everyone should have the right to use a toilet with dignity no matter who they are in our community.

The next step for the PCG is to develop a brief for the detailed design of the play space and accessible toilet facilities.

Connection

A common concern in the feedback was about how we will manage the connection between dogs, children, picnickers and other users of the park.

The PCG would like to confirm the following in relation to these concerns:

- The park will remain off-leash except for within 10 metres of the play space (as it is currently).
- To comply with the requirements of an all abilities play space, fencing or partial closure is required.
- Natural barriers such as hedges (or another type of planting or design feature) will be considered as an alternative to traditional fencing.
- Community members (including targeted engagement with young people) will be consulted with on the detailed design of the play space.

Distinctive identity

To address concerns about the lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous history in the park's identity, the PCG is engaging with the Wurundjeri Council and the local Aboriginal community to discuss the story of the park and how it can be incorporated into the master plan.

Limitations

The demographics that were underrepresented, such as young people will look to be addressed in the detailed design phases of the master plan, for example targeted consultation with children and young people over the play space design.

Efforts have been made to hear from a diversity of voices, including community members who are considered 'harder to reach' or might have a barrier to engaging. For example, we targeted disability groups that use the park by speaking with them face-to-face to listen to their concerns and ideas. We sent a newsletter to the disability advisory group informing them about the project and inviting them to participate in the event. We have also arranged targeted discussions with Aboriginal advisory groups.

It should also be noted that participants did not have to answer all questions in the online survey, or provide a response to each part of the activity we hosted at the drop-in event. As such, response rates per question will vary.

Engagement Summary to May 2019

Early July 2018

- Letter box drop to residences and businesses within 500 metres of the park to advise of drop in session
- Email notifications and telephone calls to stakeholder groups to advise them of the drop-in session

21-7-18

- Second community drop in session at park
- Approximately 200 people in attendance. See engagement report for further details.

Mid-January 2019

- Letter box drop to residences and businesses within 500 metres of the park to advertise open air cinema event
- Advertising board erected in the park to advertise event
- Emails to stakeholders about the event

9-2-19

- Open air cinema event and further consultation to get more specific information about features local residents would like to see within Penders Park & the play space
- Approximately 200 local residents were engaged in the consultation.

Refer to **PENDERS PARK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT** prepared by Wendy Holland from Community Vibe for more detail.

24-4-19

- All Abilities Play Space consultation commenced on YourSay Darebin page.
- PCG members provided draft to local primary schools (Wales Street and Pender's Grove) for comment.

6-5-19

- PCG members provided Council with a project update.

8-5-19

- PCG met with Liz Cummins (play space designer) to refine draft concepts and provided school feedback.

17-5-19

- Consultation on All Abilities Play Space closed.
- 13 comments received on the YourSay page.

PENDERS PARK

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

OVERVIEW

A variety of community engagement activities were undertaken during February 2019 at Penders Park to build on previous community engagement activities which had identified the overall vision of park and the key areas to be included within the overall park. The purpose of the latest round of consultations is to drill down to a level of detail to determine what specific features local residents would like to see within Penders Park.

In order to ensure broad participation in the engagement process, the following activities were undertaken:

Group	Details	Number
<i>General community</i>	Stand at the Open-Air Cinema on Saturday 9 February 6.00pm-8.00pm.	125 sticky notes and 31 interviews
<i>Thornbury High School</i>	Issues and Solutions workshop with 13/14-year olds at Penders Park on Monday 25 February 2.00pm-3.00pm	5 (3 females and 2 males)
<i>Penders Grove Primary School</i>	Onsite consultation with 10-12-year olds on Tuesday 26 February 12.30pm-1.30pm	14 students
<i>Wales St Primary School</i>	School consultation with 7/8-year olds – 2 classes – Tuesday 26 February 11.15am-12.15pm	38 students
<i>Raleigh St Childcare Centre</i>	Onsite consultation with 4/5-year olds on Monday 25 February 10.00am-10.30am	5 (2 females and 3 males)
<i>Thornbury Kindergarten</i>	Onsite consultation with 4/5-year olds on Tuesday 26 February 10.00am-10.30am	21 children
<i>Carinya Society Coburg</i>	Phone call with disability agency that visits the park regularly	1 female staff member
<i>Darebin Disability Advisory Committee</i>	On-site meeting with a community member in a wheelchair on Monday 25 February 11.30am – 12.15pm	1 male

Key priorities of the community are:

1. Retain the friendly, local feel of the park where everyone is welcome and included
2. Provide improved play opportunities for children of all abilities, young people and their families
3. Improve accessibility to the park for people of all ages and abilities (through pathways, toilets and appropriate infrastructure)
4. Create a greater connection with nature through play and landscaping
5. Develop additional health and wellbeing opportunities for local residents, e.g. outdoor fitness equipment, a walking / running track around the perimeter of the park and a meditation area

6. Provide modern, accessible and functional supporting infrastructure to enhance the experience of park users, e.g. seats, picnic tables, BBQs, paths, drinking fountains and accessible toilets
7. Improve the aesthetics and functionality of the site through enhanced landscaping (e.g. more shade trees and improved grass surfaces)
8. Improve safety for park users through more shade, better lighting, improved disabled parking and barriers / fencing.
9. Continue to provide off-leash dog walking at the site
10. Celebrate the history and culture of the park through art work and interpretation, particularly acknowledging the site's indigenous connections
11. Continue to offer community events such as open-air cinema nights, markets, etc

Specific details of what local residents would like to see in each area of the park are included in each section of this report.

GENERAL COMMUNITY

Open-Air Cinema

A marquee and display boards were set up at the Open-Air Cinema at Penders Park in Thornbury on Saturday 9 February with the intent to seek feedback from the general community about three key locations within the Park, i.e.:

1. New all abilities play space



2. Active play and active dog play area



3. Multi-generational space.



Additional comments were also sought about other aspects of the park in general.

Sticky notes

Participants were given the option to write their ideas on a sticky note and place it on one of the large visual maps of the park, or to speak with the project team about their ideas. A total of 125 sticky notes were received. All ages participated in this activity, with children providing the greatest input.

Key themes and ideas emerging from the sticky note exercise include:

Location / issue	Ideas	Details
All abilities play space		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water play / fountains (like at the Botanic Gardens in the City) (6) • Timber play equipment (5) • Nature play – like Ian Potter Garden at Botanic Gardens (4) • Giant slide (4) • New / exciting play equipment (3) • Pod cubbies (3) • Rock trail / through sand (3) • Hammock (2) • Shade over play equipment (2) • Play equipment that can be used by people with disabilities (2) • Climbing structure with a slide (2) • Slide (2) • Swings (2) • Sand pit with shovels (2) • Informal areas to build shelters or things with branches (2) • Spooky tunnel • Kids swing that parents can fit on too • Natural climber • Logs • Merry go round • Playground like Wombat Bend • Forest-feel • Car-like play opportunities • Hidden fossils in sand pits • Tree house • Climbing trees • See saw • Water umbrella feature • Incorporate trees into play • Monkey bars • Indoor playground • Equipment that is safe for toddlers to use • Creative play area • Exploration garden • Sensory / audio ground or bridge – have sounds on each step, e.g. frog sounds, bell bird sounds, indigenous sounds • Bigger equipment • Zones for different ages and abilities • Stone and timber bridge
Active play and active dog play area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing to prevent dogs running out of the park into oncoming traffic on the road or to provide them with a safe place to play within the park (3) • Dog bowl
Multi-generational space		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skate park (4) • Outdoor exercise equipment (3) • Running / cycling track around the perimeter of the park (3)

Location / Issue/Ideas	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play opportunities for older kids (2) • Rock climbing wall • Flying fox • Multi use sports courts • Non-removable chain nets on the existing basketball rings • Lower the south end ring on the basketball court to standard size • Tightrope • Log climbing
Parkland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of the grass (6) • More trees (4) • Fruit trees (2) • More shade (2) • Shade over BBQs (2) • Flowers • Animal hides – for possums • Make use of city views • Bike racks • Animal play • Spring critters to sit on • Play opportunities for babies and toddlers • Sensory garden for children, older adults and people with disabilities • Lots of flowers • Pond • Sustainable garden • Rain garden • Community farm • Seating nooks
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New / better toilets (3) • Better lighting in toilets (2) • Better handwashing facilities / hot water (2) • Mirrors
Sporting opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer goals (5) • Indoor basketball court (3) • Tennis court (3) • Swimming pool • Spa • BMX track
Art / culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sculptures made of timber or natural materials (3) • Art easels (2) • Outdoor theatre • Cinema • Elevated timber platform
Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter from rain and sun (3) • Extend the roof on the existing shelter • Shade sails (like Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy)
Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike traffic signs on bike path (3)

Location / issue	Ideas	Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways from playground to toilet • New street connection from St David's Street to Penders Street
Retail		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant / food store (2) • ATM
Fencing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fence entire perimeter of park for safety and to prevent cars from driving into the park (2)
Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking fountain
Events		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community events, e.g. movies (3) • Markets for local designers to sell their wares • Encourage music lessons to be held at the park – for people who want to learn and create • Neighbourhood / Family gatherings and BBQs
General feel		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun (3) • Exciting (2) • Curiosity (2) • Energising • Love • More character

Interviews

Attendees of the open-air cinema also had the opportunity to speak with a member of the project team to share their ideas. A total of 31 people were interviewed. Key themes emanating from these interviews are:

Location / issueIdeas	Details
Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant native plants to attract fauna (2) • Ensure that the Tawny Frogmouth habitat is not destroyed • Plant bush foods
All abilities play space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lots of shade in the play space from trees (5) • Water play – like in Bundoora Park or Fitzroy Park with creek bed area (5) • Sandpit (3) • Fencing (3) • Install shade sails in new playground – like those in Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy (2) • Nature play – like Royal Park (2) • Ensure equipment does not have spaces that toddlers can fall down (as is the case with the top of the climbing frame of the existing playground) (2) • Seats for parents (2) • Equipment for toddlers (not spring rocker as they have limited use) (2) • Timber equipment • Lines of site are important for supervision, particularly when someone has children of different ages / skill levels using different areas of the play space • Don't construct a cookie cutter play space • Provide unobtrusive fencing like at Wombat Bend playground • Question why playground is moving from one side of the park to the other • Develop a playground like Wombat Bend • Develop a playground like Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy • Develop a playground like Hayes Paddock • Develop a playground like Blackburn Lake Sanctuary (it has Aboriginal influences) • New playground • Hidden fossils in sand pits • Use different materials to create play equipment • Include moveable items • Musical activities • Whirly gigs • Plant trees in play area • Install a barrier (e.g. rocks or landscaping) to stop children running on the road from the play space • Explore alternative soft fall to tan bark (e.g. rubber) as some children try to eat it and it's a choking hazard • Build a slide into a hill • Flowers

Location / Issue/Ideas	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing structures • Spray paint games on to the ground periodically • Create a delineation between senior and junior play opportunities • See saw • Equipment / activities for both older and younger children • Places for young people to sit and chat with their friends • Birds nest swing • Climbing frames • Swings • Slide • Big slide • Bike skills area • Wheelchair access • Opportunities for children to play together but at different levels / challenges
Active play and active dog play area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain off leash dog area (3) • Some children are panicky around dogs so may not want to use the park • Plant more trees in dog play area • Dogs and kids in the same space don't work – move dog area to west of shelter • Open space for ball games • Create an enclosed off-leash dog area • Water fountain for dogs
Intergenerational space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise equipment – prefer interval not cluster; with instructions and programs; moveable items (8) • Flying fox (4) • Develop a running track (4) • Create a bigger sign so that more people are aware of the Climbing wall (2) • Replace the rings on the hard court so that they are both the same height and size (2) • Giant chessboard (2) • curfew for the basketball court (i.e. 8am-9pm) – although the curfew is respected • Second basketball court area for less skilled players • Install netball ring on the hard court • Increase size of basketball court • Graffiti mural • Trees for shade • Develop small tennis courts • Provide outdoor table tennis tables
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold more events at the site, e.g. multicultural food festival, movies, markets, bands / music, food truck festivals, workshops, interactive activities (8) • Link up with residents in Rossmoyne St for festivals
Public toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing toilets are too dark and kids won't use them (2) • Don't install toilets with electronic doors

Location / Issue/Ideas	Details
Parkland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plants around existing toilets create a space for someone to hide – don't feel safe • Improve toilets • Flowers and improved landscaping (3) • Develop a community garden so that people can engage with one another and grow food (2) • Install more lighting in the park (2) • Plant fruit trees (2) • More shade in the park (2) • Seats on paths and under trees (2) • Create self-contained pockets / nooks in the park • More BBQs • More undercover areas • Create some mounds / undulating hills in the park • Develop a winding path so people feel like they are on a journey and are not as intimidated as they may be on a long, wide, open path • Develop an amphitheatre or stage • Promote Aboriginal heritage of the area at the park • Construct a water feature like a pond • Construct a fountain • Ensure that bins are not placed too close to the shelter – they are an eyesore and smell • Install more roof panels on pergola • Shelter over BBQs • Bike racks • Shelters suitable for birthday parties • Picnic facilities

CHILDREN

Thornbury Kindergarten and Raleigh Street Childcare Centre

Children from Raleigh Street Childcare Centre and Thornbury Kindergarten attended onsite half-hour workshops at Penders Park on Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 February.

Prioritisation activity

Their sessions consisted of placing a red sticker on pictures of activities that they enjoy or would like to do when they play outside. This exercise worked best with Raleigh St Childcare Centre due to the smaller number of children and assistance from teachers. Results of this exercise are as follows:

Type of activity	Raleigh St Childcare Centre	Thornbury Kindergarten	Total
Ball games	5	10	15
Climbing	4	10	14
Cubby house	4	10	14
Flying a kite	5	9	14
Playing with sand	2	12	14
Sliding	4	10	14
Spinning	4	9	13
Water pumps	5	8	13
Bike riding	4	8	12
Balancing	5	6	11
Building things	5	6	11
Picnic	4	7	11
Playing with family	2	9	11
Sitting	3	8	11
Musical / sound equipment	3	7	10
Swinging	5	5	10
Walking the dog	5	5	10
Outdoor cinema	4	5	9
Running	4	5	9
Tree climbing	4	5	9
BBQs	2	6	8
Gardening	5	3	8
Water play	4	4	8
Hide and seek	3	4	7
Riding a scooter	2	5	7
Markets	5	1	6
Walking	2	2	4

Discussions with four- and five-year olds

Twenty-four four and five- year old children (five from Raleigh Street Childcare Centre and 19 from Thornbury Kindergarten) were interviewed to find out what they like doing when they play outside. Their answers are as follows:

Activity	Raleigh Street Childcare Centre	Thornbury Kindergarten	Total
Climbing / monkey bars	2	8	10
Swinging	2	7	9
Sliding	1	7	8
Water play	4	0	4
Balancing	0	2	2
Flying foxes	0	2	2
Playing in nature / build things with loose materials	2	0	2
Running	1	1	2
Gardening / picking and eating fruit	1	0	1
Having parties	1	0	1
Playing with sand	1	0	1
Playing with steering wheels on combination unit	0	1	1
Swimming	1	0	1

Observations of children playing

Children from Raleigh Street Childcare Centre were primarily drawn to the swings. They worked cooperatively by taking turns and pushing each other. Other activities undertaken included: climbing on the climbing structure, sliding, playing make-believe in the shopfront, running, spinning around poles, playing in the tan bark and playing on the spring critter.

Children from Thornbury Kindergarten seemed to be most excited about climbing structures, along with swinging, sliding, running, sitting and balancing.

In addition to the activities children enjoy doing outside, some suggestions for a new all abilities play space children included spaces for birthday parties, water play, a banana tree (so fruit can be picked and eaten), a unicorn chair, a twirly slide and a lower basketball hoop.

Penders Grove Primary School

Fourteen year four, five and six students (8 females and 6 males) from Penders Grove Primary School took part in an onsite Issues and Solutions Workshop at Penders Park on Tuesday 26 February from 12.30pm-1.30pm. Students were asked to identify potential improvements to Penders Park, specifically the intergenerational area, the active play / dog play area and the all abilities play space area.

General park

- Plant climbers on the pergola
- Provide timber furniture throughout the park
- Create a closed in area to protect people from the weather on hot days and cold days
- Plant trees / bushes that attract birds and animals
- Install a feature fountain
- Provide shade over BBQ areas
- Provide solar lighting throughout the park

Multi-generational space

- Install water fountains near basketball court
- Install bench seating next to basketball courts
- Paint smaller keys on basketball court and buy new backboards
- Lower the basketball rings
- Upgrade the surface of the basketball court
- Develop a full-sized basketball court
- Paint netball line markings on court and install a netball ring
- Provide more shade in the basketball court area
- Upgrade toilets and include air fresheners
- Upgrade the north east entrance to the park
- Install inground sprinklers to water the grass
- Install outdoor fitness equipment
- Install exercise bikes that charge mobile phones
- Include outdoor table tennis
- Develop a bike track / mountain bike track made out of dirt
- Install some lights
- Install a small sized basketball ring for small children

Active play / dog play area

- Install inground sprinklers to water the grass
- Install more water fountains and dog drinking bowls
- Provide activities for dogs, e.g. tunnels
- More seats under trees
- Provide some lighting
- Provide soccer goals and AFL goal posts
- Hold markets in this this space

- Provided grassed berm edge
- Have a long / triple jump pit
- Consider fencing this area
- Have specified times that dogs can be off their leash

All abilities play space

- Provide decorative paving in the corner closest to the toilets
- Provide a sandpit in the corner closest to the pergola and include toy tractors in it
- Have a digeridoo as a sculpture in the play area
- Provide grass covered tunnels to crawl through
- Include timber logs
- Provide a low or high ropes course
- Develop pod cubbies
- Include water play / splash park
- Develop a maze
- Install spring balance equipment
- Provide a grass berm
- Provide timber play structures
- Develop nooks with planting
- Provide water play
- Include stepping stones and big rocks
- Provide a bird's nest swing
- Create a dry river bed / creek
- Construct cubbies
- Construct tunnels
- Provide a rope swing
- Construct a stone and timber bridge
- Develop a skate park
- Plant trees for climbing
- Construct a tree house
- Install in-ground trampolines
- Relocate BBQs to proposed picnic area
- Install drinking fountains
- Create animal statues
- Plant more trees
- Construct an informal log and rock trail through the sand
- Construct elevated spring steppers
- Create the feeling of being in a forest
- Create some imaginative play features
- Create a bike riding area
- Install more seats
- Install swings
- Install rock climbing wall

- Install a climbing frame
- Install spinning equipment

Wales Street Primary School

Two grade two classes were visited on Tuesday 26 February immediately after morning recess. One class consisted of 18 children and the other consisted of 20 children. Children were shown 18 photographs of young people taking part in various activities in a park setting. They were asked to 'vote with their feet' by standing next to a 'yes' sign if they liked the particular activity shown on the photo; or standing next to the 'no' sign if they didn't. This allowed a tallying of scores to determine which activities might be most popular at the upgraded Penders Park. Results are as follows:

Type of activity	Wales St Primary School – Grade 2, class #1 (18 students)	Wales St Primary School – Grade 2, class #2 (20 students)	Total
Outdoor cinema	17	20	37
Climbing	18	17	35
Riding a scooter	18	17	35
Picnic	17	17	34
Playing with family	16	17	33
Running	18	15	33
Swinging	15	18	33
Building things	16	15	31
Ball games	14	16	30
Markets	16	14	30
Tree climbing	12	18	30
Water pumps	14	16	30
Bike riding	12	17	29
Cubby house	16	13	29
Sitting	11	17	28
Balancing	13	14	27
Hide and seek	14	13	27
Sliding	14	13	27
Musical / sound equipment	13	13	26
Water play	15	11	26
Flying a kite	12	13	25
Walking	16	8	24
Gardening	14	9	23
Spinning	8	15	23
BBQs	14	18	22
Walking the dog	13	9	22
Playing with sand	13	8	21

Children were also asked to identify any other things that they would like to see at Penders Park. Their suggestions included:

Play equipment

- Climbing structures, e.g. monkey bars
- Water slide with shade
- Flying fox
- Poles to slide down
- Splash park
- Water slide
- See saw
- Trampolines
- Birds nest swings
- Merry go round
- Giant slide

Nature based play

- Tree houses
- Trees to climb
- Tree swing
- Tunnel
- Camping area

Infrastructure

- Toilets – clean with lighting
- Drinking fountains
- Shade

Landscaping

- Sandy beach area
- Big bushes
- Flowers

Sport

- Netball ring on the hard court
- Soccer goals and pitch
- Mini golf
- Swimming pool
- Cricket wicket
- AFL Football goals

Retail

- Gift shop

Activities

- Circus activities
- Equipment to hire / borrow, e.g. bats, balls, circus equipment, etc
- Fun fair with popcorn, ice-cream, fairy floss, balloons, etc
- Petting zoo / safari zone

Other

- First Aid building
- Disco room
- Video games
- Indoor basketball
- Go karts
- Virtual reality
- Zombies

YOUNG PEOPLE

Thornbury High School

Five year eight students (3 females and 2 males) from Thornbury High School took part in an onsite Issues and Solutions Workshop at Penders Park on Monday 25 February from 2pm-3pm. Students were asked to identify potential improvements to Penders Park, specifically the intergenerational area, the active play / dog play area and the all abilities play space area. Their ideas / comments are as follows:

General park

- Create a running track around the perimeter with measurements so people know how far they have run
- Create a meditation space in the park, potentially with a Japanese garden theme
- Create small pockets in the park with walled gardens
- Install bike racks
- Install pedestrian crossings on the road leading into the park so pedestrians, not cars, have right of way
- Plant colourful flowers
- Provide interpretive information about wildlife in the park, e.g. birds
- Consider the creation of a pond
- Improve overall landscaping of the park
- Ensure that tables and seats in the park are accessible for people of all abilities
- Extend roof of pergola to make it more 'weather-proof'
- Install solar lighting around the park
- Upgrade irrigation system to ensure that there is better grass coverage throughout the park

Multi-generational space

- Install exercise equipment between the basketball court and the toilet block
- Exercise equipment to feature a seated bench press and shade over the top
- Consider exercise bikes that charge mobile phones
- Install drinking tap near the proposed exercise equipment
- Mark the basketball court with netball lines and install a netball ring
- Install a plexipave surface on the basketball court and convert it into a multi-sport court
- Upgrade toilets
- Install bike racks in this area
- Improve landscaping

Active play / dog play area

- Make sure there is space for markets and community events
- Run more events on site, e.g. open-air cinema, etc
- Make sure that there is a drinking bowl for dogs
- Plant more trees in this space
- Consider installing a low fence in this area for dogs

All abilities play space

- Install a 'spider web' climbing structure
- Install a bird's nest swing
- Create a splash zone / water play area
- Install slides, but not metal ones
- Install a tap
- Install shade over the playground
- Relocate existing BBQs to proposed picnic area
- Install drinking taps near the play equipment
- Build a sand pit
- Install a sound tube
- Include musical elements
- Consider installing a Liberty Swing
- Install a flying fox

ALL ABILITIES

An initial telephone conversation and a follow up consultation meeting was held with a member of the Darebin Disability Advisory Committee (who uses an electronic wheelchair) regarding accessibility at Penders Park. A phone call was also received from a member of staff at Carinya Society in Coburg – a disability organisation that supports 125 mostly non-verbal clients with a disability and who is a regular user of the park. Their comments include:

Infrastructure

- Need to ensure that disabled car parking spaces designers consider people who may exit a vehicle from the side or from the rear with a ramp and wheelchair - parallel parking is the best option. The nature strip should be concreted and at the same level as the path.
- Could consider developing a drop off point on west side of park.
- Ensure that picnic tables and seats / benches are constructed to enable people in wheelchairs to use them, e.g. correct height, concrete pads with paths leading to them beside the table or seats, suitable space / height for hand control panel on electronic wheelchairs at the table.
- Consider placing games on tops of tables, e.g. checkers, chess, backgammon, etc and encouraging a chess club to provide games on site periodically (equipment could be borrowed from a nearby milk bar or people could be encouraged to bring their own)
- Ensure that there is more shade over seats and picnic tables.
- Need more drinking fountains throughout the park – these should be accessible for people in wheelchairs.
- Provide shelter over BBQs
- Paths with granitic sand or dirt are difficult to navigate in wheelchairs as they tend to get ruts after rain events
- Construct a sound shell with an accessible stage for events and performances.
- Extend roof of rotunda to provide more weather protection.
- Construct a changing places toilet and ensure that the door is unlocked during the day.

Playground

- Install bird nest swings
- Provide equipment that makes sounds, e.g. tubes that people can speak into which carry the sound to another location
- Provide equipment that can be manipulated, e.g. noughts and crosses
- Want equipment that is larger sized so that it can be used by disabled adults
- Install outdoor table tennis tables.
- Install coloured rubber matting with water features and space where people can lie down
- Provide equipment that is flat and spins
- Provide some enclosed private spaces in the all abilities play space area for autistic clients
- May need some form of fencing on the all abilities play space as some clients are 'runners'
- Install a raised sand pit suitable for people in wheel chairs to use

Sport / active physical activity

- Consider enclosing basketball court with fence to prevent balls going on the road
- Consider installing cricket nets at the park adjoined to the proposed fenced basketball court
- Install outdoor fitness equipment
- Facilitate activities at the park during the day, e.g. balloon football, bean bags, etc (Carinya Society would be willing to pay for such activities)
- Develop an accessible bocce pitch

Passive recreation activities

- A meditation space would be ideal. It would potentially be a square space able to hold 12-20 people and would feature a high plant border around the edge with lower plants in front. There may be a Japanese / Asian water feature in this space and activities such as tai chi could be held. It needs to be quiet and have an enclosed feel about it.
- Encourage a gardening club to come to Penders Park on a regular basis and teach people about how to grow trees / plants.

Landscaping

- Plant hedge around the perimeter of the park and plant more succulents (as a demonstration garden).
- Consider more Asian variety of plants rather than European plants.
- Improve the condition of the grass.
- Plant more trees.
- Light up the trees at night
- Need wind breaks in the park
- Consider installing an edible garden within the park where people can pick locally grown produce.
- Consider developing a lake which can be used by people with remote controlled boats.
- Develop a sensory garden where people can touch and feel plants (and occasionally pick, e.g. rosemary and mint)
- Consider the needs of people who don't enjoy interactions with dogs in the park

Café

- Create a café on site.

Other good parks

- Other parks that Carinya clients like include: Bush Reserve in Coburg and the water play area at Wallan Park.

PARK OBSERVATIONS

The project team visited the park on three occasions – Saturday 9 February during the late afternoon and evening and Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 February during the day. The park attracted a broad range of users during these times:

- mothers pushing their babies in prams
- parents / grandparents taking small children to the playground and to the open space areas to run around
- children riding bikes or scooters through the park
- teenagers playing basketball, walking through the park or sitting down with friends to chat
- people of all ages walking dogs (including professional dog walkers) – most dogs had a drink at the drinking fountain
- people of all ages walking through the park or sitting for a while (specifically in the pergola area or on shaded seats)
- adults riding bikes through the park
- people in their 20's to 30's jogging around the perimeter of the park
- workers having lunch in the park
- people having a picnic on the grass
- a number of people (particularly taxi drivers) using the toilet facilities.

Penders Park Master Plan Project Communications and Engagement Strategy

Background & Context

Community advocacy by local residents and users of Penders Park, and a commitment by Darebin Council to the Council plan *Darebin 2021* has seen a fresh, new community-led design approach endorsed to create a master plan for Penders Park in Thornbury. The focus of the master plan is an upgrade of the playground to an all abilities play space.

In December 2017 Council held an informal drop in session at the park to explain the project and seek people's ideas and feedback about what they liked or didn't like about the park and what they would like to see in the park master plan. Council also sought expressions of interest from local residents to become members of a Project Control Group (PCG) to help design and develop the Penders Park Master Plan. The PCG is chaired by Rucker Ward councillor Trent McCarthy (with Cr Susan Rennie proxy), and through consensus will manage the delivery of the Master Plan.

The PCG started work in March 2018 and is now meeting regularly to develop the master plan based on this community feedback. The PCG is planning further consultation to report back on what feedback has been received so far and seek further feedback about this. This master plan will be presented to Council for endorsement in May 2019.

This plan outlines the next phase of consultation and a communications approach to keep the broader community and stakeholders updated on the development of the master plan.

Overarching Communications Approach

Issues identification and analysis

Issue	Potential Impact (H/M/L)	Stakeholder/s affected	Action/Mitigation
Consultation is not sufficient to give Councillors confidence that the plan has been informed by a wide range of community views, hence they do not endorse the master plan.	H	Councillors, Council staff, members of the community who may want to provide feedback and don't get a chance to do so	Use a wide range of communication channels to publicise the project – web site, social media, newspaper advertising, direct mail to local residents in the vicinity of the park; direct approaches to community interest groups to advise them of the project
People not aware of how their feedback was considered or not, and	H	Local residents, groups and councillors	Prepare a report that documents all the feedback

why, leading to some groups lobbying against the master plan			received and how it was considered, and make it widely available for people to access.
People are suspicious of the PCG motivations and decision making		Local residents, groups and	Provide regular updates of project progress promoted on Council's YourSay web site/social media and any specific enquiries addressed.
People concerned/disappointed with the time it is taking to make a decision/see some improvements			Regular communications about project milestones with visuals onsite/web/social.

Key messages

This is a list of all the key messages – primary and secondary that the project will use.

Primary messages

- Darebin Council is upgrading Penders Park and wants your feedback about what you want to see as part of the upgrade.
- Council has appointed a project control group (PCG) made up of local community members to develop a master plan for the park
- The project control group (PCG) has been working on developing a vision statement incorporating the themes identified during community engagement in December 2017.
- The vision statement will guide the development of key design principles / ideas to shape the staged approach to redevelopment of the park.
- The key ideas include enhancing safety, improving accessibility, improving facilities, developing an all ages universally accessible play space and improving landscaping.
- Council is not planning to change the park to a dog on-lead park, the park will remain a dog off-lead park.

Engagement purpose, objectives and key dates

Phase one	CONSULT – Gather ideas on the community's vision for the park.	COMPLETE BY DEC 2017
Phase two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INFORM – Inform community, Council and key stakeholders about the vision for the project, how previous feedback is being used and ways to get involved. • CONSULT – Seek feedback on the key ideas proposed to achieve the vision for the Masterplan. • INVOLVE– Ask for community input into design principles 	MAR 2018 – SEPT 2018
Phase three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INFORM – Release draft masterplan and engagement summary report. • CONSULT– ask for feedback on the draft. 	SEPT 2018 – MAY 2019

Target Audience

Local community, park users and Councillors

Relevant Council Plan 2017 - 2021 elements this project supports

1.3 We will expand and improve our network of open and green spaces, parks and natural environments to provide the lungs for our city and reduce the impacts of climate change.

2.2 We will expand opportunities for participation and social connection through sport, physical activity, arts, culture and other leisure activities.

Tactical plan - General communications

Note: all channels determined would have information available in the major community languages

Channel	Details	Timing
Onsite poster	Inform park users of what's happening, next steps where to go for more information. Include key dates and milestones.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ASAP 2. Two weeks prior to launch of phase two engagement 3. Adoption of masterplan
Darebin Council website	<p>Homepage / Your Say featured news item: Informing community of PCG progress and next steps – link back to updated YourSay page with consultation summary</p> <p>Homepage featured YourSay Darebin item: Launch of phase two and three.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASAP • 1-2 weeks prior to and during phase 2 • 1 week prior to phase 3 • Adoption of masterplan
YourSayDarebin site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular PCG updates. • Host Online Engagement (Survey & forum) • Close the loop on all phases of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fortnightly to coincide with PCG meeting schedule. • Launch of phase 2 & 3 • Close the loop minimum 6 weeks' post
Social media- Council Facebook page; Twitter	Use these to update on progress, direct people to provide feedback; use to advertise further community consultation events	As per above; as required
Partner Facebook pages	Provide updates on progress Promote ways to get involved (link back to YourSay) Inform and educate about key themes – what these <i>might</i> look like	As per above; as required
Letters/postcard to local residents within a defined vicinity of Penders Park	This would advise of upcoming consultation and invitation to participate	Distributed at least two weeks prior to event
Outreach to specific interest groups/community groups as identified during consultation	Personal contact via telephone/use of Council officers who have relationship to facilitate contact.	Early in phase two consultation and phase three
Consultation event	Onsite event with engagement activities to seek feedback on draft	Early in phase two consultation

	vision and key ideas (e.g. design principles) Pop-ups Activities for young people/elderly/key stakeholders	
Community movie night	Onsite event to activate the space, inform the public about the project progress and next steps.	Phase Three

Media strategy

Channel	Details	Timing
Darebin Community News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current key message, informing of next steps. • Feature story – announcing adoption of Master plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug/Sept issue distributed from 29 July. Deadline Thurs 7 June 2018 • Book in feature for next two editions (two-month lead times)
Leader Newspapers	Media release/approach to Leader to advise of project and upcoming consultation sessions/where people can go to provide feedback.	2-3 weeks prior to any further consultation sessions planned.
Message from the Mayor in <i>Leader</i>	Message to advise of project and upcoming consultation sessions/where people can go to provide feedback.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One month prior to event/launch 2. Following adoption of Master Plan
Media release	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launch of phase two inviting participation/attendance at event 2. Adoption of masterplan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft written 3 weeks prior to launch
Other council newsletters	Feature story inviting participation in phase two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families in Darebin • Toy library • Active in Darebin • Older persons • People with disabilities 	Two weeks prior to launch, adapt story depending on timelines
CALD media advertising	Prior to launch of phase two inviting participation If featured, announcing adoption of masterplan	
Facebook/other social media	Updates for wider distribution. Perhaps investigate paid Facebook advertising	See above

Internal stakeholder strategy

Channel	Details	Timing
Briefings/emails/agree on best way to provide regular updates	Keep Darebin councillors/council staff/relevant Council departments updated on PCG's work	As required
Staff-to-staff News	Provide updates on PCG progress and engagement approach to identify any stakeholders/channels that need to be included.	ASAP – once YourSay page has been updated
Intranet news item	Provide updates on PCG progress and engagement approach to identify any stakeholders/channels that need to be included.	ASAP – once YourSay page has been updated
Councillor E-bulletin	Provide an update on PCG progress and engagement approach, invite participation and support of phase two	Weekly Bulletin
Corporate Events Calendar	Add consultation event to corporate events calendar	TBC
Mayoral briefing	Confirm on best way to do this	5 weeks prior to event

Closing the Loop and Evaluation

These are the performance indicators for the project:

Communications and engagement objectives	Indicators of success	Achieved YES / NO	Reason not achieved / opportunities for improvement
Inform all stakeholders about key project milestones and next steps	Regular communications distributed. No issues or concerns raised.	YES	
Stakeholders feel they have been given an opportunity to be heard	Stakeholders have ownership of the plan and can see where their contributions have been incorporated.	YES	

Updates – high level description of activities**Early July 2018**

- Letter box drop to residences and businesses within 500 metres of the park to advise of drop in session
- Email notifications and telephone calls to stakeholder groups to advise them of the drop-in session

21-7-18

- Second community drop in session at park
- Approximately 200 people in attendance. See engagement report for further details.

Mid-January 2019

- Letter box drop to residences and businesses within 500 metres of the park to advertise open air cinema event
- Advertising board erected in the park to advertise event
- Emails to stakeholders about the event

9-2-19

- Open air cinema event and further consultation to get more specific information about features local residents would like to see within Penders Park & the Playspace
- Approximately 200 local residents were engaged in the consultation.

Refer to **PENDERS PARK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT** prepared by Wendy Holland from Community Vibe for more detail.

24-4-19

- All Abilities Play Space consultation commenced on YourSay Darebin page.
- PCG members provided draft to local primary schools (Wales Street and Pender's Grove) for comment.

6-5-19

- PCG members provided Council with a project update.

8-5-19

- PCG met with Liz Cummins (play space designer) to refine draft concepts and provided school feedback.

17-5-19

- Consultation on All Abilities Play Space closed.
- 13 comments received on the YourSay page.

Key Stakeholders List

Type	Organisation	Title	Address	Suburb
Local residents				
Young people 12-18 year group		Coordinator Youth Services @ Darebin		
Parents				
Dog owners	Friends of Pender's Park			
Accessibility (Disability support service)	Carinya Society		10 Bellevue St	Coburg
Accessibility	Arlington Aged Care Facility		3 Collins Street	Thornbury
Schools/ Daycare as per community schools and kinders				
	Thornbury High School	Principal	238 Collins Street	Thornbury
	Santa Maria College	Principal	50 Separation Street	Northcote
	Samaritan Catholic College		8 Clifton Grove	Preston
	St John's Greek Orthodox College	Principal	21 Railway Place	West Preston
	Wales Street Primary School	Principal	49 Wales Street	Thornbury
	Thornbury Primary School	Principal	16-22 Hutton Street	Thornbury
	Preston West Primary School			

	Pender's Grove Primary School			
	Bell Primary School	Acting Principal	78A Oakover Road	Preston
	St Mary's Primary School	Principal	2 Mansfield Street	Thornbury
	Holy Spirit Primary School	Principal	197 Clarendon Street	Thornbury
	Sacred Heart Primary School	Principal	1 Clifton Grove	Thornbury
	Melbourne Polytechnic		77 St Georges Road	Preston
	Croxton Special School	Principal	159-165 Beaconsfield Pde	Northcote
	Yarra Me		Highview Road, Preston 3072	
	Yappera Children's Service Cooperative Ltd		2B Watt Street	Thornbury
	Thornbury Kindergarten	Director	8C Newcastle Street	Thornbury
	Gower Street Kindergarten	Co-director	146 Gower Street	Preston
	Uniting Care Lentara		413 - 419 Camp Road, , Victoria, 3047	
	Clyde Street Kindergarten Inc		70 Clyde Street	Thornbury

	Merri Community Child Care Centre & Kindergaten	Director	313 St Georges Road	Thornbury
	Alfred Nuttall Memorial Kindergaten		34 Separation Street	Fairfield
	Clifton Street Children's Centre		55 Clifton Street	Northcote
	Nara Community Early Learning Centre	Director	77-91 St Georges Road	Preston
	Crisalida Child, Adolescent, Adult & Family Therapy		678 High Street	Thornbury
Scouts/Guides	5th Northcote (Cubs, Scouts, Venturers)		5 Ethel Street	Thornbury
	Darebin Girl Guides (Clyde Street, Thornbury)			
Aboriginal (Council committee)				
Aboriginal				
Indigenous			2 Watt Street	Thornbury

Accessibility			3-5 Ethel Street	Thornbury
Accessibility (Council committee)		CD worker, Aged & Disability		
Community	Span Community House		64 Clyde Street	Thornbury
Community	The Bridge Preston & Thornbury		218 High Street 131 Shaftesbury Pde	Preston Thornbury
Community	Darebin Community Legal Centre		732 High Street	Thornbury
Senior Citizens' Groups				
Community Senior Citizens' Groups	St Marys Elderly Italian Citizens Club Inc. Holy Spirit		789 High Street 197 Clarendon st	Thornbury
Community	The Salvation Army (Senior Citizen's Group)		704-710 High Street	Thornbury
MOSS Merri Outreach Support Service Ltd			279 High Street	Northcote
Darebin Council				
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor Rucker Ward	Gower Street	Preston
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor Rucker Ward	Gower Street	Preston

Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor Rucker Ward/Mayor	Gower Street	Preston
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor Cazaly Ward	Gower Street	Preston
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor Cazaly Ward	Gower Street	Preston
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor Cazaly Ward	Gower Street	Preston
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor La Trobe Ward	Gower Street	Preston
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor La Trobe Ward	Gower Street	Preston
Councillor	Darebin Council	Councillor La Trobe Ward	Gower Street	Preston
Council officers	Darebin Council – Key Internal Stakeholders			
High Street Businesses				
Community members who provided their email address at the drop in sessions or registered their interest on the yoursaydarebin page				

**8.4 CONTRACT AWARD CT201890
BILL LAWRY PAVILION CONSTRUCTION UPGRADE****Author:** Project Manager**Reviewed By:** Acting General Manager Operations and Capital

PURPOSE

To seek approval to award Contract CT201890 for the Bill Lawry Pavilion Upgrade Stage 1 & 2 Works to the preferred Contractor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is seeking to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced Head Contractor to perform the works associated with Stages 1 and 2 of the Bill Lawry Pavilion Upgrade Project. The scope of works of Stage 1 and 2 Works includes:

- Refurbishing the public amenities
- Creating additional accessible toilet and external store
- New externally accessed accessible toilet with reconfigured ramp to footpath
- Refurbishment of the gymnasium building to convert into two additional change rooms with amenities (change room 3 + 4) and medical room
- New connection to Oldis Gardens
- Create a new external raised viewing platform with accessible ramp and canopy in front of grandstand
- Upgrade handrails and balustrade to existing grandstand stairs

A Request for Tender (RFT) by invitation was released on 23 March 2019 and eight companies from the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) Construction Supply Register (CSR) were invited.

The CSR is a prequalification scheme for construction works and services established by the DTF. Local Governments and other State Departments can access the scheme for the purpose of procuring works and services. The CSR operates in accordance with the Ministerial Directions and Instructions for Public Construction Procurement in Victoria.

The RFT closed on 11 April 2019 and submissions from five companies were received. The Tender Evaluation Panel (TEP) has evaluated the tenders and recommends awarding the contract to the preferred tenderer.

The proposed contract agreement is a lump sum contract based on AS4000 and works are expected to be completed by April 2020.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Awards Contract No. CT201890 for the construction of Bill Lawry Pavilion Upgrade Stage 1 & 2 Works to _____ for the contract sum \$_____ (incl. GST);

- (2) Approves a contingency amount of \$_____, being approximately ___% of the Contract amount to be used if required for variations and/or any other unforeseen items as part of Contract No. CT201890; and
 - (3) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to finalise and execute the contract documentation on behalf of Council with the Contractor.
-

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

This report deals with the award of Contract No. CT201890 Bill Lawry Pavilion Upgrade Stage 1 and 2 Works.

Consultation during development of the Darebin Leisure Strategy in 2010 found that increased funding for sports pavilions facilities should be a high priority of Council; to renew ageing sporting infrastructure, meet community expectations regarding provision of attractive, modern sporting venues and increase participation in physical activity, especially by women.

Refurbishment of the existing Bill Lawry Oval sporting pavilion and ancillary buildings (change rooms and toilet block), aims to improve the facility condition. It is currently in very poor functional condition and non-compliant with current DDA legislation. Stage 1 & 2 Works will include creation of accessible change rooms including facilities to accommodate female participation, upgraded public toilet amenities, and DDA compliant viewing area and ablutions.

Previous Council Resolution

This matter is not the subject of a previous Council resolution.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

The following community groups and organisations were consulted during the design phases:

- Northcote Park Football Club
- Northcote Cricket Club
- Darebin Falcons Women's Sports Club
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisor
- Sports and Recreation Victoria
- Recreation Services
- Local residents neighbouring the site – via the Planning notification process

The design was conceived of, and the construction is planned, in stages to facilitate ongoing use of the facility by the clubs throughout the construction program with the disturbance minimised as far as reasonably practicable. The clubs are aware of and accepted this approach.

Communications

It is intended that the groups above will be advised once a Contract is awarded and will continue to be advised as construction progresses via periodic communication with the Recreation Services Team.

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 2 - Opportunities to live well

2.2 We will expand opportunities for participation and social connection through sport, physical activity, arts, culture and other leisure activities.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Locally sourced stone materials have been specified to support Victorian industry and to reduce transport energy/carbon footprint.

The building has been designed to meet Council's ESD policy requirements including provision for operable louver windows, for low VOC paints and finishes, for low formaldehyde MDF, for certified accredited timber supply, and for a preference for ISO 14001 compliant products. Rainwater tanks will be used to capture water with which to flush the toilets.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

The design of the Pavilion Upgrade includes provision of accessible toilets and sports viewing platform in front of the grandstand.

Provision of female change rooms will encourage higher rates of active female participation in sports and activities at the venue.

Cultural Considerations

The upgraded facility will incorporate multi-use spaces that can be used for a range of activities and events. Refurbishment of the existing Bill Lawry Oval sporting pavilion and ancillary buildings (change rooms and toilet block), aims to improve the facility condition. It is currently in very poor functional condition and non-compliant with current DDA legislation. Stage 1 and 2 Works will include creation of accessible change rooms including facilities to accommodate female participation, upgraded public toilet amenities, and DDA compliant viewing area and ablutions.

Economic Development Considerations

The redevelopment of Bill Lawry Oval pavilion is projected to generate economic benefit to the local region by providing opportunities for a diverse range of sports, events and activities. Employment outcomes during the construction phase will generate local and regional income generation.

Financial and Resource Implications

Refer to the Confidential Report (**Appendix A**) for the details of the budget and the tender evaluation and budget summary.

Part of the total funding for the project is being provided by, and in a partnership with, Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV). Total SRV funding will amount to \$500,000 (excl GST), \$450,000 (excl GST) of which will be provided prior to works commencing, and a final \$50,000 (excl GST) upon Practical Completion.

Northcote Park Football Club had offered Council \$100,000 (excl GST), but Council declined to accept this offer as the funds had been raised from poker machines revenue.

Legal and Risk Implications

A Risk Matrix was prepared for the project and included as part of the Strategic Procurement Plan. Risk controls have been identified for implementation to reduce risks to low and medium levels.

Probity

As the project was expected to be valued at over \$1Million, an external Probity Advisor was engaged at the start of the procurement process and retained through to the completion of tender evaluation.

The Probity Advisor's report confirmed that all probity requirements have been met, and there were no probity issues highlighted, and that have the potential to undermine the integrity of the procurement process.

For further details, refer to confidential report **Appendix B** for the probity auditors report.

Financial Check

A preliminary check was conducted to confirm that prospective tenderers had a work history of performing construction on projects with similar or greater value to this project, prior to inviting them to tender.

Tenderers were asked to respond, in their submissions, to a series of questions about their financial viability.

Finally, a financial check was completed on each of the preferred tenderer through Illion Direct. The financial check verified the financial capacity of the preferred tenderer to complete the works. Refer to confidential report (**Appendix C**) for the Illion Direct reports.

DISCUSSION

Request for Tender

The RFT was issued by invitation to eight (8) selected contractors. Each of these contractors is listed on the Department of Treasury and Finance Construction Supplier Register and had recently performed work for Council or demonstrated experience of working on sports pavilions on their web sites and brochures.

The Request for Tender (RFT) closed on 11 April 2019. Details of consultants who submitted tender responses before the closing date and time are provided in Confidential **Appendix A**, circulated to Councillors under separate cover.

Tender Evaluation

A Tender Evaluation Panel (TEP) was formed to evaluate the tender responses and to recommend a preferred contractor to undertake the works.

The RFT submissions were evaluated by the TEP against the evaluation criteria detailed in the Evaluation Endorsement Form, Procurement Plan, RFT and the table below.

Table 2 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria
Price
Local supplier involvement
Previous relevant experience with similar projects
Team capability and key personnel
Proposed method, program and timeline
Commercial – including risk, insurances, health, safety, environment and quality management systems

The list of members on the panel, evaluation details, pricing and scoring for the evaluation is provided in Confidential **Appendix A**, circulated to Councillors under a separate cover.

The tender evaluation matrix, showing the scores of all submissions and signed by all members of the TEP, is included as Confidential **Appendix D**, for information.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Refer to Confidential **Appendix A** circulated to Councillors under separate cover for options for consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

Once awarded, the Contractor will be advised and required to provide all preliminary documentation. It is expected that initial works will be the site establishment, followed by demolition work to make space for the works. A detailed construction program will be required before commencement.

Communication

The community groups previously consulted will be kept informed of progress of the works through communications with the Recreation Services team, as will Council via standard monthly reporting.

Neighbouring residents have received letter drops regarding the works and will be updated using letter drops if any exceptional project development warrants doing so.

Timeline

Table 3 Estimated Program Summary

Task/Milestone	Date/Range
Expenditure approval	22 July 19
Site set-up	Mid-August 2019

Task/Milestone	Date/Range
Construction start	Early-September 2019
Construction completion	April 2020
Handover	May 2020

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Previous documents related to Contract No. CT201890 – Construction of Bill Lawry Pavilion Upgrade – Stage 1 and 2 Works:

- Strategic Procurement Plan (incl. amendment)
- Risk Assessment
- Probity Plan
- Request for Tender
- Conflict of Interest Declaration
- Evaluation Endorsement
- Evaluation Matrix

Attachments

- Bill Lawry Pavilion Upgrade (**Appendix A**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Probity Auditor Report (**Appendix B**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Comprehensive Illion Report (**Appendix C**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Tender Evaluation Matrix (**Appendix D**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

8.5 G.E ROBINSON PARK PAVILION UPGRADE - CT2018128

Author: Coordinator Project Management
Senior Project Manager

Reviewed By: Acting General Manager Operations and Capital

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regent Tennis Club (RTC) facilities and outdoor playing courts are located in Reservoir, at the corner of High Street and Garden Street. They include an existing pavilion dating to the mid-1930s and an external brick toilet block (unused).

The current weatherboard pavilion and external brick toilet block are no longer deemed fit for purpose. Neither meets the club's and general community standards, are no longer compliant with current building construction codes and DDA guidelines. Both are dilapidated and can no longer cater to the growing membership numbers of the Regent Tennis Club. Maintaining the buildings in their current condition is not sustainable. The new extension and upgrade works will respect the look and design of the original pavilion. Council's Heritage Advisor has been consulted and involved throughout the design and procurement process.

The scope of works includes:

- Demolition of the existing separate toilet block and partial demolition of pavilion exterior
- Partial external demolition of the existing pavilion building and full internal restoration
- Complete stabilisation and refurbishment of existing pavilion shell and an extension to the footprint, to include the following features:
 - New Male / Female / DDA compliant bathrooms and change rooms for facility users
 - Dedicated function / meeting clubroom
 - New kitchen and cabinetry, internal and external store rooms
 - Outside paving for all access areas
 - Substantial ESD inclusions, such as solar panels on main roof on east and west sides, rain water tank or water harvesting system for use of flushing lavatories, re-use of timbers and roof tiles, bicycle parking facilities, insulation upgrades, passive cross ventilation
 - Retaining walls, fencing and gates

The appointment of an experienced contractor for the construction of the G.E. Robinson Park Pavilion Upgrade and associated works was sought via a competitive tender process. The proposed contract arrangement is a lump sum contract. Works are programmed to commence in mid-August 2019 and be completed by the end of February 2020.

The Tender Evaluation Panel has evaluated the tenders and recommends awarding the contract to the preferred Tenderer.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's approval to award Contract No. CT2018128 - G.E. Robinson Park Pavilion Upgrade to an appropriate qualified contractor.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Awards Contract No. CT2018128 for the G.E. Robinson Park Pavilion Upgrade to _____ for the contract sum of \$ _____ (GST inclusive).
- (2) Approves a contingency and provisional sum amount of \$ _____ (GST inclusive), included in the above and being approximately 10% of the Contract amount, to be used if required for variations and other unforeseen items as part of Contract No. CT2018128.
- (3) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to finalise and execute the contract documentation on behalf of the Council, with the Contractor.

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

This report deals with the award of Contract No. CT2018128 - G.E. Robinson Park Pavilion Upgrade.

Previous Council Resolution

The project was initially created in 2014 with quotations sought for the design phase. Council funded this project as part of its annual capital works budget process. The project is also part of Council's Sporting Infrastructure Priority Plan.

This particular construction procurement was not the subject of a previous Council resolution.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**Consultation**

During the design phase, key stakeholders have been consulted and have provided input to the design process.

Table 1 – Stakeholder Consultation

Title	Directorate
Manager Recreation & Libraries	Recreation & Libraries
Team Leader Leisure Services	Recreation & Libraries
Coordinator Procurement and Contracting	Finance
Senior Procurement Officer	Finance
General Manager Operations and Capital	Operations and Capital
Manager Assets and Capital Delivery	Operations and Capital
Coordinator Project Management	Operations and Capital
Coordinator Facilities Management	Operations and Capital
Coordinator Statutory Planning	City Development
Principal Statutory Planner	City Development
Heritage Advisor	Strategy and Governance

Title	Directorate
Portfolio Analyst	EPMO
Regent Tennis Club	Members of the RTC

In early December 2018, the local community was consulted on this project. A letter box drop of the surrounding residents advised of the proposed upgrade and sought feedback via attending one of two pop up sessions held in the park (on Saturday 1 December 10.00 am - 1.00pm and Wednesday 5 December 3.00pm – 6.00pm) or via email or a phone call. A Your Say web page was also established and continues to be used to communicate the project's progress www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/gerobinsonpark

The key questions asked in the consultation were:

- What do you think of the proposed plans?
- When not used for tennis, what could the club rooms be used for?
- Would you like to be contacted for future consultations regarding the GE Robinson Reserve?
- Any other comments?

Over 20 submissions were received and have confirmed the community support for the project. In particular there was support for the club / meeting room to be opened up to more uses than just tennis. The Regent Tennis Club has welcomed this idea and will work with Council to co-ordinate and implement facility booking. There was also no objection to the demolition of the currently unused toilet block. Several park users asked if the pavilion toilets could be used when needed, the Regent Tennis Club has confirmed that community access is allowed when the facility is in use. In general, the redevelopment was received positively by community members and the club as a way to encourage park activation, further use of the facility and to boost participation in the club.

Communications

The above stakeholder groups will be advised once a Contract is awarded and will continue to be kept informed and updated as construction progresses. Formal communication tools such as Council's 'Your Say Darebin' webpage and informal tools such as phone calls and emails are being used successfully.

The Regent Tennis Club has provided written consent to the expected interruption to the use of the en-tous-cas courts whilst construction works are underway

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 2 - Opportunities to live well

The project is part of the initiatives under Council's Leisure Strategy 2010–2020 and associated Action Plan.

2.2 Opportunities for participation and social connection through sports, physical activity, arts, culture and other leisure activities.

The pavilion upgrade is designed to foster the inclusion of female and junior tennis players, provide better amenities to the club and its members, increase the size of the function room,

be inviting to including the wider community to attend tennis functions at the clubhouse and renders the facility DDA compliant, whilst addressing the issues associated in the past with the public toilet block.

Goal 5 - Involving our diverse community

5.1 Ensure our services, facilities and programs benefit all, including our most vulnerable

The inclusion of people with special needs and fostering tennis participation of young and female players are a goal to be achieved as a direct result of the upgrade works.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Darebin Council's ESD Building policy has been followed to the extent possible by including the following considerations in the planning and design stage:

- 70% of demolition material to be recycled
- 80% of roof tiles and timber floor beams to be reused (subject to quality)
- Inclusion of rainwater tank and pump
- First flush and filtered water system
- Photovoltaic roof panels
- Inclusion of bike racks
- Acoustic and temperature insulation used in refurbishment and new extension in roof and walls
- Re-use of existing gates and fencing on site
- Use of water and energy efficient materials in fit out of change rooms, toilets / shower and kitchen
- Design has been assessed and successfully achieved a BESS (Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard) rating

Climate Emergency

Darebin Council is a member of the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA). This is an alliance of the Councils of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Manningham, Melbourne, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra, and Moreland Energy Foundation Limited, aiming to create a low-carbon society resilient to the impacts of climate change.

In August 2017, Council put into place its 'Darebin Climate Emergency Action Plan'. This plan sets out nine key considerations to help Council reach its environmental core goals:

1. Climate Emergency mobilisation and leadership
2. Energy efficiency
3. Renewable energy and fuel switching
4. Zero emissions transport
5. Consumption and waste minimisation
6. Fossil fuel divestment
7. Adaptation and resilience
8. Engaging the community

9. Darebin Energy Foundation

In the context of the proposed pavilion upgrade works, the project team included the following measures: use of solar roof panels, supply of Star rated appliances (items 2 and 3) to reduce greenhouse gases, supply of WELS rated appliances to conserve freshwater, rainwater harvesting measures (item 2), provision of bicycle racks (item 4), advocating the use of responsibly harvested timber and the minimisation of structural steel elements (item 6), use of insulation in walls and roof spaces (item 2), and salvaging and re-using roof tiles and floor boards from the original pavilion building to the extent possible (item 5).

By including these active measures in the build project, Council effectively demonstrates its leadership in climate emergency action (item 1).

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

The design of the pavilion refurbishment and extension includes:

- Provision of DDA compliant, male and female change rooms and restrooms.
- Acoustic and temperature insulation
- Use of water and energy efficient materials in fit out

The scope of the project will significantly improve the provision of female friendly change spaces and amenities whilst providing a facility that is DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant. This will bring the club pavilion up to a standard the club and community will enjoy as there is significant growth in female and junior sport in the City of Darebin. With the demand for quality sports facilities, it is important that Council assets such as the club house are renewed.

Cultural Considerations

The facility itself is designed to be accessible to community members with special needs and include tennis players from all cultural backgrounds.

Commencement of this Contract was not subject to receiving an approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP).

Economic Development Considerations

A local business assessment was carried out for each tenderer as part of the evaluation process in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and Guidelines. A 10% weighting was allocated to this criterion.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council allocated \$670,596 (excl. GST) in the 2019/2020 budget. The pavilion tenant Regent Tennis Club had agreed to contribute a further \$50,000 resulting in an available total funding amount of \$720,596 in the 2019/2020 budget to complete the project.

Refer to Confidential **Appendix A** for details of the budget and financials.

Legal and Risk Implications

Probity

As the expected project cost was well below \$1M, a Probity Plan and external Probity Adviser were not required for the procurement process. Probity issues were effectively addressed by Council's procurement department.

A Risk Management Plan was prepared as part of the approved Strategic Procurement Plan for the construction works.

Planning

A town planning permit for the proposed demolition works for the toilet block and exterior and interior aspects being re-furnished at the existing pavilion, was required from Darebin City Council. Darebin City Council issued the Planning Permit on 10 May 2019. The permit was further amended under Secondary Consent and re-issued on 17 June 2019.

The new construction did not require a planning permit due to its estimated total value being below \$1M.

A building permit will be obtained for the new works from a registered building surveyor.

Contract Works

The nature of the contract works is considered medium risk with respect to Occupational Health & Safety. The contractor is required to compile Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) for construction activities and site inductions for all suppliers and subcontractor staff, to undertake regular risk assessment of each task as work proceeds and to have measures in place to eliminate or reduce risk. The contractor is required to provide evidence that Public Liability and WorkCover insurances are in place and current before commencing works on site.

Financial Check

A financial credit report check was completed on the shortlisted contractor via the Illion website (formerly known as Dun and Bradstreet). This check commissioned on 24 June 2019 verified the financial capacity of the recommended contractor to complete the works. Refer to confidential **Appendix B** for the Illion Comprehensive Credit Check Report.

DISCUSSION

Request for Tender

The Request for Tender (RFT) for Contract No. CT2018128 - G.E. Robinson Park Pavilion Upgrade was sent to shortlist of nine (9) panel contractors on the Construction Supplier Register on 1 September 2018. The tender was opened for 19 days as per Council's Procurement Policy and extended by a further 7 days upon requests by some of the Tenderers. A non-mandatory Tender Briefing Session was held on 16 May 2019 to provide Tenderers with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the site and ask questions was attended by all invited Tenderers. The RFT closed on 6 June 2019.

The Tender and contract are based on a lump sum contract using Australian Standard AS 4000-1997 – General Conditions of Contract. Details of contractors that submitted proposals before the closing date and time are provided in Confidential **Appendix A**, circulated to Councillors under separate cover.

Table 2 –Tender Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria
Price
Program and Timeline
Demonstrated Experience & Team Capability
Proposed Methodology
Local Business Content
Social Procurement
Insurances and OH&S

The members of the panel, evaluation details, pricing and scoring for the evaluation is provided in Confidential **Appendix C** circulated to Councillors under separate cover.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Refer to Confidential **Appendix A** circulated to Councillors under separate cover for the three options for consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

Table 3 – Implementation Strategy

Task	Timeframe
Award Contract CT2018128 to the successful contractor	Early August 2019
Commence construction	Mid-August 2019
Complete construction works and handover	Late February 2020

The project is required to be completed within 26 weeks from the date of award, excluding extensions of time for inclement weather, public holidays or scope changes, particularly those caused by unforeseeable complications.

Communication

The community groups and organisations already consulted with and adjoining potentially affected local residents will be kept informed of progress of the works. This will be achieved via letterbox drops, one-on-one meetings, information issued to the Regent Tennis Club via email, over the phone or in by community presentation arranged by the project team and potential press release statements provided by Council's Communications and Community Engagement teams.

Timeline

The project is required to be completed within 26 weeks of the date of award, excluding extensions of time for inclement weather or scope changes, particularly caused by unforeseeable complications.

Table 7 – Planned Target Dates

The following table provides the target dates for planned completion milestones for Council staff and the engaged building contractor:

Milestone Date / Task	Target Date - Timeframe
Expenditure Approval received	22 July 2019
Letter of Award	31 July 2019
Contract Documentation and Execution	23 July – 6 August 2019
Site Establishment	12 August 2019
Construction	19 August 2019 – 21 February 2020
Practical Completion and Handover	22 February – 28 February 2020

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Documents related to Contract No. CT2018128 – G.E. Robinson Park Pavilion Upgrade are:

- Strategic Procurement Plan
- Risk Assessment
- Request for Tender
- Conflict of Interest Declaration for Council staff
- Confidentiality Agreement with external providers
- Evaluation Endorsement
- Evaluation Matrix

Attachments

- List relevant documents (legislation, policies, reference papers, previous Council reports or Briefing papers) using the Infocouncil Attachments Screen. GE Robinson Park Pavilion Upgrade CT2018128 (**Appendix A**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Illion Report (**Appendix B**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Evaluation Matrix (**Appendix C**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

8.6 PROPOSED ROAD DISCONTINUANCE BOUNDED BY GOWER STREET, SWALLOW STREET AND COOMA STREET, PRESTON

Author: Property Officer

Reviewed By: General Manager Governance and Engagement

PURPOSE

To complete the statutory procedures for the proposed discontinuance of the right-of-way/road that traverses the site of the former Preston Girls Secondary College located at 16 Cooma Street, Preston and adjoins 229 Gower Street and 1–3 Swallow Street, Preston.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 8 April 2019, Council resolved to commence the statutory process and give public notice of the proposed discontinuance of the road that traverses the site of the former Preston Girls Secondary College located at 16 Cooma Street, Preston and adjoins 229 Gower Street and 1–3 Swallow Street, Preston shown in the site plan in **Appendix A** and coloured orange on the aerial photo in **Appendix B** (Road). Council declared its intention to transfer the land from the road forming part of the school site to the Minister for Education and Training for nil consideration and to transfer any land from the road not transferred to the Minister for Education and Training to itself (Council). The land highlighted in blue in **Appendix D** does not form part of the school site and is proposed to be transferred to Council.

Public notice of the proposal was given in the Preston Leader and Northcote Leader newspapers on 7 and 8 May 2019 respectively. Notification was also given on Council's website. The notice period ended on 5 June 2019. No submissions were received.

Recommendation

That Council:

Having given public notice of a proposal to discontinue the right-of-way/road that traverses the site of the former Preston Girls Secondary College located at 16 Cooma Street, Preston and adjoins 229 Gower Street and 1–3 Swallow Street, Preston shown highlighted in **Appendix A** to this report, and having received no submissions in respect of this proposal under section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*:

- (1) Has formed the opinion that the road shown in the site plan in **Appendix A** and coloured orange on the aerial photo in **Appendix B** to this report is no longer reasonably required for road purposes.
- (2) Discontinues the road in accordance with section 206 and Clause 3, schedule 10 to the *Local Government Act 1989*.
- (3) Directs that a notice be published in the Victoria Government Gazette.
- (4) Directs that the land from the road forming part of the school site be transferred to the Minister for Education and Training for nil consideration.
- (5) Transfers any land from the road not transferred to the Minister for Education and Training to itself (Council).

- (6) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign all documents relating to the sale of any land from the discontinued road to the owner of the adjoining property.
 - (7) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all other acts to enable any land from the road not transferred to Minister for Education and Training to be transferred to Council.
-

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

The former Preston Girls Secondary College is located in Cooma Street, Preston. The site is a collection of land parcels variously owned by the State Government and Council, as shown in **Appendix C**.

In 1924, the former Shire of Preston Council resolved to support the Department of Education (Department) in the development of a school in the Preston area by offering Council land for the school site. In 1950, Council further agreed to the Road being closed and incorporated in the school site. The school opened in 1929 and operated for nearly 85 years; however, records show that transfers of the land including part of the Road were not affected and the titles to the allotments remained in Council's name or continued to vest in Council.

The school closed in 2013, but has now re-opened as Preston High School. In April 2018, the Mayor provided a letter to the Minister of Education and Training (Minister) indicating Council's support for the school development (including the transfer of the Council land contained within the boundaries of the school site).

On 2 June 2014, Council, after undertaking the statutory process and having received no submissions, resolved to discontinue and sell a portion of the road bounded by Gower Street, Swallow Street, Cooma Street, Preston to the adjoining property at 227 Gower Street, Preston, as shown in **Appendix C**. The settlement and transfer for the land was effected on 8 June 2016.

Previous Council Resolution

At its meeting held on 8 April 2019, Council resolved:

'That Council:

- (1) *Commences the statutory procedures under section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 to the Local Government Act 1989 ('the Act') to discontinue the road traversing the former Preston Girls Secondary College at 16 Cooma Street, Preston and adjoining 229 Gower Street and 1-3 Swallow Street, Preston, shown coloured yellow on **Appendix A**.*
- (2) *Gives public notice under sections 207A, 82A and 223 of the Act of the proposed discontinuance in the appropriate newspapers and on Council's website, and in such notice, state that if the road is discontinued, Council proposes to:*
 - a) *Transfer the land from the road forming part of the school site to the Minister for Education and Training for nil consideration; and*
 - b) *Transfer any land from the road not transferred to the Minister for Education and Training to itself (Council).'*

At its meeting held on 7 November 2018, Council resolved:

'That Council:

notes the report on the transfer of land within the boundary of the former Preston Girls Secondary College to the State Government for educational purposes.'

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

The statutory procedures require Council to give public notice of its intention to remove the reserve status and its intention to transfer part of the land to the Minister of Education and Training and transfer part of the land not transferred to the Minister to itself, and invite submissions from affected parties or any person/s. Submitters were offered the opportunity to request to be heard by council prior to a decision being made.

Consultation with Service Authorities and Council Departments

Easements in favour of both Council and Yarra Valley Water will be saved over part of the land from the Road where infrastructure currently exists.

Communications

Communications with the department and the VSBA are ongoing. The Department has agreed to pay all of Council's associated costs with undertaking the statutory process, as well as all reasonable legal costs to facilitate the transfer of land.

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 6 - A well governed Council

Property Assets Management Strategy 2014

Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy 2015

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact upon environmental sustainability considerations.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

The provision of a government secondary school in this location will benefit the Darebin community. A proposed formal shared user agreement between the Department and Council will ensure the land becomes available as publicly accessible open space for the community to enjoy.

Cultural Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact upon cultural considerations.

Economic Development Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact upon economic development considerations.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications as a result of commencing the statutory procedures as contained in this report.

Costs associated with the statutory procedures and transfer of the Road will be recovered from the Department, should the discontinuance proceed.

Legal and Risk Implications

Risks associated with each option are covered under the analysis of each option.

DISCUSSION

Council's property portfolio must meet current service needs while providing the flexibility to meet future requirements. Roads, reserves, revenge strips, hiatus and other pieces of land of unusual shape and limited usefulness that are less than 200m² in area (collectively referred to as minor Council property assets) were originally set aside in early plans of subdivision for a particular purpose, such as access or drainage. In many cases, these parcels of land are still required for that purpose and need to remain open and available to the public.

In situations where a minor Council property asset is no longer reasonably required for that purpose or other strategic purposes, it may be considered surplus and suitable for sale or transfer to another entity.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option 1 – Abandon the Proposal or Do Nothing

Council could resolve to abandon the proposal, take no action or may make no resolution on the matter. This option would mean that the status quo would remain with the Department continuing to occupy part of the Road contained within the school site boundary.

This action would be inconsistent with the intent of the Council resolutions of 14 April 1924, 7 November 2018 and 8 April 2019. There is also a risk that the Department may take legal action to formalise the ownership of that part of the Road that has been contained within the school site and used for education purposes for more than fifty years.

Option 2 – Proceed with the Statutory Procedures (Recommended)

Council could resolve to discontinue the Road and transfer the land to the Minister for Education and Training for nil consideration and transfer any land from the road not transferred to the Minister for Education and Training to itself. This would be consistent with the intent of the Council resolutions of the 14 April 1924, 7 November 2018 and 8 April 2019.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

- Arrange for the transfer of the land from the road forming part of the school site to the Minister for Education and Training for nil consideration and transfer any land from the road not transferred to the Minister for Education and Training to itself.

Communication

- Minister for Education and Training
- Russell Kennedy Lawyers

Timeline

It is expected that the transfer of the land to the Minister for Education and Training and to itself will be finalised within three months of Council approval.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Council Minutes 14 April 1924
- Council Minutes 7 November 2018
- Council Minutes 8 April 2019
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy 2015

Attachments

- Site Plan (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)
- Aerial View (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)
- Property Ownership Plan of 16 Cooma Street, Preston (**Appendix C**) [↓](#)
- Road Division Plan (**Appendix D**) [↓](#)

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

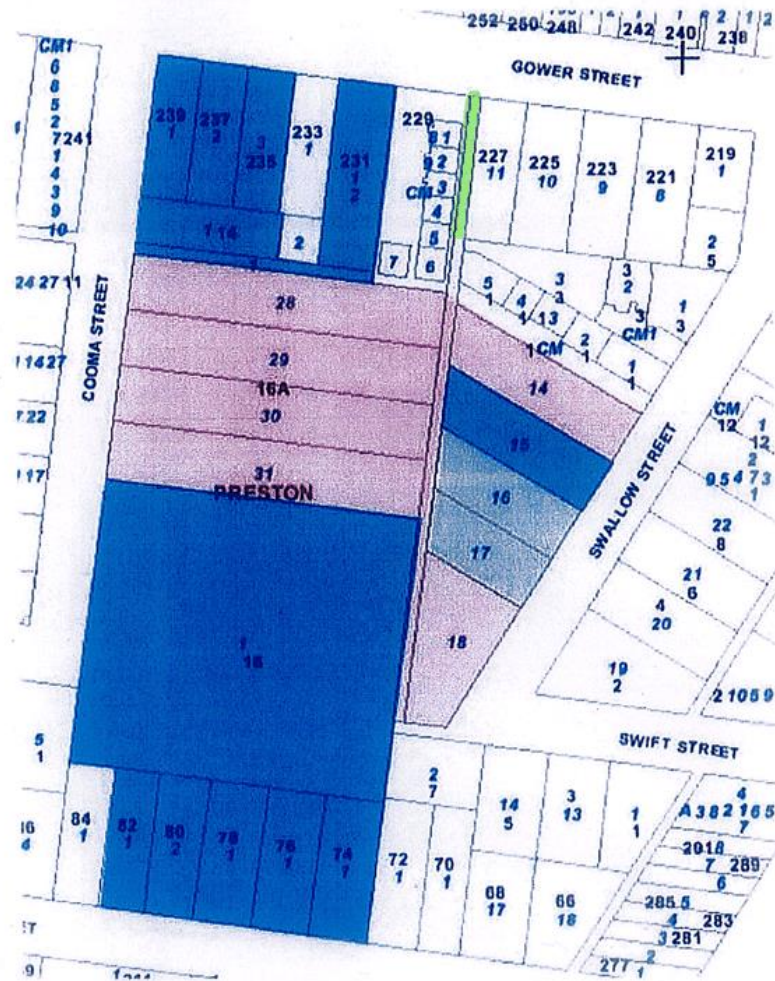
Darebin City Council
21/02/2019



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Darebin City Council
21/02/2019





The Mayor Councillors and Burgesses of the Town of Preston (Darebin City Council)

Minister Administering the Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Minister Administering the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (as claim of adverse possession from Edward John Dunston of Knotts Siding Near Warbuton)

Discontinued road (right of way) sold to adjoining 227 Gower Street Preston

Darebin City Council
21/02/2019



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**8.7 PROPOSED SALE OF A DISCONTINUED ROAD
REAR 8 MASSEY AVENUE AND 7 LAWLEY STREET,
RESERVOIR****Author:** Property Officer**Reviewed By:** General Manager Governance and Engagement

PURPOSE

To complete the statutory process for the proposed sale of land from a 3.05-metre-wide former road adjoining the rear of 8 Massey Avenue and 7 Lawley Street, Reservoir, shown hatched on site plan in **Appendix A** and in orange in the aerial view in **Appendix B** and referenced as Lot 10 on Title Plan 0936581T (**Appendix C**).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 3 December 2018, Council resolved to commence the statutory procedures and give public notice of the proposed sale of the land at the rear of 8 Massey Avenue and 7 Lawley Street, Reservoir to the adjoining property owner at 8 Massey Avenue. The process provided the community and all abutting property owners with the opportunity to make comment on the proposal.

Public notice of the proposal was given in the *Preston Leader* and *Northcote Leader* newspapers on 23 and 24 January 2019 respectively. Notification was also given on Council's website. The notice period ended on 8 March 2019. No submissions were received.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Having given public notice of the proposal under section 189 of the *Local Government Act 1989* ('the Act') and having received no submissions in respect of the proposals under section 223 of the Act, directs that the land shown as Lot 10 on Title Plan 0936581T in **Appendix C** be sold by private treaty to the owners of 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir, in accordance with Council's Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy.
 - (2) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign all documents relating to the sale of the land from the discontinued road.
-

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

In 2018, Council received an enquiry from an adjoining property owner at 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir looking to purchase the land from the former road at the rear of their property.

Investigations revealed that on 6 April 2010, Council resolved to discontinue the road bound by Massey Avenue, Broadhurst Avenue and Lawley Street, Reservoir and to sell the land by private treaty in accordance with Council policy. However, not all parcels of land were sold at that time, with the unsold parcels of land continuing to vest with Council. The discontinuance was published in the Victorian Government Gazette on 15 April 2010, shown in **Appendix D**.

Investigations also revealed that the land appears to have been incorporated within the abutting property at 7 Lawley Street, Reservoir for many years. Consultation confirmed that the owner of 7 Lawley Street, Reservoir has no objection of the sale to the adjoining owner nor expressed any interest in the land. This position was recently reaffirmed with the owner of 7 Lawley Street on 14 June 2019.

Previous Council Resolution

At its meeting held on 3 December 2018, Council resolved:

'That Council

(1) Commences the statutory procedures under Section 189 of the Local Government Act 1989 ('the Act') to:

*Sell the land from the discontinued road adjoining the rear of 8 Massey Avenue and 7 Lawley Street, Reservoir, shown as Lot 10 on Title Plan 0936581T in **Appendix H** to the owners of 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir, in accordance with Council Policy.*

(2) Gives public notice under Sections 189, 82A and 223 of the Act of the proposed sale in the appropriate newspapers and on Council's website, and in such notice state that Council proposes to sell the land from the former road to the owners 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir by private treaty.'

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation with adjoining property owners

All immediate adjoining property owners were consulted regarding the proposal and no objections were received.

The property owner of 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir, has confirmed an interest in acquiring the land, shown as Lot 10 on Title Plan 0936581T provided in **Appendix C**, at current market value, as well as meeting all costs associated with selling the land in accordance with current policy. Further consultation with the owner of 7 Lawley Street on 14 June 2019 (the occupier), confirmed that they had no interest in the land and did not object to the sale of the land to the adjoining property owner.

Consultation with Service Authorities and Council Departments

Easements in favour of both Council and Yarra Valley Water were saved over the land at the time of the discontinuance in 2010.

Consultation with the community

The statutory procedures require Council to give public notice of its intention to sell the land known as Lot 10 on Title Plan 0936581T and invite submissions from affected parties or any person/s. Submitters were offered the opportunity to request to be heard by Council prior to a decision being made. In addition, all abutting property owners were advised of the proposal in writing and informed of their right to make a submission.

Communications

Public notice of the proposal was given in the Preston Leader and Northcote Leader newspapers on 23 and 24 January 2019 respectively. Notification was also given on Council's website. The notice period ended on 8 March 2019. No submissions were received.

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 6 - A well governed Council

Property Assets Management Strategy

Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact upon environmental sustainability.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact upon equity, inclusion and wellbeing.

Cultural Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact upon cultural considerations.

Economic Development Considerations

There are no factors in this report which impact upon economic development considerations.

Financial and Resource Implications

At the commencement of negotiations with the property owner of 8 Massey Avenue, the City Valuer placed a market value of \$330.00 per square metre (including GST) on the land. The sale of Lot 10, with an area of 56m², is intended to be sold to the property of 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir for the amount of \$18,480.00 (including GST).

Costs associated with the statutory procedures and sale of the former road will be recovered from the purchaser, should the sale proceed. The land from the former road, once sold, will also attract Council rates.

Legal and Risk Implications

Risks associated are covered under the analysis of each option.

DISCUSSION

Council's property portfolio must meet current service needs while providing the flexibility to meet future requirements. Roads, reserves, revenge strips, hiatus and other pieces of land of unusual shape and limited usefulness that are less than 200m² in area (collectively referred to as minor Council property assets) were originally set aside in early plans of subdivision for

a particular purpose, such as access or drainage. In many cases, these parcels of land are still required for that purpose and need to remain open and available to the public.

In situations where a minor Council property asset is no longer reasonably required for that purpose or other strategic purposes, it may be considered surplus and suitable for sale.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option 1 – Abandon the proposed sales or do nothing (Not Recommended)

Council could resolve to abandon the proposal, take no action or may make no resolution on the matter. This option would mean the status quo would remain with the adjoining property owner continuing to occupy the land.

Council may be perceived as knowingly encouraging and enabling property owners to continue to occupy other reserves, roads or rights-of-way within Darebin to the detriment of the community (whether financially or as a benefiting right).

Council may, at some time in the future, resolve to commence the process to sell the land.

Option 2 – Proceed with the Statutory Procedures to sell the parcels (Recommended)

Council could resolve to proceed with the statutory procedures to potentially sell the land. This would be consistent with the statutory procedures which have been completed, with no submissions being received.

Benefits of finalising the statutory process, depending on Council's decision on the proposed sale, could result in receipt of revenue from the sale of the land, which is no longer required for its original purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

- Arrange for the land to be sold and transferred to the owner of 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir by private treaty in accordance with Council policy.

Communication

- Council departments
- Macquarie Local Government Lawyers
- Owners of adjoining properties
- Statutory authorities

Timeline

It is expected that the sale and transfer of this parcel of land will be finalised within three months of Council approval for the sale.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Road Management Act 2004*

- Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy

Attachments

- Site Plan - 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)
- Aerial View - 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)
- Title Plan - 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir (**Appendix C**) [↓](#)
- Victorian Government Gazette - 8 Massey Avenue, Reservoir (**Appendix D**) [↓](#)

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



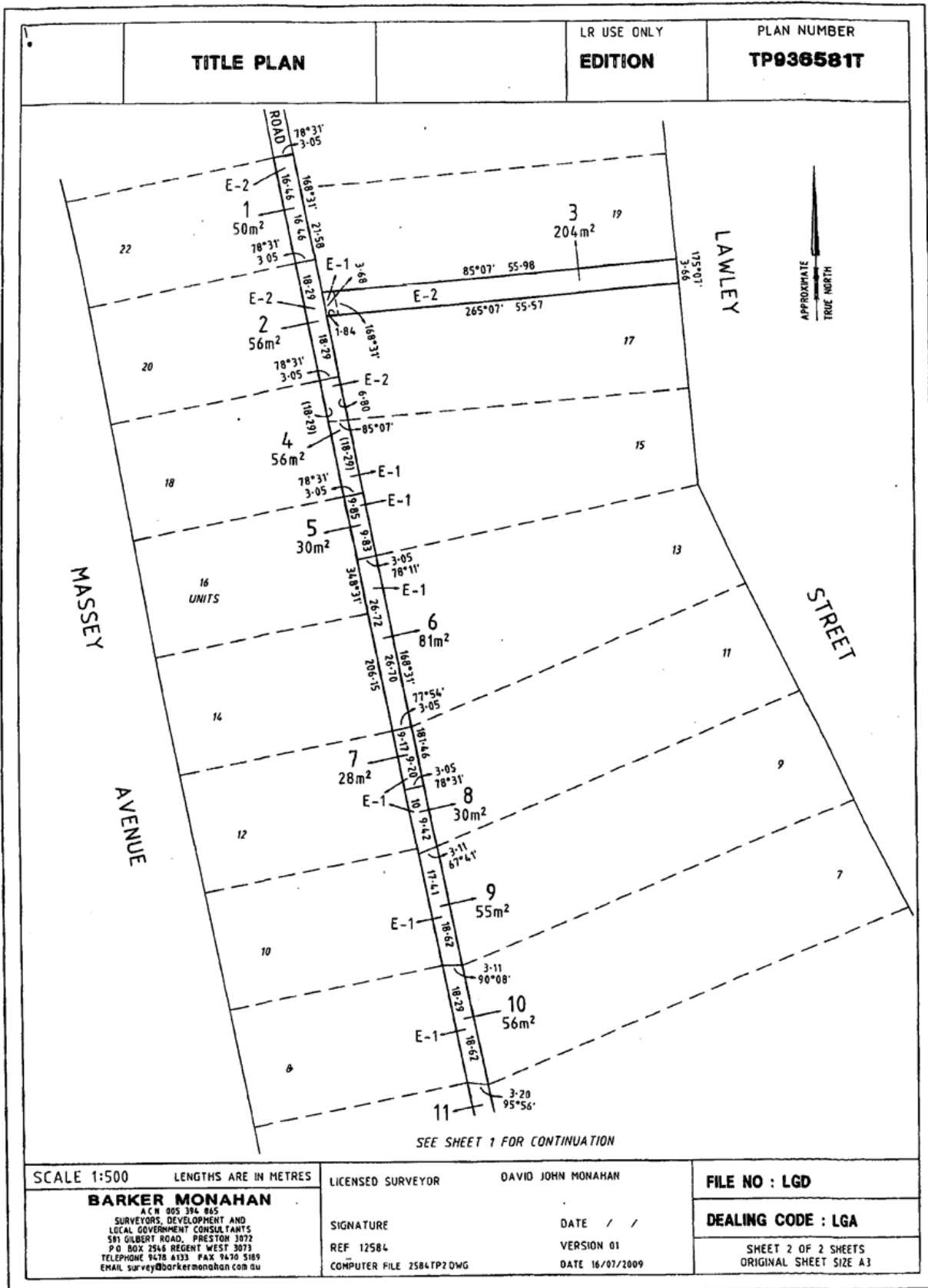
Massey Avenue



Lawley Street

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TITLE PLAN		LR USE ONLY EDITION 1	PLAN NUMBER TP936581T	
LOCATION OF LAND PARISH KEELBUNDORA TOWNSHIP - SECTION - CROWN ALLOTMENT - CROWN PORTION 13 (PART) LAST PLAN REFERENCE LP8539 DEPTH LIMITATION DOES NOT APPLY PARENT TITLE REFERENCE VOL.9300 FOL.713 MGA CO-ORDINATES E 322 870 ZONE 55 (APPROX. CENTRE OF LAND IN PLAN) N 5 824 880		WARNING THIS PLAN REPRESENTS AN EXPECTED DIVISION OF LAND. ANY ONE LOT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CREATED. CHECK THE LOT/PLAN INDEX FOR CURRENT INFORMATION NOTATIONS - THIS PLAN IS NOT BASED ON SURVEY.		
EASEMENT INFORMATION				
LEGEND A - APPURTENANT EASEMENT E - ENCUMBERING EASEMENT R - ENCUMBERING EASEMENT (ROAD)			THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR LAND REGISTRY FOR TITLE DIAGRAM PURPOSES CHECKED BY Anthony Haynes DATE 30/07/2010 ASSISTANT REGISTRAR OF TITLES	
EASEMENT REFERENCE	PURPOSE	WIDTH (METRES)		
ORIGIN	LAND BENEFITED/IN FAVOUR OF			
E-1	AS PROVIDED FOR IN SEC.207C LGA 1989	SEE DIAGRAM	SEC.207C LGA 1989	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL & YARRA VALLEY WATER LTD.
E-2	AS PROVIDED FOR IN SEC.207C LGA 1989	SEE DIAGRAM	SEC.207C LGA 1989	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL
SEE SHEET 2 FOR CONTINUATION				
SCALE 1:500 LENGTHS ARE IN METRES BARKER MONAHAN A.C.N. 005 394 865 SURVEYORS, DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS 581 GILBERT ROAD, PRESTON 3072 P.O. BOX 2546 REGENT WEST 3073 TELEPHONE 9478 6133 FAX 9470 5189 EMAIL: survey@barkermonahan.com.au		LICENSED SURVEYOR DAVID JOHN MONAHAN SIGNATURE DATE / / REF. 12584 VERSION 01 COMPUTER FILE 2584TP1DWG DATE. 16/07/2009		
		FILE NO : AH382290V DEALING CODE : 207D SHEET 1 OF 2 SHEETS ORIGINAL SHEET SIZE A3		



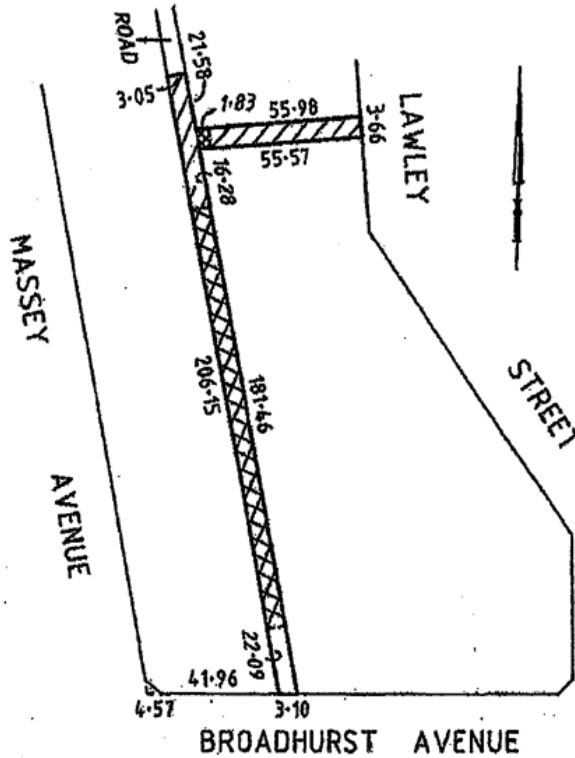
DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

Road Discontinuance

Pursuant to section 206 and schedule 10, clause 3 of the Local Government Act 1989, the Darebin City Council, at its ordinary meeting held on 6 April 2010, formed the opinion that the road at the rear of 2 to 22 Massey Avenue and 5 to 21 Lawley Street and adjoining 17 and 19 Lawley Street and 124 Broadhurst Avenue, Reservoir, which is shown delineated within the heavy black lines on the plan below, is not reasonably required as a road for public use and resolved to discontinue the road and to sell the land from the road by private treaty to the adjoining property owners.

The section of road shown hatched is to be sold subject to the right, power or interest held by the Darebin City Council in the road in connection with any sewers, drains or pipes under the control of that authority in or near the road.

The section of road shown cross-hatched is to be sold subject to the right, power or interest held by Yarra Valley Water Limited and the Darebin City Council in the road in connection with any sewers, drains or pipes under the control of those authorities in or near the road.



JAN BLACK
Acting Chief Executive Officer

8.8 2019/20 COMMUNITY GRANTS OUTCOMES**Author:** Manager Equity and Wellbeing**Reviewed By:** General Manager Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council adopted a new grants model for 2019/20, with grant categories including equity, inclusion, wellbeing, youth partnerships, environment and sustainability and arts and culture.

This paper outlines the outcomes of the 2019/2020 small, medium and three year partnership cash grants program. It also outlines the outcomes of the 2019/2020 venue support program.

In 2019/20, there was a strong response from applicants, with a great many more applications received than could be funded from the allocated grants budget.

In summary, Council received the following grant applications:

- Small grants of up to \$3,000:
71 applications received (with 64 applications funded).
- Medium grants of up to \$15,000:
55 applications received (with 20 applications funded).
- Three Year Partnership grants (annual funding for three years):
57 applications received (with 17 applications funded).

The venue hire grants program also attracted 57 applications, of which 52 were approved.

The 2019/20 grants program has allocated a total of \$726,710 in grants for this financial year, which includes \$424,000 in three year funding. There was also \$99,997 allocated in 'in kind' venue hire.

The grants program will provide a major boost to community, environmental and arts activities, programs and services in Darebin.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Notes the outcomes of the 2019/2020 small, medium and three year partnership cash grants.
 - (2) Notes the outcomes of the 2019/2020 venue support grants.
 - (3) Receives a report in October 2019 reviewing the first iteration of the new grants model, and recommending any changes for the future.
-

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

In 2018 Council undertook a review of all funding agreements and grants provided by Council to the community. The review included two stages of community consultation, benchmarking of other Councils and an analysis of Council's existing programs against community need and Council priorities.

Following this review, a new grants model was adopted by Council on 25 February 2019. Council increased the total cash grants pool by \$172,861 and the venue hire support pool by \$20,000.

The new model introduced a number of new grants programs that responded to community need and greater alignment to Council's goals. This included the introduction of a Three Year Partnership Grant program, an open competitive process for organisations to seek funding up to \$50,000 per year for services and programs that align with Council's priorities across the areas of wellbeing, inclusion reducing inequality, sustainability and creative culture.

Four of the grants programs outlined in the new grants model opened between March and May 2019. These programs included:

Annual Grants

Table: small, medium and venue support grant categories

Category		Grant cap	Total pool
Small grants Funding to support community groups to support initiatives which reflect one or more of the Council Plan goals.		up to \$3,000	\$150,000
Medium Grants Funding to support initiatives which support the delivery of Council's Plan goals and demonstrate social, wellbeing, environmental or cultural benefits for our community.	Environment and Sustainability	Up to \$15,000	\$45,000
	Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing	Up to \$15,000	\$65,000
	Creative Projects – Artists led	Up to \$15,000	\$65,000
Venue Support Grants Free or subsidized use of selected Council venues upon application for not for profit groups to support initiatives and activities which reflect one or more of the Council Plan goals		up to \$8,000	\$100,000 (in kind)

Three Year Grants Program

This program provides three years of funding to deliver programs and services that align with Council's priorities. Eligible organisations will be not for profit organisations that have a proven track record in the provision of quality programs and services.

Table: Three Year Partnership Grant Program Categories

Program	Priority Areas	Grant Cap	Total Pool
Youth Partnerships Programs and services that improve wellbeing outcomes for Darebin young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing • Community Connection • Education, Training and Career Pathways 	\$25,000	\$50,000
Environment and Sustainability Programs and projects that create a sustainable and address climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate emergency - including sustainable food, biodiversity communications and engagement. • Sustainable transport - projects which increase sustainable transport use. 	\$40,000	\$80,000
Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Programs and services that improve the wellbeing, inclusion and participation of Darebin's diverse communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities • Addressing disadvantage and promoting inclusion of CALD communities including refugees and asylums seekers • Building an age friendly Darebin • Reducing the harm of Electronic Gaming Machines • Improving gender equity Improving access and inclusion for the benefit of people with disability and the broader community. • Addressing health inequity and discrimination across Darebin's diverse communities. 	\$50,000	\$230,000

Program	Priority Areas	Grant Cap	Total Pool
Key Cultural Organisations Funding to support Key Cultural organisations location in Darebin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and social connection through art support creative industries making • Darebin a significant arts and creative centre • Equity and diversity 	\$8,000	\$64,000

This paper reports on the outcomes of these programs.

Previous Council Resolution

At its meeting held on 25 February 2019, Council resolved:

'That Council:

- (1) *Notes the Grants Review Issues Paper.*
- (2) *Adopts the proposed annual grants model, effective from 2019/2020, which will include:*
 - a) *Small grants providing up to \$3,000, with a total pool of \$150,000*
 - b) *Medium grants providing up to \$15,000, with a total pool of \$175,000*
 - c) *Venue hire support of up to \$8000 per applicant per year with a total pool of \$100,000*
 - d) *Quick response grants, providing up to \$1000 in cash and /or venue hire support outside of the regular grants round, with a cash pool of \$15,000 and a venue hire pool to be determined following the closure of the main venue hire support program*
 - e) *Social Enterprise Grants with a total pool of \$40,000*
 - f) *Celebrating Darebin Grants with a total pool of \$50,000*
 - g) *Youth Projects Grants up to \$5,000 with a total pool of \$25,000*
 - h) *Leisure Minor Works Grants of up to \$10,000 with co- contribution required, with a total pool of \$66,300*
 - i) *End of year events grants of up to \$2500 for emergency relief organisations with a total pool of \$10,000*
- (4) *Honour the funding agreements currently in place for 2018/2019 with Your Community Health, Darebin Ethnic Communities Council, Darebin Community Legal Centre, Darebin Information and Volunteer Resource Service, Preston Symphony Orchestra, Darebin City Brass Band, Reservoir Neighbourhood House, Brotherhood of St Laurence, but not renew these agreements beyond the 2018/19 term.*
- (5) *Establish a Three Year Partnership Grants program with a total pool of \$354,000, spread across the categories of environment and sustainability, equity, inclusion and wellbeing, key cultural organisations and youth partnerships, to open every three years commencing in 2019.*
- (6) *Authorise the Chief Executive to append \$6000 for the 'East Reservoir End of Year event' via a variation of agreement to the Operational and Program Delivery Funding Agreement with Reservoir Neighbourhood House for the term of 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2023, with the option to extend to 30 June 2026.*

- (7) *Establish new Community Grants Guidelines that encompass the new grants model for endorsement by the Executive Management team.*
- (8) *Approves the proposed net \$110,361 increase in community grants program operating expenditure to fund the above changes.*
- (9) *Undertakes a review of the MOU in place with Darebin Ethnic Communities Council in order to develop a new MOU that reflects the 2017-2021 Council Plan and proposed grants model.'*

At its meeting on 24 June 2019 Council passed the following resolution when adopting the 2019/20 budget:

'That Council:

...

- (7) *Makes the following amendments to the Annual Budget 2019–20 utilising funds from the proposed Parking Strategy Implementation that will not be required, in response to the submissions received, noting that \$25,000 has been allocated to extending the shower access pilot:*

....

- c. Additional operating expenditure of \$70,000 to provide additional funding to the three year partnership grants program (Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing category).'*

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

The grants review was informed by two stages of community consultation, benchmarking of other Councils and an analysis of Council's existing programs against community need and Council priorities.

Council officers from across the organisation have informed the recommendation and decision for the small, medium, venue support grants and three year key cultural organisation grants.

An independent panel of three sector experts provided the assessment of the Youth Partnerships, Environment and Sustainability and Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing grants.

Communications

The program was communicated as per the Communication Plan through a variety of channels including media release, advertisements in Leader newspapers, information on Councils website, letters to all previous applicants, promotion via networks. Two community information sessions were held.

A communication plan has been created and utilised throughout the application phase of the program. It will continue to be implemented.

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 2 - Opportunities to live well

Goal 5 - Involving our diverse community

The Community Grants Program aligns to multiple goals of the 2017-2021 Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Goal 1 of the Council Plan, Create a sustainable city through local innovation projects that address climate change is one of the priority areas of the small grants program. A number of applications were received supporting this goal.

Nine grants were received in the Environment and Sustainability medium grants and 9 received in the Environment and Sustainability three year partnerships grants category, with a total of \$125,000 approved across these two categories.

The Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Grants are also asked to consider Environment and Sustainability impacts.

Climate Emergency

Addressing the climate emergency is a priority area with the medium and three year partnership grants Environment and Sustainability categories.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

The majority of the applications received and approved in 2019/20, supported one or more of Council's priorities relating to equity, inclusion and wellbeing. \$295,000 is specifically allocated to streams which directly support Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing, not including the small grants which also support a wide range of activities under these themes. \$50,000 is allocated specifically to support the wellbeing of young people.

All applications are asked to consider how they seek to include groups at risk of exclusion, with the three year grants categories also seeking information on the location of the proposed activity / program service. For all categories in the Three year Grants, Equity and Inclusion considerations accounted for 25% of the assessment criteria.

To provide equity of access, for the small, medium and venue support grants Council provides groups who don't have internet access or have difficulty using an online platform with one on one support to complete their application.

Cultural Considerations

\$129,000 is specifically allocated to grants which support Council's creative culture objectives across annual medium and three year partnership grants. A number of applications supporting Council's creative and cultural objectives were also supported under the small grants program.

Economic Development Considerations

A number of applications received this round seek to support economic participation of disadvantaged community members, in particular those applications received in the Youth Partnership and Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Three Year Grants. A number of the three year grants approved for funding seek to increase employment and economic participation opportunities for disadvantaged community members.

Financial and Resource Implications

Table: Annual Grants Budget & Approved Funding – Summary

Program	Budget allocation	Amount Approved
Small Grants	\$150,000	\$128,210
Medium - Environment and Sustainability	\$45,000	\$45,000
Medium - Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing	\$65,000	\$65,000
Medium- Creative projects Artist led	\$65,000	\$65,000
Annual grants budget	\$325,000	\$302,710
Venue Support (in kind)	\$100,000	\$99,997

Table: Three Year Partnership Grants Categories Allocation & Approved Funding – Summary

Program	Original Allocation	Amount Approved
Youth Partnerships	\$50,000	\$50,000
Environment and Sustainability	\$80,000	\$80,000
Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing	\$230,000	\$238,800
Key Cultural Organisations	\$64,000	\$55,200
Total three year grants	\$424,000	\$424,000

Note: as the Key Cultural Organisations applications were under-subscribed by \$8,800, it was decided to reallocate the unused funds from that category to the highly oversubscribed Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing category.

Legal and Risk Implications

The Grants Policy and the use of the Smarty Grants online system have been designed to address the risks associated with the Program, with a particular focus on conflict of interest and ensuring the adherence to the conditions of grants funding. A number of governance controls have been implemented to mitigate the identified risks and best practice grant management principles are applied, in line with previous internal audit recommendations.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Small, medium and venue support grants

- The 2019/20 Funding round opened on Monday 18 March and closed on Friday 26 April 2019.
- For the small and medium grants, application assistance was provided by the Darebin Information and Volunteer Resource Service to 17 groups with no access to internet and/or unable to use on-line application forms. 12 of the 18 groups were also assisted with their 2018/2019 acquittal reports. (Note: DIVRS is not eligible to apply for these grants.)

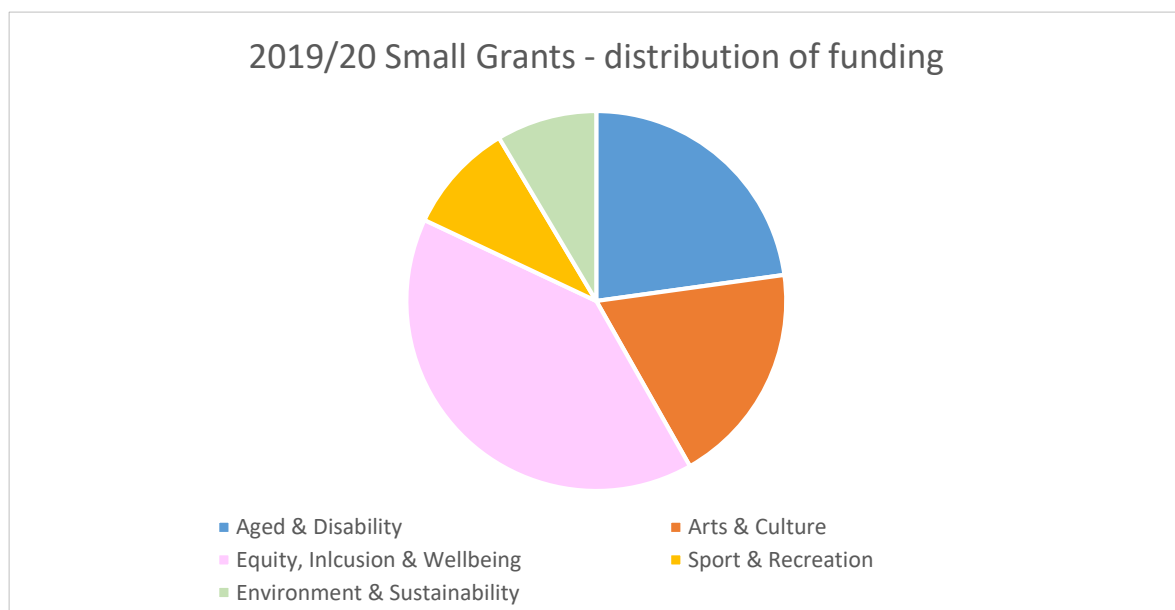
Table: Summary of Small and Medium Grants Applications and Approvals

Annual Grants Program	Received	Amount requested	Budget Allocated	Approved	Amount approved
Small Grants	71	\$186,977.30	\$150,000	64	\$128,210
Medium - Environment and Sustainability	9	\$79,423.00	\$45,000	6	\$45,000
Medium - Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing	23	\$263,738.54	\$65,000	7	\$65,000
Medium- Creative projects Artist led	23	\$214,117.40	\$65,000	7	\$65,000
	125	\$744,256.24	\$325,000	83	\$302,710

- The amount received across these categories is comparable with the previous round, with 126 cash applications received in 2018/2019.
- Across the two programs, 40 applications were received from new applicants.
- Seven applications were received from African community groups and organisations, four of which were first time applicants.
- 46% of applications received in the small grants were CALD community groups.
- Almost half (49%) of the small grants funding pool was granted to CALD specific groups, organisations or programs.
- 32 of the applicants awarded funding in the small grants were seniors groups or groups who members are primarily older adults. These groups were awarded a total of \$50,331.

As the small grants program is not split into categories, the image below provides an overview of the distribution of small grant funding across broad categories

Image: 2019/20 Small Grants distribution of funding



- A list of successful Small and Medium Cash Grants is attached as **Appendix A**.
- A list of unsuccessful Small and Medium Cash Grants is attached as **Appendix B**.

Venue Support

- 57 applications requested a total of in-kind support. This is a comparable amount to the number requested in 2018/19, with 62 venue hire applications received, but a substantial increase in the amount requested in 2018/19, which was \$103,271. This is likely due to the increased cap of \$8,000 available to groups.

Table: Summary of Venue Support Applications and Approvals

Program	Received	Amount requested	Budget allocation	Approved	Amount approved
Venue Support	57	\$176,116.71	\$100,000	52	\$99,997

- Over half of the venue support funding pool (51%) was granted to CALD specific groups, organisations or programs.
- A list of successful Venue Support applications with amount requested and amount approved is attached as **Appendix C**.
- A list of unsuccessful Venue Support applications with amount requested and amount approved is attached as **Appendix D**.

A panel assessment was used for the small, medium and venue support grants. This resulted in each grant being assessed by at least two officers to inform a consensus recommendation, with medium grants having a panel of three assessors in recognition of the larger amount provided.

These recommendations were then provided to the Executive Management Team for endorsement.

Groups that were unsuccessful in this grants round will be supported to access other venue options (for instance, the free venue hire trial for eligible groups at Council's community hubs which will take place during 2019/20).

5.2 Three Year Partnership Grants

- The Three Year Grants program is a new funding program approved by Council following the grants review.
- Previously, a small number of organisations had received annual funding agreements, which were in many cases rolled over each year without opportunity for other organisations to make applications for this funding.
- The organisations previously receiving annual funding include: Your Community Health, Darebin Ethnic Communities Council, Darebin Community Legal Centre, Darebin Information and Volunteer Resource Service, Preston Symphony Orchestra, Darebin City Brass Band, and Reservoir Neighbourhood House. The Brotherhood of St Laurence had also been allocated funding by Council under a funding agreement for 2018/19.
- The Three Year Partnership Grants program was open between 17 April and Friday 31 May 2019. A strong response was received, as outlined in the table below:

Table: Summary of Three Year Partnership Applications and Approvals

Three Year Grants Program	Received	Amount Requested	Budget allocated	Approved	Amount Approved
Youth Partnerships	11	\$260,445	\$50,000	2	\$50,000
Environment and Sustainability	9	\$313,124	\$80,000	3	\$80,000
Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing	30	\$1,330,698	\$230,000	5	\$238,800
Key Cultural Organisations	7	\$55,200	\$64,000	7	\$55,200
Total	57	\$1,959,467	\$424,000	17	\$424,000

Assessment of Three Year Partnership Grants

The three year grant categories of Youth Partnerships, Environment and Sustainability and Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing involve significant multi-year investment. These grants were available for up to \$25,000 - \$50,000 per year for three years. An independent panel was established to assess these grant applications.

The Independent panel assessors for these grant categories were:

- An Aboriginal cultural consultant, trainer and social researcher with a broad range of expertise including employment, children and youth (reviewed all applications)
- A Multicultural Centre for Women's Health trainer with expertise across CALD community, LGBTIQ+ and gender equity fields (Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing and Youth partnerships).
- Wurundjeri Elder, Cultural Education Manager at the Wurundjeri Council with expertise in the environment and sustainability field (Environment and Sustainability Grants).

These grant applications (50 in total) were assessed through the following process:

- Council officers from relevant areas provided a preliminary assessment of each grant application to independent panel members.
- Independent panel members reviewed the applications considering the staff assessment, before working with their co-panel member to finalise recommendations, scoring and prioritisation.
- Every three year grant application (excluding key cultural organisations applications) was assessed by two out of three of the independent assessors.
- These assessments were then provided to the Executive Management Team for consideration and approval by the CEO. All recommendations and prioritisations by the assessors were accepted.

The Key Cultural Organisations applications were eligible for up to \$8,000 p.a. and were assessed by a panel of Council officers.

Outcomes of Three Year Partnership Grant applications

- The standard of applications across all categories was very high, resulting in a highly competitive and difficult assessment process.

- 17 organisations were awarded \$424,000 across the four categories.
- In the Youth Partnerships, Environment and Sustainability and Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing grants, there were a far greater number of high quality applications than there was funding available.
- There are three organisations who have previously had an annual funding agreement with Council, and were not successful in their application for a three year partnership grant. Council will work with these organisations to determine what support could be provided by Council outside of the provision of direct cash grants. One organisation has access to office space and venue hire and this support will continue.
- All applicants in the Key Cultural Organisations category were awarded the full amount requested. As the program was as under \$8,800 under budget, this was reallocated to the Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing which was the most oversubscribed category.
- The table below outlines the organisation approved funding under the Three year grants program.

Table: Three Year Partnership Applications - Approved Applications

Equity Inclusion and Wellbeing		
Applicant Name	Project	Amount approved
Good Samaritan Inn	<i>GoodSams Cleaning - Social Enterprise - Social enterprise to train and employ women who have experienced family violence. (Good Samaritan Inn provides accommodation and support for women and children escaping violence and homelessness.)</i>	\$50,000 p.a.
Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities	<i>Building a Sustainable ArtAbility – working with over 100 artists and including art therapy workshops with a trauma informed and culturally sensitive practice, art exhibitions, and promotion of integration.</i>	\$44,100 p.a.
Hands on Health Australia	<i>Indigenous Community Clinic (Thornbury) – engaging community members to take control of their own health outcomes and providing them with preventative health care measures. Project also includes employment pathways.</i>	\$50,000 p.a.
Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights	<i>The Women's Leadership Project - Targeted at CALD Muslim women, working with mothers and their children in Preston, Kingsbury and Reservoir to support an empowered community, with an awareness raising and capacity building approach.</i>	\$50,000 p.a.

Circus Oz	<i>Koori Youth Circus (Kingsbury)</i> - working in partnership with Melbourne Aboriginal Youth Sport & Recreation to build a pipeline of young circus artists that could feed into the Blakflip program for talented emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers.	\$44,700 p.a.
Youth Partnerships		
Applicant Name	Project Name	Amount approved
Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. (incorporating the Darebin Community Legal Centre)	<i>Young People and the Law</i> – Youth legal service at Northland Youth Hub, including ongoing casework services for young people; engagement through activities and legal education; sector development and capacity building with partner youth organisations.	\$25,000 p.a.
Islamic Museum of Australia	<i>Muslim Youth Network</i> - Engaging with, supporting and empowering young Muslims who experience disadvantage and face social, community and economic barriers, with the aim of delivering improved outcomes.	\$25,000 p.a.
Environment and Sustainability		
Applicant Name	Project Name	Amount approved
CERES	<i>CERES Fair Wood</i> - Social enterprise sourcing timber from Victorian farmers practising agroforestry, seeking to raise awareness of how timber choices impact on our climate. The program will also provide employment for recent migrants seeking asylum.	\$30,000 p.a.
Darebin Information and Volunteer Resource Service (DIVRS)	<i>Urban Food Program</i> – Community development food and labour sharing program to reduce the impact of climate change, including reducing food wastage and food miles; support social inclusion and promote volunteering; provide equitable access to locally grown produce. The project supports home food growing, community gardening and urban food production.	\$30,000 p.a.

Reservoir Neighbourhood House	<i>East Reservoir Community Food Hub – Taking action on climate change and building a resilient community with community champions and educational workshops focusing on food production, composting, soil conditioning and reduction of household waste. East Reservoir Community Garden and its members are key partners.</i>	\$20,000 p.a.
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Key Cultural Organisations	
Applicant Name	Amount approved
Preston Symphony Orchestra	\$8,000 p.a.
ARC - Amateur Repertory Company Inc - (ARCappella and ARC Children's & Youth Choirs)	\$7,200 p.a.
Darebin City Brass Inc.	\$8,000 p.a.
Gertrude Contemporary	\$8,000 p.a.
Arts Project Australia	\$8,000 p.a.
Westside Circus	\$8,000 p.a.
Speak Percussion	\$8,000 p.a.

- A list of successful Three Year Grant applications including the amount requested and project description is attached as **Appendix E**.
- A list of unsuccessful Three Year Grant applications including the amount requested and project description attached as **Appendix F (Confidential)**.

Review

A report will be provided to Council in October 2019 reviewing the first applications and assessment round in the new grants model, and recommending any changes for the future. This will include consideration of whether there should be financial reallocations between funding categories.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Communication

Council will continue to regularly promote and showcase the programs and services funded as part of the grants programs

Timeline

- July – August 2019: Small and Medium grant recipients to sign conditions of grants documentation
- July – August 2019: Three year grant recipients to sign funding agreements and submit project plans.
- August - September 2019: Quick response cash grants program opens.
- August - September 2019: Pilot the 'free upon application' model for venue hire at Community Hubs (Keon Park Childrens Hub, Darebin North East Community Hub, the Intercultural Centre and Reservoir Community Learning Centre).
- September - October 2019: implementation of Social Enterprise, Youth Projects and End of Year Event grants.
- October 2019: Report to Council, reviewing the first applications and assessment round in the new grants model.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Nil

Attachments

- 2019/2020 Small and Medium Annual Cash Grants Successful Applications (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)
- 2019 / 2020 Small and Medium Annual Grants Unsuccessful Applications (**Appendix B**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- 2019/2020 Venue Support Successful Applications (**Appendix C**) [↓](#)
- 2019/2020 Venue Support Grants Unsuccessful Applicants (**Appendix D**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Three Year Partnership Grants Successful Applications (**Appendix E**) [↓](#)
- Three Year Partnership Grants - Unsuccessful Applications (**Appendix F**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

2019/2020 Small and Medium Annual Grants - Successful Applicants

2019/2020 Small Grants Successful Applications

Application ID	Applicant Name	Project Title	Project description	Amount requested	Amount recommended
SG-2019/2020-001	Preston - Reservoir Indochinese Elderly Refugees Group	Preston - Reservoir Seniors Hub	The project will create seniors hub to increase seniors' participation in Darebin community and provide outreach to bridge barriers. Our Sub branch leader offer a variety of group programs for a diverse senior population, including dialogues, lunches, teas, shared experiences, and dance, health and wellness activities.	\$3,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-002	Greek and Cypriot Social/Welfare Centre	Greek and Cypriot Social/Welfare Centre	Our group is a social/welfare centre in which it caters for both men and women from the Greek and Cypriot backgrounds. It meets once a month and we hold a variety of activities such as bingo, luncheons, outings, guest speakers and a welfare service we also hold 2 cultural events during the year.	\$3,000	\$1,500
SG-2019/2020-003	Preston Primary School	Preston Primary School Show	The project is a unique drama performance created and performed by 100 Grade 6 students and presented at Reservoir High School Performing Arts Centre. Students explore their own ideas, promoting self-expression and teamwork. All students improvise, write, rehearse, edit, compose, direct, design, construct, choreograph, resource and perform in groups. We will include presentations from the school band, original videos made by the students in the show and dances choreographed and performed by the students.	\$2,000	\$2,000

SG-2019/2020-004	Home Away From Home Chinese Elders group.	Providing opportunities for our members to live their lives well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly group activities with up to 30 members - Two excursions for members (with hire bus). - Cultural celebrations - special events/ presenters to share information at East Reservoir (like Fireman for fire safety, Diabetic, Dementia, etc.) - For our members weekly activities to share cooking skills, group chat, play card , chess table tennis - once a month for outing: BBQ, Art show, garden show, eating out, etc. 	\$3,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-005	Shaking the Tree Choir (new applicant)	Shaking the Tree 20th Birthday Concert	We will present a special birthday concert in the Northcote Town Hall on December 7, 2019. This event will be open to the general public, and will showcase our music, who we are and what we have achieved. The leadup to this concert will include the creation of a video presentation, the production of the music album, and publicity and promotion of the event to the general public.	\$3,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-006	Preston Boxing and Youth Club	Youth engagement and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer general fitness training and boxing training to the community. - Program particularly targets young people but is inclusive to all. - D8Continue to offer targeted training sessions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and our newly formed women's group. 	\$3,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-007	Greek Community of Northcote, City of Darebin and Districts	Greek Community Festival	A day of celebration of Darebin's Greek community that is open to all community members. The festival will include traditional food, cultural music and dancing and children's activities.	\$3,000	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-008	Life View of the Refugees Inc. (new applicant)	Community development project	Hosting a BBQ & performances to celebrate refugees day 20/06/19 and continuation for South Sudan independent day on the 9 of July. The event will engage the community and provide an opportunity for social interaction as well as explore issues of refugees, culture, integration and development to promote and inspire the next wave of generation. Activities include sports and cultural activities, BBQs, a mini sports carnival and soccer tournament.	\$3,000	\$2,000

SG-2019/2020-009	Probus Club of Preston	Preston Probus Engagement Project	The project consists of a country bus trip for retired members of the Darebin community. The trip is designed to increase the social connectedness and mental wellbeing of older members of our community. We will organise a bus trip and social lunch in November 2019, providing attendees with a chance to have a new experience in a welcoming and social setting.	\$2,138	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-012	Merri Community Child Care Centre and Kindergarten Inc	Raising the Flags	Over the last few years Merri CCK Inc has taken an active commitment to acknowledging Aboriginal People as the first people of Australia. Recently the centre celebrated its launch of its own Reconciliation Action Plan. The installation of three flag poles will enable us to further demonstrate our commitment to our significant achievements as well be a visual presence in the community for all to see.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-013	Ignition Theatre, Work Education Department	Activate8	Activate8 is a project designed to create positive stories of an inclusive ensemble and their participation as emerging theatre makers. The performances and workshops will demonstrate the diversity, accessibility and benefits of working with a range of young adults with disabilities who are positive role models. It provides a pathway to employment working in a professional theatre, collaborating with graduates, emerging theatre makers and professionals.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-014	Greek Choir Parikia	Parikia Community Carols	We will host a Christmas Carols event bringing together seniors groups from a number of multicultural backgrounds. The Parikia Choir will perform traditional Greek songs and we will invite groups from other cultures to sing their own traditional songs.	\$2,800	\$2,800
SG-2019/2020-015	Probus Club of Kingsbury Inc	Ageing with Dignity	To help older members of our community to age with dignity by companionship ; having Speakers in to show us what is available to aid us in our older years. To plan trips so our members can have a social life outside their homes.	\$3,000	\$1,650

SG-2019/2020-017	Action on Disability Within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)	Enhancing wellbeing by celebrating culture	The project will celebrate cultural diversity, build social connections and reduce social isolation between members of Darebin's Arabic and Chinese communities. Activities include a cross-cultural art workshop for ADEC's Darebin-based support groups for Arabic and Chinese communities. The event will promote the celebration of cultural diversity within Darebin and pay tribute to the work of carers and the significant impact they have to those they care for.	\$2,623	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-018	Australian Thornbury Pensioners Club	Social Engagement for Australian Thornbury Pensioners Club	Our members will meet each week for 5 hours. We will provide a hot meal and light refreshments. We will undertake social activities such as dancing, craft, social and political discussion, sharing ideas, hearing from guest speakers, and local day trips.	\$3,000	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-019	Nuba Omarang	Nuba Omarang Cultural Day	A day for the community to come together and celebrate our cultural traditions, including singing, dancing, food, information and entertainment to be held on 12 October 2019. We will be providing an opportunity for the community to engage with police, including organising a police vs Sudanese youth soccer match, aiming to break down barriers between them.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-022	Multicultural Woman Association Melb/Vic	Providing a social venue. lunch and refreshments for elderly women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet monthly on a Monday from 10am to 1pm. - Provide a venue for women of various cultures to get together and talk and share stories - Provide information sessions on various topics including domestic violence, cooking, dietitian etc - Provide community awareness - Provide a lunch and refreshments - Offer 1 excursion per year - Conduct mothers day, International Woman's day and - Christmas celebrations 	\$2,600	\$1,500

SG-2019/2020-023	Northern Region Indian Seniors Association Vic Inc (NRISA)	Well being of Indian Seniors	There are two parts to this project. Part 1: an event at Preston Town Hall on Sunday 17 May 2020. The purpose is to unite all Indian Seniors operating different seniors clubs to meet, greet and exchange and display entertainment capabilities and share a lunch. Part 2: Involves having for NRISA members a physical activity on 1st Sunday of each month at Bent St, Northcote. This will be in the form of yoga/line dance.	\$1,500	\$1,200
SG-2019/2020-024	Melbourne Konkan Community	Monthi Fest 2019	Monthi Fest is a cultural event celebrated in India. We will together the Indo-Australian community to celebrate the harvest festival to help preserve the Konkan culture and language on an event on 7.9.2019 at Santa Maria College. We expect numbers to touch 600. The cultural program showcases singing, dancing and other unique talents of children and youth, and senior citizens.	\$2,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-026	Darebin Presbyterian Church (new applicant)	Carols in the Park 2019	A community Christmas Carols and Family Festival in Penders Park Thornbury on Sunday 15 December 2019 from 3pm - 6:30pm. Open for anyone to attend, publicised across the City of Darebin. The event includes free activities for families, a sausage sizzle, a Community Christmas Carols event, children's entertainment and some short Christmas reflections.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-027	Kouchkovski Social Club Inc	Kouchkovski Social Club	The activity/ies would be to organise 2-3 day trips to locations of interest to the club members. Such trips could be based on members' suggestions and/or requests. These include: - Tesslar Tulip Farm - Immigration Museum - 2019 Christmas Lunch.	\$3,000	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-029	Reservoir Chinese Seniors' Group	Promoting Traditional Chinese Culture	We will meet regularly and provide our group members with venue-based activities (such as singing, tai chi, physical activity and cooking) and five to six tours of interesting places around Melbourne. The group will participate in four traditional Chinese cultural festivals throughout the year. We will invite the Spring Dreams Dance Group to join us and perform, other community members and Council representatives to join our events.	\$3,000	\$2,200

SG-2019/2020-030	Spring Dreams Dancing Group	Spring Dreams Chinese Dance Performances	The group will meet weekly for dance lessons and practice with our members. The group will participate in a number of community performances such as Christmas, Chinese New Year, Seniors Month and at Aged Care facilities.	\$3,000	\$2,800
SG-2019/2020-034	Hellenic Women's Federation of Victoria	Hellenic Women's Federation Flower Celebration 2020	The 20th anniversary of this traditional celebration will be held on the first weekend in May 2020 at Maroondah Reservoir. The festival will consist of a community picnic and cultural celebration featuring a DJ, food, dancing, best dressed 'spring' competition, best Greek dance competition and lots of flowers. People from all backgrounds are welcome to come along and learn about Greek culture and participate in our celebration.	\$1,381	\$1,381
SG-2019/2020-035	Macedonian Senior Citizens Group Prespa Inc.	Prespa International Women's Day Event	We will hold a lunch for our members to celebrate International Women's Day, including traditional Macedonian music and dancing.	\$3,000	\$1,500
SG-2019/2020-036	NE African Women's and Children Support Group	Yoga Classes and Homework Club	Yoga classes will be offered on Thursday evenings. They will be open to all women and led by a qualified Group Fitness instructor. The Homework Club will run on Wednesdays after school, with sessions for primary and secondary students. The sessions will be facilitated by a volunteer tutor and participants are provided with assistance with their learning, a healthy snack, and the opportunity to meet other local children.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-041	The Penguin Club of Australia (Victoria) Inc.	The Penguin Club of Australia (Victoria) Inc.- Preston Members' Training at a National Convention	Registration funding for seven members of the Preston Group to attend a four day National 'Speaking Made Easy Convention'. Attendance at the Convention will empower women to take on leadership roles including work and community positions. This is an opportunity for these members to further build their confidence and skill base for participation and leadership and become the new leaders in the Preston Group.	\$2,940	\$2,940

SG-2019/2020-043	Darebin Progress Association Inc	Darebin Progress Association Small Cash Grant	To represent ratepayers and residents to negotiate on their behalf about council policies. The Cash grant is to enable us to continue our work which has been in existence since the 1960's	\$1,085	\$1,085
SG-2019/2020-047	Multi Ethnic Senior Citizen Group- Preston	Socializing Seniors from Bosnia and Herzegovina	The group will undertake regular meetings every Wednesday in Preston library where they will be involved in activities such as socialization, variety of information sessions and forums, support and information sharing, participation in multicultural events and refugee week celebrations and group interaction with other groups and activities within the community.	\$3,000	\$500
SG-2019/2020-048	Australian Greek Ex Servicemen Elderly Citizen Club of Darebin	Empowering Seniors!	We would like to organize a series of information sessions for our Club and for one more Club within Darebin city Council. These information sessions would include the following: First Aid for Seniors, Mental Health Issues, Information Session Against Violence, Basic Computer Skills, Information session about Club Governance and one information session against Gambling.	\$2,800	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-049	Friendly Senior Citizens Group (new applicant)	Friendship	We will be meeting once a month at the East Reservoir Seniors centre having lunch together, mostly traditional food . Our lunches will be for free , we intend to bring a speaker mostly on the ageing and health subjects and entertain them within their culture Help them reminisce the places they lived and talk about it	\$3,000	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-050	North Eastern Melbourne Chinese Association Inc	Promotion of cultural events such as Dancing, Sports and Cultural activities	In this proposed event, NEMCA would like to invite the participation of individuals from all cultures (Vietnamese, Italian, Indian etc) to participate in social and cultural activities. These events include : Table tennis, performance dance, English class, Elderly age-group fitness classes, Calligraphy, Mahjong, Choir, Chinese Chess and many more.	\$3,000	\$1,500

SG-2019/2020-051	Thornbury Kindergarten Inc.	Connecting Kids with Country	The Connecting Kids with Country project, facilitated by Aboriginal Elder Trevor Gallagher, will increase the cultural awareness and competency of all staff, students and their families. The project includes: - an in-depth Yarning Circle for Teachers; - yarning Circles for 4-year old kindergarten children and their parents; - Expanding our Bush Kinder program with Uncle Trevor.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-052	Preston-Reservoir Legacy	Preston-Reservoir Legacy Social Support	Support for regular bus trips for members to improve their social connectedness and physical and mental wellbeing.	\$3,000	\$500
SG-2019/2020-054	Golden Oldies Reservoir	Golden Oldies Interactions 2019	We will meet twice a week (Monday and Wednesday) for morning tea and exercise sessions at the Reservoir YMCA. The exercise sessions are 1.5 hours of badminton and 30 minutes of aerobics for those who wish to participate. The group provides a regular social outing and mutual support group for members.	\$2,250	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-055	Darebin Songwriters' Guild	Darebin Songwriters' Guild 2019-20	The Darebin Songwriters' Guild runs performance events and songwriting workshops for members. In 2019–20 we will host 6 'Sessions' at Bar 303 in Northcote where members perform their original songs to other members. 11 'Songwriting Workshops' at various locations in Darebin where members will share songs and complete songwriting challenges, Guild Showcase event, performance show at the 2020 Darebin Community and Kite Festival, Host an email discussion group for members, Promote member performances online	\$600	\$600
SG-2019/2020-056	Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-op (new applicant)	Darebin Threatened Three Community Conservation Project	This project presents a unique opportunity for volunteers from the Darebin community to survey, collect and grow 3 threatened species from the Ngarri-Djarrang Grasslands in Reservoir, and subsequently replant/revegetate them. This project includes three key stages: surveying, collecting plant material, and replanting. It also includes workshops on grassland identification and plant propagation.	\$629	\$629

SG-2019/2020-057	U3A Darebin	History Tours Project	A book of historical based activities emphasising the history and development of the Darebin Municipality. The book will bring together diverse and interesting stories, giving residents and visitors deeper insight into the history of Darebin. U3A Darebin also proposes to develop more bike rides and walks with a history focus.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-058	Sierra Leonean Australian Community of Victoria (SLACOV) Inc.	Sports for Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	Provide young people in our community with access to a range of sporting activities once a week to improve their physical and mental wellbeing and increase social connectedness. The project includes: - competitions between the young and old in our community; - competitions with other community groups; - an opportunity for families to come together and socialise.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-059	Housing Choices Australia Ltd	Flourishing Fridays	This project builds the confidence of low income earners residing in community housing, increasing their chances of accessing gainful employment or volunteer positions. The project will provide the opportunity to access registered training certificates at no cost and include a series of job-ready workshops. It will also supply some financial support to participants to assist with the cost of travel to interviews, initial uniform or tool expenses and payment for employee checks. This program will be available for free to residents of Housing Choices Australia that live in the Darebin area.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-064	Reservoir Combined Probus Club Inc	Reservoir Probus Community and Wellbeing Program for Seniors over 55.	Reservoir Probus provides a range of social activities to promote the wellbeing and active aging of its Members and to ensure they have the opportunity to enjoy fun, friendship and fellowship. These include: Monthly Meetings with Guest Speakers, day trips to places of interest, Morning Melodies, Theatre Outings, Monthly Luncheons, Club's birthday and Christmas lunches, Book Club, Card/Games Group, Drama Group.	\$3,000	\$1,500

SG-2019/2020-065	Bipolar Life Victoria inc.	Bipolar Awareness and Education	Our program has a number of activities: PROMOTION: Conduct advertising campaigns on bipolar disorder awareness SUPPORT GROUP: provide a confidential environment free of scrutiny and judgment. INFORMATION NIGHT: provides scientific information about bipolar disorder. TRAINING & EDUCATION: Provide subsidies to members to attend workshops and seminars related to bipolar disorder. Maintain a specialist bipolar library for use by our members.	\$2,893	\$2,893
SG-2019/2020-066	Parkside Junior Football Club (PJFC) (new applicant)	Aboriginal Community Acknowledgement and Engagement	The project is aiming to install two flagpoles at Pitcher Park in Alphington, to allow the Aboriginal and Australian flags to fly equally at all games. We aim to visually celebrate our indigenous culture with the addition of a flag and a plaque recognising the traditional owners of the land on which we play our game, providing a club that is culturally safe for indigenous children and their families	\$2,592	\$2,592
SG-2019/2020-067	Cantabile Association Inc	Cantabile and the mid week singers	To bring our music to our community - to the elderly in nursing homes; to the public in our libraries and public places - offering both our full choir on weekends or evenings, or smaller groups who can be available as required during the day. This will give us more opportunities to sing in nursing homes in particular where staffing levels make weekend performances difficult.	\$1,000	\$1,000
SG-2019/2020-068	Parkinson's Victoria (new applicant)	Painting With Parkinson's Darebin	Painting with Parkinson's Darebin is open to people with Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders, their families, friends and carers. The project draws together a subset of disabled people in Darebin who have not previously had a focal meeting point or activity. As well as being therapeutic, and making art in new ways, the group also has a social function.	\$3,000	\$1,500
SG-2019/2020-069	Sahara Victorian Association (new applicant)	Melbourne Multicultural Mela 2019 (MMM 2019)	This community and social cohesion event is open to everyone, all ages and all colours. SVA is organising this mela for the first time and are hoping to attract 600-700 people on Saturday 2 November 2019. We will organize lectures on numerous resources available to the community. The Mela showcases a wide diversity of cultures, music, dance, arts, fashion and food	\$3,000	\$1,500

SG-2019/2020-070	Sylvester Hive	Connecting the Community	Connecting the Community aims promote urban permaculture, grow food in urban and suburban areas and limit waste through composting and to avoid landfill. The project will include: at least 3 workshops at Sylvester Hive, weekly meets at the garden, adopt a monthly working bee for the community to come and learn gardening techniques, hold 4 main events throughout the year which will build and connect Sylvester Hive with the community.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-071	WeCycle Incorporated	WeCycle Bicycle Rehoming Project	Based in Pioneers Retreat. As a team of 25 volunteers, we collect unwanted and discarded bicycles, and clean, assess and carry our repairs on the bicycles. Clients are referred by asylum seeker and refugee support agencies. We find a suitable bicycle for the client and provide a helmet, lock and lights.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-073	Preston Cricket Club	Girls Under 17 Winter Cricket Development Program	Preston Cricket Club wants to help facilitate a pathway for young girls (under 17s) in the community. The program teaches batting and bowling techniques and off-field instruction around nutrition, leadership skills, good culture, pathway advice & recommendations. We will also contribute significant funds and in kind time. Total costs are for coaching, equipment, clothing and venue hire.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-074	Friends of Darebin Creek	Sustainability Mosaic Public Artwork	The Friends of Darebin Parklands plan to work with an artist (Amanda Tattam), volunteers and community members to transform the block at the entrance to Darebin Creek Bush Plot in Gooch Street into a work of mosaic art. This would provide a welcoming entrance to the urban bush plot and showcase sustainability and the importance of our natural world.	\$2,950	\$2,950
SG-2019/2020-076	Westgarth Kindergarten	Running free: more kids at bush kinder	We are seeking support to establish costs for a third stream of bush kinder in 2020. Extending our number of streams will enable us to timetable two 7.5 hour days (one in the bush) per stream.	\$2,990	\$2,990

SG-2019/2020-077	Preston West Primary School	Development of a Bush Tucker / Native kitchen garden	This project involves the rejuvenation of the school kitchen garden and focuses on the implementation of a bush tucker garden and native plants display. Weekly lunch time garden clubs would be held, lead by teachers and volunteer parents. The garden will the benefits of being self sustaining, rain water use and composting food waste.	\$2,300	\$2,300
SG-2019/2020-079	High Street Bells Choir Inc	High Street Bells Choir Community performances	This project is seeking to cover costs associated with the Choir performing in the community. The Choir aims to perform at least four times per year. These costs include transport of performers, additional fees for Music Director and Piano Accompanist for extra rehearsals and at the performance.	\$2,200	\$2,200
SG-2019/2020-080	Kate Tempany (artist) and Thornbury High School	Intercultural Music Project	Collaborative intercultural music and dance project in which members of the Somali and Indigenous communities teach cultural songs to the wider school community at Thornbury High School, focusing on Year 7s and 8s. Two entire year levels will participate in Somali and Indigenous music and dance, and will present performances to the whole school community.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-082	Hellenic Writers Association of Australia	Publication of Hellenic Writers Association of Australia annual journal "O LOGOS"	The association publishes an annual literary journal "O Logos" containing original contributions from its members in the form of poems, short stories or reviews written in Greek to advance and promote the literary tradition. The association also conducts weekly sessions in the art of writing in the Greek language in order to encourage new writers.	\$2,500	\$2,500
SG-2019/2020-083	Damayan Victoria Inc.	Filipino & Multicultural Music Extravaganza - 10th Year Celebration	In March 2020, Ethno specific clubs and groups from Darebin and beyond are invited to a day of celebration of Filipino & Multicultural Music Extravaganza - 10th Year celebration. This will showcase the multicultural choir, singing, musical comedy, food and cultural costumes.	\$2,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-084	Keon Park Tennis Club	Free After School Tennis Coaching Program	Keon Park Tennis Club runs a free after school coaching program for schools. Our program introduces participants to the sport of tennis, allowing them to learn free of cost. This provides the opportunity for participants to mix with other people and also keeps them active after school. They are also served light refreshments.	\$3,000	\$2,000

SG-2019/2020-085	Ghana Association of Victoria	GAV Literacy & English Support Program	There will be several workshops occurring every fortnight on a Sunday afternoon after church. Each session will run for 3 hours and workshops will focus on a single topic; these include: •Resume Writing Skills, Job Searching, Interviewing Skills & Preparation, Employment Law, Drumming and dancing classes and Employment coaching	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-086	Northern Inner Multiple Birth Association Inc (NIMBA)	Supporting families of multiples in Darebin	Playgroups, which involve enhancing social connection and participation through playgroups for multiple birth family members of NIMBA;Expectant Parent Information Sessions which provides support for expectant parents;'Breastfeeding Twins or More' in partnership with the Australian Breastfeeding Association who will provide a trained lactation consultant to run an information session.	\$2,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-088	Station Street Switch (new applicant)	Station Street Switch	This pilot project is offering a unique and free auditing/education system to 3-10 hospitality businesses in Station Street, Fairfield. We will motivate business owners to actively care about their business' environmental footprint through assistance with the sourcing of alternative products and the creation and implementation of an electronic toolkit / guide for owners.Activities also include educational resources to people who frequent Station Street and an evaluation.	\$2,000	\$2,000
SG-2019/2020-089	The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Victoria Inc.	GSOV at Darebin Arts Centre 2019	Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Victoria will be producing and performing 3 productions over the next 6 months culminating in two performance seasons, one in July and one in October 2019.	\$3,000	\$3,000
SG-2019/2020-090	Tamang Society of Victoria Inc	Regular Meeting and meditation	Tamang Society of Victoria Inc will conduct its regular meeting with executive team members, advisers and founding members once in a month of second week from July 2019 to June 2020. Tamang Society of Victoria Inc will run the mediation class for the members, Golf Tournament and Spring Picnic/BBQ Day. We will also celebrate The Damphu Saanj (Tamang Lhochhar) once a year in order to preserve our language, art and culture.	\$2,000	\$2,000

SG-2019/2020-091	Nepali Association of Victoria	Children Forum	Baal Chautari (Children's Forum) is a unique type of project/ activities to engage and develop younger children's talents & leadership from the very initial stage of their social learning activities. More than 30 family's children, age 6-14 are actively participating the activities. There are about 35 children regularly attending the Forum.	\$3,000	\$3,000
Total				\$165,771	\$128,210

Medium Grants - Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing					
Application ID	Name applicant organisation	Project Title	Project Description	Amount requested	Amount recommended
EWG-2019/2020-014	Launch Housing (new applicant)	TSP Brokerage Project	The TSP Brokerage Project will address financial barriers that households face in successfully establishing or sustaining social housing tenancies. Access to flexible funding to break down these barriers is crucial to stabilising tenancies. Brokerage assistance is paired with support to establish tenancies or address issues affecting a tenancy. Examples of material/financial aid include: Essential household items to establish tenancy, House cleaning/rubbish removals, Maintenance (incl. garden) Food vouchers (limited) for financial stress impacting tenancy. In working with people to maintain their tenancy, TSP case management support to spend more time addressing the underlying challenges that led to their tenancy being at risk.	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
EWG-2019/2020-040	North East Healthy Communities (new applicant)	Building connections together	This project is a collaborative partnership between North East Health Communities, Your Community Health and the older residents of East Reservoir. A co-design process will develop, test, evaluate and document strategies seeking to engage and build connections for socially isolated local older people. The project will use an existing initiative developed by YCH (The Social Food project) as the vehicle to: a) recruit Co-design working group members, b) target isolated community members known to existing participants, c) continue to strengthen the relationship with older residents in East Reservoir, d) test the strategies developed by the Co-design working group.	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00

EWG-2019/2020-025	Fitzroy Stars Football and Netball Club Inc.	Aboriginal Cultural Gathering	We will run a Koorie Cultural Gathering at the Aborigines Advancement League. The gathering will be open to all residents in the Darebin area, including Aboriginal and CALD community members. It will include rides for children such as rock climbing and flying chair swings, community activities such as face painting, corroboree, and basket weaving. It will also include food trucks, live entertainment and an open mike. Local Aboriginal organisations and community members will have the chance to promote their services to Aboriginal community members and the wider community. Different cultural groups will be invited to set up a stall to promote their culture and organisations to the Koorie community members, while at the same time the Koorie community can promote our culture to the CALD communities.	\$15,000.00	\$12,000.00
EWG-2019/2020-016	Breakaway Youth	Winter School Holiday Camp	Winter school holiday camp is a 6-day program we will run for 20 vulnerable young people from the 6th to 11th of July 2019. The program includes outdoor recreation, emotional support and encouragement, practical skill building and the development of healthy relationships and community, within a safe environment. The program is designed very specifically for kids struggling with a range of issues.	\$12,500.00	\$10,000.00
EWG-2019/2020-022	Darebin Sudanese Community Groups Inc. (new applicant)	Ahlaan Bikum Jamieaan, All Welcome.	We are planning an open day on the 5th of October at the Gower St Town Hall. The program will be intergenerational; our youth, our children and our elders will work together to bring this event to life. It will feature, Sudanese food, music, singers, dance, costume exhibition and discussions on Sudan and its people. We will invite speakers from the community and Council to welcome all.	\$4,000.00	\$3,000.00

EWG-2019/2020-026	Positive Attitude Incorporated Association	Weekly Lunch and Social Group	Positive Attitude provides a healthy and nutritional lunch each Friday to people living with HIV, particularly long term survivors. This lunch and social group is well established as a safe and inclusive space for LGBTIQ elders, their families, friends and supporters, to connect. In addition to the weekly lunch group, larger events occur each year that are organised and attended by a broader group of participants, volunteers and Positive Attitude Inc. supporters. These include the AGM in October, Christmas Day Lunch, and fundraising evenings.	\$7,000.00	\$5,000.00
EWG-2019/2020-013	Multiple Sclerosis Limited	MS: Health and Wellbeing Workshop in Darebin for people with a disability	The MS: Wellbeing Workshop will provide education with regard to living well with MS, empowerment, strengthening resilience and living well with a chronic illness. The workshop will provide opportunities for people with MS to: Meet other people living with multiple sclerosis and carers, Get the most out of the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) Connect with local community health professionals, Learn about wide range of services provided by MS Ltd. MS Ltd will also use the workshops, MS Connect and newsletters to seek expressions of interest in establishing local face-to-face / telephone peer support groups.	\$8,659.00	\$5,000
Total				\$77,159.00	\$65,000.00

Medium Grants - Environment and Sustainability					
Application ID	Name applicant organisation	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Amount requested	Amount recommended
EWG-2019/2020-007	Friends of Merri Creek, Friends of Merri Park Wetland Subgroup	Promoting Biodiversity and Drawdown: 1000 Native Plants for Merri Park, Northcote	Volunteers from Friends of Merri Park Wetland and the Northcote High School Green team, assisted by MCMC staff, would plant 1000 local indigenous grasses, herbs and shrubs in two zones on the northwestern perimeter of Merri Park Oval. MCMC would do site preparation, including removal of weeds, laying out the plants and conditioning the soil. The project engages students and community volunteers and includes community events.	\$7,000.00	\$6,125.00
EWG-2019/2020-020	Oakhill Preschool Association Inc (<i>new applicant</i>)	Oakhill Kinder Community Garden	This project includes the creation of a community garden at Oakhill Kindergarten in partnership with CERES. The garden incorporates a sensory garden, Indigenous and edible plants, the installation of a water tank and shade sail. As part of the project, environmental education will be provided by CERES topics such as:Waste Management Systems and practices- Good soil, compost and worm farm management - Maintaining your garden/basic gardening skills and tips - Techniques to get children involved in sustainability by composting, recycling, etc- Bushfood activities to do with the children - Biodiversity and how it works.	\$11,625.00	\$9,930.00
EWG-2019/2020-021	Environmental Film Festival Australia (<i>new applicant</i>)	Environmental Film Festival Australia	In 2019, we will again hold EFFA over eight days. We aim to: 1. Hold more sessions (five screenings over four days) in Darebin; 2. Hold a children and young adult day in Darebin; 3. Set community/individual environmental impact targets with Council; 4. Offer 5% of tickets free of charge to local CALD and marginalised communities and families. 5. Honour Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by screening Indigenous films and engaging Indigenous panellists. 6. Engage the community with EFFA's hero impact campaign.	\$15,000.00	\$13,000.00

EWG-2019/2020-031	OzGREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network Australia Incorporated) (<i>new applicant</i>)	Youth Leading Darebin	This is a two-day environmental congress followed by an evening community forum. This will equip young people with the necessary information, skills and resources to develop and implement local environmental action plans. OzGREEN will work with local schools to select approximately thirty participants. Upon closure of the congress, OzGREEN will assist participants to hold a community forum where they will present their environmental action plans to their wider school communities, Government leaders, local businesses and the public.	\$6,985.00	\$6,985.00
EWG-2019/2020-038	Keon Park Kindergarten Inc.	Native Wonderland	Our project is to establish a native canopy, garden and play space to offer our children and community shade and sensory engagement. Key elements include native and deciduous trees, native garden, sensory garden. The project also aims to incorporate low carbon construction materials, to reuse existing garden and play space elements, and source recovered / recycling where possible. As a community owned Kindergarten, families and broader community have been, and will continue to be involved in the planning, building and use of our Native Wonderland.	\$5,000.00	\$3,060.00
EWG-2019/2020-039	3000acres	The Harvesting Hub for a Sustainable Darebin	We will provide training to six Darebin community groups in how to use the 3000acres' Harvesting Hub (a moveable trailer full of key local food processing equipment), how to design and promote a community event, and how to share sustainability knowledge effectively with participants. We will provide support to those six organisations throughout the process, leading them each to co-host a community harvesting event in Darebin around harvesting. The participating community organisations will be upskilled in event management, promotion, and the practical skills required to operate food processing machinery (which they can continue to use in the future).	\$6,950.00	\$5,900.00
Total				\$52,560.00	\$45,000.00

2019/2020 Medium Grants Applications - Artist Led Initiatives					
Application ID	Name Artist or Organisation	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Amount requested	Amount recommended
AG-2019/2020-010	Arts Access Society Inc	Nebula Small Scale	A cabaret of intimate performance works in the Nebula Theatre. Small Scale is a curated selection of performances by artists with disability designed specifically for the Nebula Theatre. Works will range in length from 30 seconds to 10 minutes and cover a diverse range of forms and styles – Magic, Dance, music, comedy, puppetry, film etc. Small Scale would be offered to be included as part of Darebin City Council's program for the Melbourne Fringe Festival with Nebula being set up in front of the Northcote Town Hall during the Festival to compliment the accessible program curated by Darebin City Council.	\$7,000	\$7,000
AG-2019/2020-033	Riot Stage (<i>new applicant</i>)	Everyone Is Famous	Everyone Is Famous (EIF) is a new performance work created by Riot Stage Youth Theatre in collaboration with 8 young performers (ages 14 – 20) from diverse backgrounds. The work will be presented at Northcote Townhall, for a 2 weeks season, in May 2020 as part of the Next Wave Festival. EIF is about persona in the age of the internet, and how social media has affected the self-image of young people.	\$15,000	\$15,000
AG-2019/2020-039	Westside Circus (WSC)	Altitude Pavilion	Altitude Pavilion uses circus and performance making as a tool to address issues experienced by young people disengaged from education, and the impact this has on them finding and retaining employment. Westside Circus (WSC) will utilise the risk-taking nature of circus and its appeal to young people at risk of disengaging from education to provide activities that EXCITE, ENGAGE and, ultimately, EMPLOY by assisting students to achieve a VCAL certification. Our aim is that students will transition from “disengaged from education” to “employable” through using circus as a learning tool.	\$7,000	\$7,000

AG-2019/2020-026	Ms Alex Walker (<i>new applicant</i>)	Project 2050 (working title)	Responding to the old maxim, (attributed regularly to the following thinkers: Aristotle, Francis Xavier and Ignatius Loyola), "give me a child until he is seven and I'll show you the man", this project presents the provocation: if these are our seven year olds, what is our Melbourne in 2050? Engaging the premise that the foundation of character is laid by seven years old, particularly in regard to major and driving philosophies, what can we understand about the future of our city? How will the current value systems, thoughts, opinions, dreams, desires, and politics of seven year-olds shape the personality of a fast approaching Melbourne identity? This project takes a highly human look at future by tapping into the real capacity of children to be culture-makers.	\$15,000	\$15,000
AG-2019/2020-029	Ms Emma Brimfield-Walsh (<i>new applicant</i>)	Reservoir Stomp	The Reservoir Stomp is an event by locals for locals. Now in its fourth year, its purpose is to showcase the diverse array of talent residing in Reservoir, spanning art, music and more. It's one of the only opportunities for local artists to perform in their neighbourhood and for Reservoir residents to engage with live music ...and connect with each other. The first event drew a crowd of 600 people. Since then, the Reservoir Stomp has grown to become a much-loved event on the local calendar which sells out weeks in advance and welcomes a crowd of over 1,000 people.	\$15,000	\$15,000
AG-2019/2020-015	Northern Community Church of Christ	Compassionate Voices Community Choir	Compassionate Voices Community Choir (CVCC) began in 2013 as a partnership between NEAMI (mental health organisation) and it's Choir Leader. Now a NCCC program, it provides a social, creative outlet for people at risk of exclusion, especially for people from CALD backgrounds, women, older adults, people with a disability and low-income earners.	\$14,751	\$6,000
Total				\$73,751	\$65,000

2019/2020 Successful Venue Hire Support Grants Applications				
Application ID	Applicant name	Project title	Amount requested	Amount recommended
FH-2019/2020-001	Preston - Reservoir Indochinese Elderly Refugees Group	Welcoming Hub for Seniors	\$2,755.00	\$1,625.00
FH-2019/2020-002	Greek and Cypriot Social/Welfare Centre	Greek and Cypriot Social/Welfare Centre	\$1,767.00	\$1,767.00
FH-2019/2020-003	Australian Shia Gathering Place Inc	Alghdeer Arabic School	\$8,000.00	\$6,000.00
FH-2019/2020-005	Bell Primary School	Bell Primary School Grade 6 Graduation 2019	\$693.26	\$693.26
FH-2019/2020-006	Great Future Chinese Culture School Inc.	Children Performance	\$500.00	\$298.35
FH-2019/2020-007	Preston Education and Community Support Association Inc	Building Diverse Empowered Community by Engagement and Education	\$7,553.00	\$7,553.00
FH-2019/2020-008	Australian Chinese Buddhist Association (Melbourne) Inc.	Australian Chinese Buddhist Association (Melbourne) Inc. - Vegetarian Event	\$679.14	\$679.14
FH-2019/2020-009	Greek Choir - Parikia	Greek Choir 'Parikia'	3771.84	\$2,379.84
FH-2019/2020-011	Melbourne Polytechnic, Preston Campus	Activate8	\$1,538.00	\$1,200.00
FH-2019/2020-012	Dancebourne Arts	POINTE, LINE & SURFACE a history of ballet	\$3,940.00	\$3,200.00
FH-2019/2020-015	Australian Macedonian Disability Pensioners Group 'Vardar'	Australian Macedonian Disability Pensioners Group 'Vardar' Weekly Meetings	\$3,828.00	\$2,258.00
FH-2019/2020-018	Preston Symphony Orchestra	Preston Symphony Orchestra rehearsals	\$8,000.00	\$6,774.00

FH-2019/2020-019	Melbourne Polytechnic Advanced Diploma Jewellery and Object Design	Advanced Diploma of Jewellery and Object Design Graduate Exhibition 2019	\$5,531.00	\$2,600.00
FH-2019/2020-020	Darebin District Girl Guides	Weekly Meetings	\$1,076.25	\$1,076.25
FH-2019/2020-021	Multicultural Women's Association Victoria	Providingsocial & recreational activities..	\$870.00	\$513.00
FH-2019/2020-022	Shaking the Tree Choir	Shaking the Tree Choir 20th Birthday Concert	\$1,312.00	\$650.00
FH-2019/2020-023	Roma Social Club Inc	Dinner dances	\$8,000.00	\$6,774.00
FH-2019/2020-024	Click Photography Club	Click Photography Club monthly meetings	\$252.00	\$252.00
FH-2019/2020-025	Preston Garden Club Inc.	Preston Garden Club Inc. meetings and shows.	\$6,555.00	\$6,555.00
FH-2019/2020-026	Fairfield Hellenic Senior Women and Partners Inc	Fairfield Hellenic Senior Women and Partners	\$1,354.50	\$1,354.50
FH-2019/2020-027	Multi Ethnic Senior Citizen Group - Preston	Socializing Seniors from Bosnia and Herzegovina	\$1,280.00	\$1,280.00
FH-2019/2020-029	The Penguin Club of Australia (Victoria) Inc.	The Penguin Club of Australia (Victoria) Inc. - Preston Group Meetings	\$840.00	\$840.00
FH-2019/2020-030	Darebin Progress Association	Darebin Progress Association	\$252.00	\$252.00
FH-2019/2020-031	Darebin Information and Volunteer Resource Service	Mental Health Week Celebration Exhibition	\$1,867.43	\$1,867.43

FH-2019/2020-032	Sly Rat Theatre Co. Inc.	BRAVE NEW WORLD	\$2,000.00	\$1,300.00
FH-2019/2020-033	Baha'i Community of Darebin	SoulTime	\$588.00	\$100.00
FH-2019/2020-035	AGAPI Care Inc	Ditch the 'Dis' in Dis-Ability	\$235.00	\$235.00
FH-2019/2020-036	Matrix Guild Victoria	Midwinter Art Event	\$525.00	\$350.00
FH-2019/2020-037	Preston Photographic Club	Preston Photographic Club	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
FH-2019/2020-038	Casa Cultura Inc.	Tradizioni: 2020 Taranta Festival Public Program	\$2,755.00	\$2,300.00
FH-2019/2020-039	U3A Darebin	Beginners French	\$340.00	\$340.00
FH-2019/2020-042	Greek Women's Club of Northern Suburbs "Anemones"	"Anemones" Dance and Exercise for Good Health and Well	\$280.00	\$280.00
FH-2019/2020-043	Sicilia Bella Folkloristic Group	A Sicilian Theatrical Play and a Multicultural Musical Concert.	\$1,530.00	\$1,530.00
FH-2019/2020-044	Keon Park Greek Senior Citizens Club	Christmas Lunch for CALD Seniors	\$397.92	\$397.92
FH-2019/2020-045	Northern Inner Multiple Birth Association	Supporting families of multiples in Darebin	\$742.00	\$742.00
FH-2019/2020-046	Friends of Baucau	Administration, Coffee store Management, Meetings and gatherings	\$1,605.00	\$947.00
FH-2019/2020-047	Darebin Climate Action Now	Don't Mention the Emergency presentation	\$549.00	\$548.13
FH-2019/2020-049	Tamang Society of Victoria Inc	Regular meeting and meditation	\$1,856.00	\$1,095.00
FH-2019/2020-051	SMART Recovery Australia Ltd	SMART Recovery Weekly Meetings	\$1,530.00	\$1,530.00

FH-2019/2020-052	Ivan School INC.	Russian community playgroups	\$3,128.00	\$3,128.00
FH-2019/2020-053	Bipolar Life Victoria inc.	Northcote Bipolar Support Group	\$480.00	\$480.00
FH-2019/2020-054	Hellenic Writers Association of Australia	Learning Greek Literature writing	\$1,980.00	\$1,980.00
FH-2019/2020-055	The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Victoria Inc	GSOV at Darebin Arts Centre 2019	\$1,538.00	\$3,950.00
FH-2019/2020-056	Australian Lebanese Christian ladies group	Monthly catch ups	\$561.00	\$561.00
FH-2019/2020-057	Invisible Skin Project	Invisible Skin - Loss and Gain of Identity, belonging and cultural acceptance	\$1,538.00	\$1,350.00
FH-2019/2020-058	Sahara Victorian Association	Melbourne Multicultural Mela 2019	\$700.00	\$546.98
FH-2019/2020-060	Darebin City Brass	Darebin City Brass Concert/Fundraiser - 2 Events	\$1,555.00	\$1,554.74
FH-2019/2020-061	Ghana Association of Victoria	Meetings for GAV Programs (Celebrations, Teaching, Culture dance and Drumming Workshop)	\$8,693.00	\$5,241.10
FH-2019/2020-063	Damayan Victoria Inc.	Damayan Victoria Inc.	\$2,047.00	\$1,452.00
FH-2019/2020-065	Blanke Knochen Opera Inc	Bluebeard's Castle	\$1,889.00	\$1,500.00
FH-2019/2020-069	Brotherhood of St Laurence	Refugee Children's Outreach Program - Darebin	\$5,064.00	\$2,988.00
FH-2019/2020-070	Amatuer Repertory Company Inc - ARCapella	ARCappella Community Choir Rehearsals 2019-20	\$861.00	\$861.00
FH-2019/2020-072	Nepali Association Of Victoria	Bal Chautari (Children Forum)	\$5,200.00	\$3,068.00
		Total	\$123,582.34	\$99,997.64



2019/20 Three Year Partnership Grant - Successful Applications

Equity Inclusion and Wellbeing

Application ID	Applicant Name	Project Name	Project Description	Amount requested p.a.	Amount approved p.a.
19-TYP-EIW039	Good Samaritan Inn	GoodSams Cleaning - Social Enterprise	GoodSams Cleaning will be a social enterprise of the Good Samaritan Inn that will train and employ women who have experienced family violence. Our purpose is to help women build a thriving sense of self and generate a sustainable income through employment at GoodSams Cleaning.	\$50,000.00	\$50,000
19-TYP-EIW004	Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities	Building a Sustainable ArtAbility	This three year project aims to transform ArtAbility to a sustainable community program, utilising commercial and collaborative opportunities to ensure continued success and growth, as well as empowering participants. During the three years ADEC will build a network of supporting organisations to reach artists. This will be in addition to ADEC's client base and past ArtAbility participants. Co-design sessions will focus on developing a package that can be offered to individuals as part of their NDIS services which ADEC will communicate and promote to the supporting organisations.	\$44,100.00	\$44,100
19-TYP-EIW007	Hands on Health Australia	HoHA Indigenous Community Clinic	The project focuses on health promotion and preventative healthcare through the establishment of the pilot project of the existing clinic based at Croxton Hall through the Sustainable Treatment, Training Employment Programme (STTEP) utilising our educational partners in the provision of peer-to-peer, informal learning. The clinic's aims to engage community members to take control of their own health outcomes, providing them with the best preventative health care measures to ensure healthy and productive lives. The project will also include employment pathways through breaking down educational barriers and increasing access to the formal system.	\$50,000.00	\$50,000

Successful Three Year Grant Applications 22 July 2019 (A5149926)

19-TYP-EIW035	Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights	The Women's Leadership Project	The Women's Leadership Project is a leadership development program targeted at CALD Muslim women to support an empowered community of Muslim women who can actively participate and confidently engage with the broader Australian society. The program will take an awareness raising and capacity building approach to support the development and strengthening of Muslim women to take leadership of their own lives and take on leadership roles within the broader Muslim community.	\$50,000.00	\$50,000
19-TYP-EIW008	Circus Oz	Koori Youth Circus	This project is in partnership with MAYSAR (Melbourne Aboriginal Youth Sport & Recreation) and is part of Circus Oz's broader First Nations Engagement Strategy. We aim to continue this program as a touch point with local community, that benefits Koori Youth and also builds a pipeline of young circus artists that could feed into our BLAKflip program. BLAKflip is a pathway for talented emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers.	\$50,000.00	\$44,700
Total Equity Inclusion & Wellbeing Three Year Partnership Grants				\$244,100	\$238,800

Successful Three Year Grant Applications 22 July 2019 (A5149926)

Youth Partnership Grants

Application ID	Applicant Name	Project Name	Project Description	Amount requested p.a.	Amount approved p.a.
19-TYP-YP012	Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. (incorporating the Darebin Community Legal Centre)	Young People and the Law	The project aims to provide accessible and holistic legal services to young people who live in or have connection within the City of Darebin. Factors such as youth, lack of independent resources, lack of place, exposure to interactions with institutions of authority cause young people to encounter legal problems. Mistrust of institutions, lack of knowledge of available services, and lack of general social supports can often lead to young people not seeking legal assistance at an early stage. For young people who experience other disadvantage, such as homelessness, poverty, violence, institutional racism, sexism, ableism or homophobia or transphobia, these factors can often magnify negative experiences of the legal system and can create further barriers to timely and effective legal outcomes.	\$25,000.00	\$25,000
19-TYP-YP011	Islamic Museum of Australia	Muslim Youth Network	The project aims to engage and deliver improved outcomes for young Muslims by better supporting and empowering Muslim youth who experience disadvantage and face social, community and economic barriers. Young Muslims will be given a platform to have their voice heard and create their own identity as Australian Muslims. They will be empowered to voice their ideas and concerns, and be listened to by decision makers about matters that impact their own lives. Young Muslims create their own aspirational plans to make decisions on matters important to them and affect their lives.	\$25,000.00	\$25,000
Total Youth Partnership Grants				\$50,000.00	\$50,000

Successful Three Year Grant Applications 22 July 2019 (A5149926)

Environment and Sustainability Three Year Grants

Application ID	Applicant Name	Project Name	Project Description	Amount requested p.a.	Amount approved p.a.
19-TYP-E&S013	CERES	CERES Fair Wood	Fair Wood is a start-up social enterprise that sources timber from Victorian farmers practising agroforestry to supply consumers, architects and builders seeking farm grown timber that mitigates the impact of climate change in Australia and at the same time reduces the need to cut down our last standing native forests here and overseas. The program also seeks to create permanent employment for recent migrants seeking asylum	\$40,000.00	\$30,000
19-TYP-E&S005	Darebin Information and Volunteer Resource Service	Urban Food Program	The DIVRS Urban Food Program is a Darebin based community development program that engages community members in three main program areas to reduce the impact of climate change, including reducing food wastage and food miles; support social inclusion, including promoting volunteering, increasing community participation and connection and increasing the mental health and wellbeing of clients and provide equitable access to locally grown produce, reducing the impact of food insecurity in Darebin.	\$40,000.00	\$30,000
19-TYP-E&S009	Reservoir Neighbourhood House	East Reservoir Community Food Hub	The project will build climate resilience in people/communities experiencing vulnerability (public housing tenants, single parent families, seniors, people with disability, low income families and young people) through increasing access to fresh food grown locally. East Reservoir Community Garden and it's members will be central to the project with Reservoir Neighbourhood House and we will work in partnership with community, groups, organisations and schools in the area of East Reservoir and surrounds to create a network that is actively responding to climate emergency and fostering innovative approaches to sustainability.	\$40,000.00	\$20,000
Total Environmental Sustainability Three Year Grants				\$120,000.00	\$80,000

Successful Three Year Grant Applications 22 July 2019 (A5149926)

Key Cultural Organisations

Application ID	Organisation	Organisation Description	Amount requested p.a.	Amount approved p.a.
19-TYP-KCO004	Preston Symphony Orchestra	The Preston Symphony Orchestra is a community orchestra of over 50 musicians who perform a series of concerts for the Darebin community each year. Concerts are planned to offer local audiences a range of music, from major classical repertoire to film music; the orchestra is also committed to playing Australian music and has commissioned work from Melbourne composers. In addition, it undertakes activities in the community to spread enjoyment and interest in music.	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
19-TYP-KCO006	ARC - Amateur Repertory Company Inc - (ARCappella and ARC Children's & Youth Choirs)	ARC, Amateur Repertory Company Inc. is a not for profit community arts organisation (Incorporated Association) that commenced as a youth theatre group in Preston in 1996. ARCappella –The adult community cappella choir of ARC was established in 2000. The mission of our organisation is to produce high quality theatrical and choral performances and engage members of the community in all aspects of performance, production and organisation. ARC is a volunteer managed organisation, which has engaged hundreds of members in our activities over the past 23 years with performances watched by thousands of people.	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00
19-TYP-KCO009	Darebin City Brass Inc.	Darebin City Brass is a community-based group of approximately 80 musicians whose mission it is to strive to produce quality music, nurture developing young musicians, provide an encouraging space for seasoned musicians to hone their craft and serve the people of Darebin. The four distinct ensembles that make up Darebin City Brass (Preston Band, Northern Brass, Youth Band and Jack's Juniors) cater for all ability levels, from beginner, to developing player, to the upper echelons of banding in Australia and provides a clear path for anyone wishing to learn and continue learning music throughout their lives.	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
19-TYP-KCO011	Gertrude Contemporary	Respected nationally and internationally, Gertrude Contemporary has demonstrated our impact for over 30 years in shaping the careers of Australia's most celebrated artists, and building and engaging broad public audiences around contemporary arts practice and the ideas of our time.	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00

Successful Three Year Grant Applications 22 July 2019 (A5149926)

19-TYP-KCO012	Arts Project Australia	Arts Project Australia is a centre of excellence that supports artists with intellectual disabilities, promoting their work and advocating for inclusion within contemporary art practice.	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
19-TYP-KCO013	Westside Circus	Westside Circus is a not-for-profit, charitable institute, delivering multiple funded projects, and running a circus workshop program that has seen us become a national leader in youth circus. For 23 years Westside Circus has used circus training, physical theatre, art making and performance as tools to develop physical, cultural and creative capacity in young people aged 3–25.	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
19-TYP-KCO014	Speak Percussion	Speak Percussion has shaped the sound of 21st century Australian percussion music through the creation and presentation of ambitious arts projects. Internationally recognised as a leader in the fields of experimental and contemporary classical music, Speak is constantly seeking to redefine the potential of percussion.	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Total Key Cultural Organisation Three Year Partnership Grants			\$55,200.00	\$55,200

Successful Three Year Grant Applications 22 July 2019 (A5149926)

8.9 ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW 2019 – PRELIMINARY SUBMISSION

Author: Coordinator Governance, Council Business and Civic Services

Reviewed By: General Manager Governance and Engagement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is currently undertaking an electoral representation review of the City of Darebin.

Electoral representation reviews look at:

- a) whether the Council has the right number of councillors per voter
- b) if the Council should be one large area (unsubdivided) or made up of wards (subdivided)
- c) if subdivided, how many wards, what ward boundaries and how many Councillors each ward should have.

The VEC conducts electoral representation reviews approximately every 12 years. Representation reviews aim to ensure that the electoral structure of a local Council provides fair and equitable representation for all voters. The last electoral representation review of the City of Darebin took place in 2007.

The report seeks to obtain Council endorsement of its preliminary submission, with a focus on retention of its existing multi-member structure and nine Councillors and providing for necessary adjustments to achieve long-term relevance and legislative compliance.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Receives and notes the report.
- (2) Endorses the attached submission (provided as **Appendix A**) for lodgement to the VEC's Electoral Representation Review 2019 of Darebin City Council.
- (3) Requests the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that Council's submission is lodged with the VEC by 24 July 2019.

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

The timelines for the electoral representation review of Darebin City Council are as follows:

Tuesday 25 June @ 7pm	Public Information Session (Preston Shire Hall)
Wednesday 26 June	Preliminary submissions open
Wednesday 24 July @ 5pm	Preliminary submissions close
Wednesday 21 August	Preliminary report published Response submissions open
Wednesday 18 September @ 5pm	Response submissions close

Tuesday 24 September @ 6pm

Public Hearing (Preston Shire Hall)

Wednesday 16 October

Final report release

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**Consultation**

An electoral representation review is a statutory process and communities and interested individuals are invited to make submissions directly with the VEC. The VEC will hold a public hearing to hear submissions to the preliminary report on 24 September.

Internal consultation has taken place with the Strategic Planning department on the proposed ward boundary changes in the preliminary submission.

Communications

In initiating the electoral representation review of the City of Darebin, the VEC advertised and held an information session for interested individuals, on Tuesday 25 June 2019 at 7pm in the Preston Shire Hall, Gower Street, Preston.

The VEC has advertised the representation review through the local newspapers, its website and via posters and other collateral. Council has supplemented this through providing information on its website and via its social media channels.

ANALYSIS**Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy**

Goal 6 – A well governed Council. This matter is being progressed, to achieve the best outcomes for our community.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

There are no environmental sustainability considerations arising from the preparation of this report.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

Considerations pertaining to equity, inclusion and equity have been identified and addressed in the submission.

Cultural Considerations

There are no cultural considerations arising from the presentation of this report.

Economic Development Considerations

There are no economic development considerations arising from the presentation of this report.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resources implications arising from the presentation of this report.

Legal and Risk Implications

There are no direct legal or risk implications in the preparation of this report.

DISCUSSION

The underlining premise of the review is to safeguard the principle of 'one vote, one value'. Inevitably over time, with land use changes and development, together with other population movements, voter numbers are directly impacted.

As Darebin is subdivided into three wards, the review will assess whether the number of voters represented by each Councillor is within 10% of the average per Councillor (for the municipality). The number of voters represented by each Councillor in each ward must be within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per Councillor.

In preparation for the review, the VEC has prepared a voters' roll as at 18 February 2019 and confirmed the following assessment of Darebin's three wards:

Ward	No. of Councillors	Total Voters @ 18/2/19	Variance
La Trobe	3	34,999	-10.46%
Cazaly	3	40,369	+3.28%
Rucker	3	41,893	+7.18%
Total	9	117,261	
Average per Councillor		13,029	

As a starting point, La Trobe Ward is outside the 10% tolerance level (set under the *Local Government Act 1989*) and therefore requires immediate attention before the next general elections to be held in October 2020.

Council officers have prepared a submission for Council's endorsement that seeks to provide a sound platform for the ensuing 12 years before the next scheduled review. The submission proposes that the three-by-three ward structure has served the community well and subject to some minor ward boundary adjustments (outlined in **Appendix A**), will continue to do so.

The nature of the minor ward boundary adjustments can be summarised as follows:

Adjustment to La Trobe and Cazaly Wards

The adjustment will transfer a portion of Reservoir that is currently in Cazaly Ward into La Trobe Ward, where the major portion of Reservoir is represented. The area to be transferred is:

From a point at Carrington Road and Elizabeth Street, travel south to Nocton Street, then along Nocton Street to Bourke Street, then along Bourke to Gilbert Road, then along Pershing Street to Powell Street and generally along Powell and rear of properties in Robinson Road (western side), then continuing on Powell Street, then Queen Street to Oakhill Avenue, south along Oakhill Avenue to Tyler Street, along Tyler Street, then Plenty Road, then along northern side boundary of 680 Plenty Road, then in easterly direction to McColl Street, then along Tyler Street and along western boundary of Tyler Street and rear of properties at No 156-152 Tyler Street, along the eastern boundary of 152 Tyler Street, along Tyler Street to western boundary of 150A Tyler Street, then along rear of properties at 150A – 90 Tyler Street, to Grevelli Street,

then along Tyler Street, along western boundary of 72 Tyler Street and generally in easterly direction thereafter arriving at a point at Darebin Creek, then northerly along Darebin Creek to Plenty Road, then in westerly direction along Rubicon Street to Storey Road, the generally in westerly direction to Berwick Street, then Locksley Avenue and then Carrington Road to Elizabeth Street.

Adjustment to Cazaly and Rucker Wards

The adjustment will transfer a portion of Thornbury that is currently in Rucker Ward into Cazaly Ward. The area to be transferred is:

From Merri Creek along Normanby Avenue to Mernda Railway Line to Miller Street, then east to High Street, then south along High Street to Kemp Street, west along Kemp Street to St George's Bike Path, then south to Bird Avenue, then along Bird Avenue, along eastern boundary and rear of 60 Bird Avenue, then generally along boundary of Mayer Park, then to Merri Creek.

In summary, Council's submission supports the retention of the three-by-three ward structure with a total of nine Councillors and signals Council's interest in pursuing potential ward name changes, subject to further consultation with the community.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option 1 – Council submits a response (preliminary submission) to the VEC's Electoral Representation Review, as per the recommendation. (Recommended)

Option 2 – Council submits an amended response to the VEC's Electoral Representation Review, as determined by Council.

Option 3 – Council does not submit a response to the VEC's Electoral Representation Review. (Not Recommended) With its deep understanding of the Darebin community, Council has a valuable contribution to make to the VEC's review.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Subject to Council resolving to make a preliminary submission to the VEC's Electoral Representation Review, Council's response will be lodged by the deadline of 24 July 2019.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

Attachments

- Darebin City Council Preliminary Submission July 2019 (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

ELECTORAL

REPRESENTATION

REVIEW

2019

PRELIMINARY SUBMISSION – JULY 2019



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1. Introduction

Darebin City Council (Council) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC's) electoral representation review.

Council is committed to good governance and ensuring that local democracy is well supported by having an appropriate electoral structure that best serves the needs and interests of its community, including voters, residents and ratepayers.

2. Profile of Municipality

The City of Darebin was formed in 1994 through the amalgamation of the Cities of Preston, Northcote and small parts of the Cities of Coburg, Heidelberg and the Shire Diamond Valley.

Darebin is located 11 kilometres northeast of Melbourne and covers an area of 53 square kilometres. The City is bounded by the Merri Creek to the west and Darebin Creek to the east. Major centres in Darebin include Northcote, Preston and Reservoir.

The City of Darebin is a large diverse municipality that incorporates a mix of residential, industrial and retail areas; and also includes La Trobe University and the Northland Shopping Centre.

Nearly one-third of the population was born overseas. Since 2006, the City of Darebin's population has increased from 128,067 to 161,609 (2018 ABS estimated population). The VEC fact sheet about the City of Darebin states that the population is expected to grow by 1.4% per annum; however, Council's forecasts indicate a projected 2% per annum growth in population to 2031.

3. Previous Representation Review

The last electoral representation review of Darebin City Council was completed in May 2007.

At the time of this review, the City of Darebin was a subdivided municipality with nine councillors elected from nine wards.

The VEC's recommendation, which was accepted by the Minister, was for the City of Darebin to adopt a multi-member ward structure, consisting of nine Councillors to be elected from three three-Councillor wards.

In arriving at its recommendation, the VEC made various comments, including the following:

"The City Darebin is a diverse and dynamic municipality that has achieved a great measure of success since its formation. It faces issues relating to cultural and linguistic diversity, socio-economic disadvantage, diversity of interest, ideas and aspiration and the management of environmental and economic development across the municipality. The continued provision of appropriate, effective services and infrastructure and decision-making that meets the needs of the community is a vital part of the work of the Darebin City Council.



The management of these issues is critical to the future form and character of the City of Darebin. The opportunity for fair and equitable representation is an important component of community support for and participation in the decision-making processes of the Council.

The VEC considers it important that the community has the opportunity to elect a council that is able to reflect and represent the City's diversity and local communities of interest if it so chooses.

The VEC considers that an electoral structure for the City of Darebin consisting of three three-councillor wards, captures local communities of interest and different diversities more effectively and will provide voters with the opportunity for representation.

Secondly, there is anticipated to be a change in the population distribution within the municipality between now and the next review. Growth in some wards with little or none in others could lead to inequitable representation. The larger, multi-councillor wards in the recommended option will better accommodate growth and are more likely to provide fair equitable representation between reviews with respect to the number of voters per councillors."

Council considers that in reflecting on the basis for the VEC's 2007 review recommendation and subsequent change to multi-member wards, there have been no new or extraordinary environmental changes that would lead Council to reconsider the continuation of the multi-member ward structure.

Accordingly Council has, as part of its submission, prepared a preferred option that is underpinned by the multi-member ward structure.

4. Current Structure

La Trobe Ward

The area bounded by Mahoney's Road, Merri Creek and then from a point at Carrawa Drive in a southerly direction along Elizabeth Street to Hosken Street, then generally in an easterly direction to Tyler Street and then to Darebin Creek, moving in northerly direction to Crissane Road, then Kingsbury Drive to Waiora Road to Cherry Street, then along Broadford Highview Crescent, along southern boundary of Gresswell Forest Wildlife Reserve, along Acacia Avenue, then Gresswell Park Drive, then along northern boundary of Strathallan Golf Course to Plenty Road, then to a point west of Grimshaw Street and hence in a westerly direction to Keon Parade and Mahoney's Road.

Includes the suburbs of Reservoir, Kingsbury and a portion of Bundoora and Preston (northern portion only) and a very minor portion of Coburg North



Cazaly Ward

The area bounded by the starting point at Elizabeth Street and Hosken Street, then generally in an easterly direction to Tyler Street and then to Darebin Creek, then in southerly direction along Darebin Creek to Dundas Street and along Miller Street, then Stott Street and Normanby Avenue to Merri Creek and then in northerly direction to starting point.

Includes the suburb of Preston, with the exclusion of a northern portion (currently included in La Trobe Ward) and a very minor portions of Coburg North and Coburg

Rucker Ward

The area bounded by Merri Creek, then to Heidelberg Road to Darebin Creek and then in northerly direction to Dundas Street, along Miller Street to Stott Street and to Merri Creek.

Includes the suburbs of Thornbury, Northcote, Fairfield and a portion of Alphington

Status of Existing Structure

The VEC has produced a voters' roll as at 18 February 2019, which it is using for the representation review.

The figures below highlight that the review is timely, given that La Trobe Ward exceeds the 10% deviation factor (-10.46%) and Rucker Ward is also showing a +7.18% variation, before the likely impacts of further population growth and voter enrolments.

Therefore, the current ward structure will need to change.

Ward	Number of Councillors	Total Voters @ 18/2/19	Variance %
Cazaly	3	40,369	+3.28%
La Trobe	3	34,999	-10.46%
Rucker	3	41,893	+7.18%
Total	9	117,261	
Average Voters per Councillor		13,029	

5. Number of Councillors

As part of this review, the VEC will make an assessment of whether Councillors represent an appropriate number of voters.

The following table provides figures for Darebin and other metropolitan municipalities (excluding the City of Melbourne) in terms of the number of voters, the number of Councillors and the Councillor-to-voter ratio. The table clearly shows that of the 21 municipalities listed, Darebin has the fifth highest ratio, but is ranked thirteenth in terms of the area of municipality.



Comparable Council Statistics

Council	Area (sq km)	Population 2016 - Census	Voters at last Review	Current Voters (Est)	Number of Councillors	Voters per Councillor
Banyule	63	121,865	90,094	99,158	7	14,165
Kingston	91	151,389	105,316	122,333	9	13,592
Boroondara	60	167,231	125,742	133,357	10	13,335
Knox	114*	154,110	116,335	118,678	9	13,186
Darebin	53	146,719	96,334	117,261	9	13,029
Brimbank	123*	194,319	127,517	135,931	11	12,357
Frankston	131*	134,143	95,979	109,662	9	12,184
Moreland	51	162,558	109,744	132,790	11	12,071
Glen Eira	38	140,875	97,582	106,440	9	11,826
Whitehorse	64	162,078	111,384	117,705	10	11,770
Bayside	36	97,087	67,702	78,937	7	11,277
Monash	81	182,618	120,779	123,695	11	11,245
Moonee Valley	44	116,671	88,394	94,682	9	10,520
Stonnington	25	103,832	77,494	93,754	9	10,417
Port Phillip	20	100,863	85,439	93,106	9	10,345
Manningham	114*	116,255	85,748	89,624	9	9,958
Hobsons Bay	65	88,778	63,363	69,683	7	9,954
Maroondah	61	110,376	77,739	87,817	9	9,757
Maribyrnong	31	82,288	52,543	65,202	7	9,314
Gr Dandenong	130*	152,050	93,970	101,846	11	9,258
Yarra	20	86,657	65,512	81,669	9	9,074

*Note the large area covered (sq km)

Apart from the requirement that a Council must consist of between five and 12 Councillors, there is no legislative guidance on the appropriate number of Councillors for individual councils.

Although Darebin is at the higher end of the Councillor-to-voter ratio compared to other metropolitan councils, it is a relatively compact and developed municipality. In addition, effective community outcomes are achieved not just through representation ratios, but also through a strong strategic focus, effective decision-making and robust governance processes. It could be considered that a smaller Councillor group more efficiently supports strong governance and decision-making processes, reinforcing the retention of the existing Councillor cohort of nine.

The average number of voters currently represented by Darebin Councillors is 13,029, which is 15% more than the metropolitan average of 11,364. Based on forecast population growth of 2.0% per



annum, this is projected to increase to 16,188 by 2031. The projected growth in the municipality, combined with the diversity of the population, produce an environment in which an increase in the overall number of Councillors could well be justified. This option should be considered by the VEC.

6. Ward Structure

Apart from the City of Melbourne, the metropolitan councils have adopted either a single-member or multi-member ward structure. Council has noted the analysis and attributes of single and multi-member wards highlighted in the VEC's Submission Guide document (outlined in the table below). Further, Council considers that it is timely and extremely relevant to ensure that the advantages and disadvantages of these two options are clearly recognised.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Single-Member Wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors are more likely to be truly local representatives easily accessible to residents and aware of local issues; • Major geographical communities of interest are likely to be represented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors may be elected on minor or parochial issues and lack a council-wide perspective; • Ward boundaries may divide communities of interest and may be difficult to define; • Voters may have a restricted choice of candidates on elections for individual wards; • Small populations in each ward may make ward boundaries more susceptible to change as a result of population growth or decline; • Where major groups support candidates in multiple wards, it is possible that one group can dominate the council.
Multi-Member Wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can accommodate a large community of interest; • Focus on issues may be broader than in single-member wards (though councillors may have a more local focus than in an unsubdivided local council); • Councillors may be more accessible than in an unsubdivided local council. Electors have a choice of councillors; • Councillors may share workloads more effectively; • Wards boundaries should be easy to identify and less susceptible to change as a result of population growth or decline than in single-member wards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups may form within the council leading to possible division between councillors; • Very specific local issues may not be addressed; • In very large wards, councillors may not be accessible for residents in parts of the ward; • Duplication may occur if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads.



Communities of Interest

There are a number of different geographic communities across Darebin, including suburbs/postcodes, Council service planning precincts, and local neighbourhoods with shared common concerns and aspirations about services, facilities and amenity issues. Single-member wards invariably split some of these communities, which undermines the direct local representation that is an alleged strength commonly attributed to this model.

With an extremely diverse community, Darebin could be regarded as having a number of non-geographical communities of interest, including older people, socio-economically disadvantaged people, people with disabilities, residents from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and a large Indigenous population. Council has a range of policies and programs in place that address the particular needs of these communities. A strategic and collaborative approach is critical to the success of these initiatives and a multi-member ward structure, with Councillors who are able to take a broader municipal-wide perspective, is likely to provide a model that more effectively delivers on the needs of these communities.

Diversity

Council has a particular concern about the potential of the single-member ward model to limit the choice of candidates for certain wards, restricting diversity overall in Councillor representation of the community. As an example, the average percentage of female Councillors for metropolitan councils is 46%; however, the percentage of female Councillors for metropolitan councils with single-member ward structures averages at 35%.

Further, any potential impact that might detrimentally impact gender balance in local representation is inconsistent with the State Government's stated commitment to improving participation by women. The State, via Local Government Victoria, has a number of current programs aimed at addressing gender imbalance. In addition, the State has made public commitments to achieving 50% of new appointments for women to paid public boards. The Victorian Government's website states: 'We are committed to the promotion of women in leadership and decision-making roles. That's why we've set targets to increase the representation of women in leadership.'

Population Growth

The Darebin population is projected to grow annually by 2.0% for at least the next 12 years. Some areas in the central and northern regions of the municipality are expected to experience more concentrated growth. Should a single-member ward structure be implemented, it is likely that the creation of smaller wards would necessitate more frequent boundary changes to adjust to these future patterns of growth.

Conclusion

Overall, Darebin considers that multi-member wards will continue to meet the current and future needs of Council and the community.



7. Ward Names

Darebin's three existing wards are named Rucker, Cazaly and La Trobe.

Rucker

William Fredrick Augustus Rucker purchased land in Northcote in the 1840s and developed the most prominent geographical feature of the Northcote District, the steep, flat-topped hill now known as Rucker's Hill.

Cazaly

Roy Cazaly was the captain and coach of Preston Football Club. It could be stated that Cazaly is perhaps the most famous Australian Rules player of all, as he has been immortalised in the song 'Up There Cazaly'.

La Trobe

This ward is named after Victoria's third university, La Trobe, which is itself named after Charles Joseph La Trobe, the first Superintendent of the Port Phillip District and first Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony of Victoria.

Naming Considerations

In the spirit of reconciliation with the Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Council is committed to better recognising and reflecting the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung history of the local area.

Council would welcome the opportunity to explore the renaming of some or all of the existing wards (if retained) for Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, figures, symbols or culturally significant items, as a way of recognising and respecting them as Traditional Owners of the land and waters on which Darebin stands. Guidance from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation would be paramount in that regard.

8. Council's Preferred Option

In examining potential ward boundary options, Council has analysed the estimated growth in the voter base over the next 12 years. Council has examined the population forecasts by suburb and ward, and applied a percentage that reflects the voter-to-population ratio, in order to understand projected movements in the voter base.

Appended to this submission is an updated ward boundaries map that reflects the preferred option, together with ward voter projections to 2031.

It is important to note that every effort has been made to take account of existing communities of interest and wherever possible, retain suburb areas and key precincts in their entirety.



Notwithstanding this key objective, the exercise of devising ward boundaries does ultimately default to compliance with the >10% deviation from the average number of voters per Councillor for each ward.

Adjustment to La Trobe and Cazaly Wards

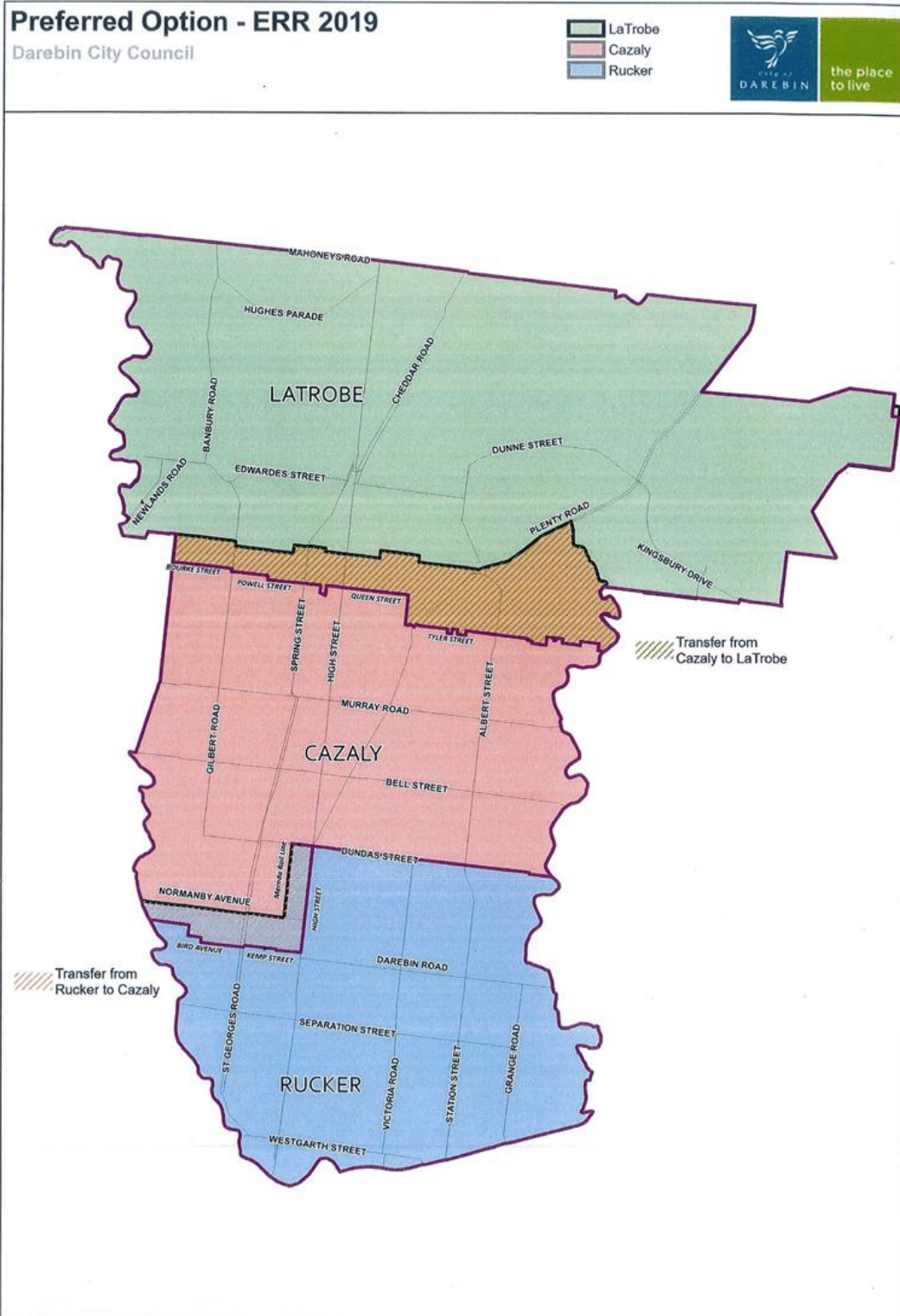
The adjustment will transfer a portion of Reservoir that is currently in Cazaly Ward into La Trobe Ward, where the major portion of Reservoir is represented. Specifically, the area to be transferred is summarised as follows:

From a point at Carrington Road and Elizabeth Street, travel south to Nocton Street, then along Nocton Street to Bourke Street, then along Bourke to Gilbert Road, then along Pershing Street to Powell Street and generally along Powell and rear of properties in Robinson Road (western side), then continuing on Powell Street, then Queen Street to Oakhill Avenue, south along Oakhill Avenue to Tyler Street, along Tyler Street, then Plenty Road, then along northern side boundary of 680 Plenty Road, then in easterly direction to McColl Street, then along Tyler Street and along western boundary of Tyler Street and rear of properties at No 156-152 Tyler Street, along the eastern boundary of 152 Tyler Street, along Tyler Street to western boundary of 150A Tyler Street, then along rear of properties at 150A – 90 Tyler Street, to Grevelli Street, then along Tyler Street, along western boundary of 72 Tyler Street and generally in easterly direction thereafter arriving at a point at Darebin Creek, then northerly along Darebin Creek to Plenty Road, then in westerly direction along Rubicon Street to Storey Road, then generally in westerly direction to Berwick Street, then Locksley Avenue and then Carrington Road to Elizabeth Street.

Adjustment to Cazaly and Rucker Wards

The adjustment will transfer a portion of Thornbury that is currently in Rucker Ward into Cazaly Ward. Specifically, the area to be transferred is summarised as follows:

From Merri Creek along Normanby Avenue to Mernda Railway Line to Miller Street, then east to High Street, then south along High Street to Kemp Street, west along Kemp Street to St George's Bike Path, then south to Bird Avenue, then along Bird Avenue, along eastern boundary and rear of 60 Bird Avenue, then generally along boundary of Mayer Park, then to Merri Creek.





VOTER PROJECTIONS 2019 to 2031

		Current Structure 2019		Preferred Option 2019		Preferred Option 2026		Preferred Option 2031	
Ward	No of Crs	Total Voters	Cr-to-Voter Variance from Ave	Total Voters	Cr-to-Voter Variance from Ave	Total Voters	Cr-to-Voter Variance from Ave	Total Voters	Cr-to-Voter Variance from Ave
La Trobe	3	34,999	-10.46%	41,466	6.09%	47,271	4.58%	50,094	3.15%
Cazaly	3	40,369	3.28%	36,294	-7.15%	44,446	-1.67%	49,698	2.33%
Rucker	3	41,893	7.18%	39,501	1.06%	43,890	-2.90%	45,903	-5.48%
Total	9	117,261		117,261		135,607		145,694	
Ave per Cr		13,029		13,029		15,067		16,188	

8.10 TREE PROTECTION ON PRIVATE PROPERTY - TREE PROTECTION BONDS AND PLANNING SCHEME OPTIONS**Author:** Senior Strategic Planner**Reviewed By:** General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to Council's request at the 8 April 2019 meeting to receive a report "*on the feasibility and process of including a Tree Protection Bond and other interventions available to us in the planning scheme as part of the planning permit process.*" (Minute number 19-022).

There are some opportunities to further protect trees through the planning scheme. However, on balance, changing the planning scheme isn't recommended at this time. The main reason for this recommendation is because Council's current approach provides good protection, and additional planning protections would require a significant resource commitment and this would require other work in progress to be delayed that has been assessed as having greater community benefit.

Council's current approach provides good protection of trees on private property. Council recently adopted a tree protection local law which requires a permit to remove mature trees on private property. The Local Law requires trees that has a single or combined trunk circumference greater than 100cm (1000mm) measured at 1.5m above ground level and is taller than 8m to be issued a permit for removal. Trees are also considered in the planning system under clause 54 and 55 of the Darebin Planning Scheme.

Tree Protection Bonds have been used by some councils as a way of better enforcing significant tree protections with new development. There may be merit in this process, however it would require changes to the planning scheme prior to its implementation, which means that the lead time is at least three years. Further investigations of the benefits and efficacy of this approach would be required.

At this stage, officers recommend monitoring the implementation of the local law, monitoring other councils' approaches, and further investigating mechanisms are as part of the planning scheme review project. In the longer term, changes to the planning scheme can be considered.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Notes the contents of this report.
 - (2) Notes Council officers will monitor the effectiveness of existing tree protection mechanisms.
 - (3) Notes Council officers will monitor the effectiveness of Tree Protection Bonds used by other Councils and evaluate alternative tree protection mechanisms.
 - (4) Notes Council officers will address improving tree canopy cover as part of the Planning Scheme Review.
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BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

The Darebin *Urban Forest Strategy 2013-2028* (Adopted December 2013) identifies implementation measures and targets to increase canopy tree cover across the municipality. The strategy seeks to respond to the climate emergency by increasing the number and species of trees and canopy coverage which can facilitate carbon reduction, reduce the impacts of urban heat and improve biodiversity.

To aid in the retention of mature canopy trees on private property, Council resolved on the 8 April 2019 to adopt the *City of Darebin Local Law for the Protection of Trees on Private Property 2019*. The Local Law requires trees that has a single or combined trunk circumference greater than 100cm (1000mm) measured at 1.5m above ground level and is taller than 8m requires a local law permit for removal.

Council also resolved at this meeting to receive a report “*on the feasibility and process of including a Tree Protection Bond and other interventions available to us in the planning scheme as part of the planning permit process.*” (Minute number 19-022).

This report responds to this Council resolution and outlines additional options to the adopted Local Law for protecting trees on private property.

Urban Forest Strategy

Council has committed to a goal of 25% canopy tree cover across the municipality on public land. To achieve this goal, an increase in the number of trees is required. Recent thermal imaging and canopy measurement data prepared as part of the *Urban Forest Strategy* found that canopy cover in the City is 16.6% on public land and 7.1% on private land.

The strategy identifies the important contribution private land makes to the City of Darebin’s Urban Forest, both due to the land area private ownership covers and the existing low canopy tree cover on private land. The strategy found that 61% of the area sampled was private land and the average tree canopy cover (residential and commercial) was only 7.6%. Council has an important role to encourage planting and protection of trees within the private realm wherever possible.

The strategy identified the following actions:

- Increase the protection and retention of canopy trees on private properties.
- Continue to maximise tree planting offsets within the planning permit process to compensate for tree removals undertaken as part of development on private property.
- Educate the community on the importance of canopy trees and increasing the canopy cover. Provide incentives for tree planting on private land, e.g. a program of donating trees to property owners.

Since the adoption of the *Urban Forest Strategy 2013-2028 and Green Streets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020*, Council has increased the tree canopy on public land from 13.9% in 2012 to 16.6% in 2018.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

To inform this report, there has been consultation with:

- Tree Management and Statutory Planning teams within Council

- Stonnington City Council and Boroondara City Council

Communications

NA

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 1 - A sustainable city

The introduction of tree protection on private land is an action of the *Urban Forest Strategy*.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Further tree protection mechanisms would assist in achieving Council's goal of preserving and enhancing the urban forest and further implement the Darebin *Urban Forest Strategy*.

Climate Emergency

The protection of canopy trees supports Council's *Urban Forest Strategy* and responds to the climate emergency by supporting the mitigation of climate change impacts of carbon dioxide emissions. Tree planting programs within Darebin also assist in maximising the direct and indirect carbon benefits.

The effect of a changing climate on the performance of tree species in Darebin is unknown. Monitoring and recording the performance of tree species over time will be central to understanding the impact of climate change on the Urban Forest. Encouraging and requiring the planting of trees for new developments assist in reducing the effects of urban heat and in absorbing carbon dioxide emissions.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

Increasing and protecting trees on private property assists in addressing the health impacts of the climate emergency. The benefits of the natural environment on human health and wellbeing is recognised and the protection of trees on private property supports these objectives.

Cultural Considerations

NA

Economic Development Considerations

NA

Financial and Resource Implications

The table below outlines the finances and resources required for the various options included in this report.

Option	Finances and Resource
Work to support planning scheme controls	External consultant – \$200,000 (estimate). New funding required.

Option	Finances and Resource
<p><i>Background Report/Data Analysis</i></p> <p>Prepare a detailed analysis of the natural values to be protected, this will require substantial research, a scientific assessment, comparative analysis to identify areas or individual trees to be protected. Appropriately qualified experts to assess and recommend trees/areas to be protected is required.</p>	<p>Costs associated with engagement, planning scheme amendment, and expert witnesses - \$50,000 New funding required.</p> <p>Significant implications for ongoing resourcing. Additional officers may be required.</p>
<p>Changes to the Darebin Planning Scheme (changes to zones and overlays)</p> <p>Strategic Justification with sufficient evidence and assessment is required to incorporate changes to planning scheme overlays and zones, this is possibly the most effective tool in protecting and increasing tree requirements in the planning scheme.</p> <p>Further consideration of the merits of this approach will be considered as part of the Planning Scheme Review report.</p>	<p>External consultant – \$200,000 (estimate). New funding required.</p> <p>Costs associated with engagement, planning scheme amendment, and expert witnesses - \$50,000 New funding required.</p> <p>Significant implications for ongoing resourcing. Additional officers may be required.</p>
<p>Changes to the Darebin Planning Scheme in the local planning policy framework</p> <p>Recommendations to change the local planning policy framework will form part of the Planning Scheme Review project. It is recognised there are opportunities to improve the Darebin Planning Scheme to reflect Council adopted positions, this includes implementing the Urban Forest Strategy and responding to the climate emergency. This work is currently underway and will be forwarded to Council for consideration.</p>	<p>Current and being conducted by Council officers.</p>
<p>Tree Protection Bond</p> <p>Investigation as to how tree protection bonds are applied through the planning system was considered.</p> <p>The application of a Tree Protection Bond through the planning permit process is a fairly involved administrative process between Council and applicant. It requires a legal agreement between the two parties including the terms and conditions of the bond. Before a bond is released, inspection of the health of the tree is assessed by an arborist.</p>	<p>Resourcing implementation</p> <p>Legal agreements would be required to be prepared between Council and applicant – requiring additional administration for Council staff.</p> <p>Additional Council arborists may be required for successful implementation.</p> <p>Additional planning permit triggers, possible increase in planning enforcement needs.</p> <p>Potential planning permit condition appeals (VCAT).</p>

Legal and Risk Implications

Advice received from Council's Legal Counsel is that permit conditions requiring Tree Protection Bonds may be open to legal challenge.

DISCUSSION

Current approaches to increasing and protecting existing trees

Local Law protecting trees on private property

On the 8th of April 2019, Council adopted *Local Law for the Protection of Trees on Private Property (2019)*. The Local Law requires a permit to remove mature trees on private property. The Local Law requires trees that has a single or combined trunk circumference greater than 100cm (1000mm) measured at 1.5m above ground level and is taller than 8m to be issued a permit for removal.

Statutory planning

Council's statutory planning department currently considers trees under Clause 54 (one dwelling on a lot) and Clause 55 (2 or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings) of the Darebin Planning Scheme.

Existing trees are identified and considered as part of a planning application. Where trees are identified for removal, Council's arborist assesses these trees for their health/significance. Any proposed removal of significant trees requires replacement planting; Council's arborist recommends the preferred species type and size for replacement planting.

For those trees to be retained, a Tree Protection Zone (temporary fencing) is required to minimise undue impact during construction. This approach ensures that existing trees are considered as part of the planning application and provides an opportunity for Council to negotiate on either tree retention or tree replacement as an offset to removal.

Ongoing maintenance and tree planting

Council has planted approximately 3000 new trees in vacant spots in streets and parks in the last 2 years, with a further 2000 trees to be planted in the next financial year. Council has a scheduled monitoring and maintenance program for all trees on public land. This includes the planting of replacement trees and maintenance of trees in our parks and streets.

Advocacy for tree replacement for Level Crossing Removal Projects

Council has been actively seeking tree replacements and additional planting as part of Level Crossing Removal Projects to improve landscaping including in new public open space areas. Council will continue to do this with the recent announcement of the additional level crossing removals within the municipality.

Proposed Open Space Strategy

The draft Open Space Strategy (in conjunction with the proposed open space levy) identifies ways to improve the quality of existing open spaces, including potential funding sources to acquire new and improved existing open spaces (this will provide increased opportunities for tree planting in open spaces).

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Options to improve vegetation protection in the Scheme

There are a number of vegetation protection mechanisms available within the planning system, including:

- through a local planning policy for neighbourhood character (landscape character), which includes a statement of preferred neighbourhood character,
- application of the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) and/or Environmental Significance Overlay

To make changes to a planning scheme, strategic justification based on sufficient evidence and data to apply the planning control is required.

Local Planning Policy Framework

There is opportunity to strengthen Council's position regarding the retention of trees and its support in mitigating the impacts of the climate emergency.

Landscape character policy

There is opportunity to strengthen policy in the scheme to protect areas with existing landscape value. This would strengthen policy to retain significant trees and encourage additional trees to be planted in areas where landscape character is important.

Landscaping requirements for new developments

There are opportunities for councils to strengthen landscaping requirements for new residential developments. This provides Council with additional opportunity to increase the planting of canopy trees to address the impacts of the climate emergency. This will be explored as part of the Planning Scheme Review.

Application of overlays

(1) The application of Vegetation Protection Overlays (VPO), Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO), and Heritage Overlays (HO) may be applied to protect existing trees of significance.

The application of planning overlays does not prevent or prohibit the removal of trees on private property, rather it requires planning permission for the lopping or removal of identified trees or vegetation. To apply either overlay, justification for the planning control needs to be established.

There are pros and cons for applying planning controls for the protection of trees on private property. Implementation of such changes would not be immediate and would require resourcing to develop adequate strategic justification for the planning scheme amendment, as well as ongoing resourcing of the implementation of these controls.

Tree Protection Bonds

A number of councils currently apply Tree Protection Bonds. These councils have some guidance in their planning schemes (via their local planning policy framework) that provides some support for this process. However, there may be limitations for council if this process is challenged by a developer.

The application of tree protection bonds and their various process will be investigated and monitored by council officers.

Pros and Cons of each approach

The following table outlines the various advantages/disadvantages of different planning controls for the protection of trees on private property.

Planning Scheme options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Local Planning Policy Framework	<p>Supports opportunities for tree canopy planting and protection.</p> <p>Does not require significant strategic work to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Requires a planning scheme amendment which does not provide for immediate protection.</p> <p>No controls or requirements – performance based policy only</p>
Neighbourhood character – Local Planning Policies	<p>Identify the significance of trees/natural landscapes as part of a statement of existing or preferred neighbourhood character.</p> <p>Supports opportunities for tree canopy planting, does not require identifying specific vegetation/trees to be protected.</p>	<p>Requires a planning scheme amendment which does not provide for immediate protection.</p> <p>No controls or requirements – performance based policy only</p>
Vegetation Protection, Environmental Significance or Heritage Overlays	<p>Proactive and transparent in identifying trees to be protected.</p> <p>Supports existing urban character (where appropriate)</p> <p>Protects suburbs/areas which currently benefit from a well vegetated landscape character</p> <p>Provides ecological benefits as it includes significant vegetation understorey (rather than just large trees)</p> <p>Heritage Overlay can be used for trees identified heritage value, including Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Only those trees identified as “significant” under established criteria will generally be supported.</p> <p>The proposal will impact on existing resources in the following areas of Council:</p> <p><u>Strategic Planning</u> Detailed data, research and community consultation is required to assess the merit of the planning controls, followed by a planning scheme amendment process.</p> <p><u>Statutory Planning</u> New planning overlays will increase planning permits required and received, which may impact on assessment timeframes.</p> <p><u>Planning Enforcement</u> The application of additional planning controls for the protection of trees may require additional planning enforcement resourcing.</p> <p><u>Tree Management</u> Advice from Council’s arborists may be required to assist with the assessment. This may require additional arborist resourcing.</p>
Condition on a planning permit for a Tree Protection Bond	<p>Allows for higher penalties for the removal of significant trees than that allowable under a Local Law.</p>	<p>Open to legal challenge without sufficient justification in the planning scheme, more detail in the local planning policy framework is recommended.</p> <p>Additional cost and time for applicants in preparing legal documents which needs to be administered by Council.</p>

Planning Scheme options	Advantages	Disadvantages
		<p>Council will be required to develop additional processes to ensure the deeds are efficiently executed to reduce delays.</p> <p>Additional workloads for Council's statutory planners and arborists in the assessment and administration of tree protection bonds.</p>
<p>Non-planning scheme options</p> <p>Protection through the Local Law</p>	<p>Currently implemented and supports the retention of trees</p>	<p>Penalties set under the Local Law Act which may not be prohibitive to developers.</p>
<p>Education</p>	<p>Educate the community on the importance of canopy trees and increasing the canopy cover. Provide incentives for tree planting on private land, e.g. a program of donating trees to property owners.</p>	<p>This does not provide for immediate protection of trees.</p>
<p>Advocacy</p>	<p>Advocate to State Government for improved planning scheme options to increase Canopy Cover</p>	<p>None</p>

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

As part of the Planning Scheme Review, more detailed investigations into the protection and the planting of canopy trees will be considered to support Council's adopted policy positions. Council officers will further investigate approaches and monitor the effectiveness of applying Tree Protection Bonds in other municipalities, to determine the most effective approach for Darebin.

Communication

As part of the City Plan consultation process, Council may be able to gauge the level of support for tree protection in the municipality.

Timeline

Council will receive further updates on the planning scheme review and implementation strategy which will address the implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy and Climate Emergency Darebin Strategic Plan.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Darebin Urban Forest Strategy
- The Climate Emergency Darebin Strategic Plan

Attachments

Nil

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

8.11 NEW DAREBIN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION WITH COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Author: Coordinator Community Engagement and Demographics

Reviewed By: General Manager Governance and Engagement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Darebin Council is committed to effective and transparent decision-making which prioritised consideration into the diverse views held by members of our community.

Ensuring Council's engagement practices are of the highest standard is critical to effective governance. To this end, the development of a new Community Engagement Strategy for Darebin City Council is underway.

Recommendation

That Council authorises the community engagement phase of the Community Engagement Strategy, including a review of the Community Advisory Committees and Community Reference Groups.

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

A new Community Engagement Strategy is being prepared for Darebin Council. The strategy will focus on:

- Strengthening **representativeness** in decision-making to ensure Councillors and staff have access to information from all interests; and
- **Open and transparent feedback** on decisions made, to allow public input scrutiny and to ensure the community understands the rationale employed by Council.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation

The following consultation activities are proposed:

August

- Survey of Community Advisory Committees and Community Reference Groups to determine effectiveness as reported by members of these committees.
- If required, follow-up with face-to-face meetings with Advisory Committees and Reference Groups
- Launch of Your Say Darebin page to gather feedback on the proposed outcomes of the strategy from a broad cross-section of the community.
- Focus groups and other face-to-face engagement with communities at risk of exclusion. These groups will be identified in collaboration with the Equity and Wellbeing Department and through the Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Planning and Audit Tool to refine the expected outcomes of the strategy and to ensure inclusivity

- Staff listening posts and workshops to socialise the new standards and requirements

September

- Analysis of data, implementing any changes and closing-the-loop with participants
- Finalisation of draft Community Engagement Strategy, Framework and Toolkit, ensuring compliance with Local Government Act requirements, VAGO best practice and also Councils policies on Human Rights and commitment to being a Child-Friendly and Aged-Friendly City.

ANALYSIS

Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 5 - Involving our diverse community

Darebin is a diverse community with a multitude of voices and viewpoints, experiences and needs. Our ultimate aim is to ensure equal opportunity for all people to best inform Councils decision-making.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

There are no immediate environmental sustainability considerations.

Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations

Council's Community Engagement Strategy/Framework intersects with the following: Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029; EIWPAT (Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Planning and Audit Tool - the tool that operationalises the Framework); and the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021.

An Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Planning and Audit Tool (EIWPAT) Assessment was conducted by the Equity and Wellbeing team and will influence our development approach.

Cultural Considerations

The development of a Community Engagement Strategy will have cultural implications for staff who will need the right resources and training to deliver the outcomes from the Strategy.

Economic Development Considerations

There are no immediate economic development considerations.

Legal and Risk Implications

Upon completion of the development of the Community Engagement Strategy/Framework, Council will need to ensure that these new standards are adhered to or risk reputational damage from the community.

DISCUSSION

Darebin Council is committed to effective and transparent decision-making that considers the diversity of views held by members of our community. International research shows that the decision-making of governments is improved by input from all community voices.

The new Local Government Act is expected to enshrine requirements for Councils in relation to community engagement in legislation when introduced later this year. This emphasis on engagement alongside Councils commitment to strengthen our engagement practices has informed the development of a new Community Engagement Strategy for Darebin.

A new Community Engagement Strategy will seek to:

- Remove barriers to participation so that people from our diverse community can have a voice on matters of importance to them.
- Ensure that the purpose of our engagement is clear and the approach we use is the right match for the issue and decision required.
- Ensure that Council is always open with communities about the level of influence they can exercise on overall outcomes.
- Allow enough time to provide feedback by setting minimum time-frames.
- Provide engagement opportunities with a real influence on change.
- Evaluate feedback processes.
- Ensure that data is collected and managed strategically.

Community Advisory Committees and Community Reference Groups

Council has a large number of Advisory Committees that have been established over time and who aim to represent specific segments and/or interests in the community. Advisory Committees can be an important tool for engagement and a review of the function, scope and purpose of each of our Community Advisory Committees and Reference Groups is included in this scope of work for the development of the new Community Engagement Strategy.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option One: **Recommended**

Authorise the engagement with Council’s Community Advisory Committees and Reference Groups.

Option Two: **Not Recommended**

Finalisation of the new Community Engagement Strategy without direct consultation with Council’s Community Advisory Committees and Reference Groups.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Details

Council Meeting	22 July 2019	Council to authorise engagement for Community Advisory Committees and Community Reference Groups.
Council Meeting	14 October 2019	Council adopt a new Community Engagement Strategy including recommendations in relation to Advisory Committees, Reference Groups (and any associated governance frameworks) and other proposed engagement methodologies.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

Attachments

Nil

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

9. CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO PETITIONS, NOTICES OF MOTION AND GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

10. NOTICES OF MOTION**10.1 PROTECTION OF 31–33 COMAS GROVE, THORNBURY****Councillor:** Trent MCCARTHY**NoM No.:** 429

Take notice that at the Council Meeting to be held on 22 July 2019, it is my intention to move:

That Council:

- (1) *Engages the owner of 31–33 Comas Grove, Thornbury regarding Council and the community's strong support for the retention and ongoing protection of the existing building and garden setting, given their contribution to local heritage.*
- (2) *Writes to the Minister for Planning advising that it has completed a preliminary heritage assessment finding that the 'Thornbury Park Estate' (encompassing parts of Comas Grove, Harold, Hutton, Fyffe, Rennie and Keon Streets, Thornbury) is likely to meet the threshold for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay in the Darebin Planning Scheme, and that the property at 33 Comas Grove is likely to be a significant heritage place within the precinct and is currently under threat of imminent demolition.*
- (3) *Requests the Minister for Planning to prepare and approve an amendment to the Darebin Planning Scheme, pursuant to section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, to apply an interim heritage overlay to the precinct 'Thornbury Park Estate', while permanent controls are being progressed.*
- (4) *Commences preparation of an amendment to the Darebin Planning Scheme to introduce permanent heritage controls for the 'Thornbury Park Estate'.*

Notice Received: 25 June 2019**Notice Given to Councillors** 17 July 2019**Date of Meeting:** 22 July 2019**Attachments**

Nil

11. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Nil

12. RECORDS OF ASSEMBLIES OF COUNCILLORS

12.1 ASSEMBLIES OF COUNCILLORS HELD

An Assembly of Councillors is defined in section 3 of the *Local Government Act 1989* to include Advisory Committees of Council if at least one Councillor is present or, a planned or scheduled meeting attended by at least half of the Councillors and one Council Officer that considers matters intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

Written records of Assemblies of Councillors must be kept and include the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending, the matters considered, any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending, and whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest leaves the assembly.

Pursuant to section 80A (2) of the Act, these records must be, as soon as practicable, reported at an ordinary meeting of the Council and incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

An Assembly of Councillors record was kept for:

- Councillor Briefing Session – 3 June 2019
- Bicycle Advisory Committee – 18 June 2019
- Women’s Advisory Committee – 27 June 2019
- Councillor Briefing Session – 1 July 2019

Recommendation

That the record of the Assembly of Councillors held on 3, 18 and 27 June 2019 and 1 July 2019 and attached as **Appendix A** to this report, be noted and incorporated in the minutes of this meeting.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

Attachments

- Assembly of Councillors - 22 July 2019 (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)



ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS PUBLIC RECORD

ASSEMBLY DETAILS:	Title:	Council Briefing Session
	Date:	Monday 3 rd June 2019
	Location:	Council Chamber
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr S Rennie (Mayor), Cr S Newton (Deputy Mayor), Cr K Le Cerf, Cr. L Messina, Cr S Amir, Cr T McCarthy, Cr J Williams, Cr G Greco
	Council Staff:	S Wilkinson, I Bishop, V Albicini, C Henderson, R Ollivier, Melinda Viksne, Vicky Guglielmo, Felicity Leahy, Dara Quinlan, Carolina Dixon, Alan Cochrane, Peter Rollis, Rod Burke, Jen Patterson, Sally Moxham, Shadi Hanna, Stevie Meyer,
APOLOGIES:	Other:	Kate McMahon
		Nil
	Absent:	Cr T Laurence

The Assembly commenced at 5.42 pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Preston Market Community Engagement Update	No disclosures were made
2	Age Friendly Darebin (Theme 2) (Verbal)	No disclosures were made
3	Council Plan Action Plan 2019-20	No disclosures were made
4	Budget Submissions (verbal)	No disclosures were made
5	Draft Planning Committee Agenda 20 June 2019	No disclosures were made

ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS – PUBLIC RECORD (CONT)

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
6	General Local Law Review	No disclosures were made
7	Update on Strathallan Golf Club Land	No disclosures were made
8	General Business NOM RSL Additional Poker Machines	No disclosures were made

The Assembly concluded at 9.55 pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name:	I Bishop
	Officer Title:	GM Governance and Engagement



ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS PUBLIC RECORD

ASSEMBLY DETAILS:	Title:	Darebin Bicycle Advisory Committee
	Date:	Tuesday 18 June 2019
	Location:	Council Chamber, Darebin Council Offices
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr. Steph Amir
	Council Staff:	Heidi Marfurt, Sustainable Transport Officer Che Sutherland, Coordinator Transport Strategy
	Other:	Representatives of the Darebin Bicycle Advisory Committee.
APOLOGIES:		Cr. Susanne Newton

The Assembly commenced at 6.40pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
	Level Crossing Removal Projects	No disclosures were made
	Northern Pipe Trail Project	No disclosures were made
	Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling Strategy • Draft Parking Strategy 	No disclosures were made
	Updates on travel behaviour change and road safety programs	No disclosures were made
	Updates on infrastructure projects	No disclosures were made
	Planning	No disclosures were made

The Assembly concluded at 8.35pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name:	Heidi Marfurt
	Officer Title:	Sustainable Transport Officer



ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS PUBLIC RECORD

ASSEMBLY DETAILS:	Title:	Darebin Women's Advisory Committee
	Date:	Thursday 27 June 2019
	Location:	Council Chambers, 350 High Street, Preston
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr. Lina Messina
	Council Staff:	Jess Fraser, Disa Linden Perlis
	Other:	Members of the Darebin Women's Advisory Committee
APOLOGIES:		Members of the Darebin Women's Advisory Committee

The Assembly commenced at 6.00pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Welcome and introductions	No disclosures were made
2	Induction Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction into the City of Darebin • Decision making in local government • Role of the committee • Gender Equity and Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2019 - 2023 	No disclosures were made
3	Women in economic development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Global Sisters program • Feedback on women's economic development • The intersections of creative culture and business 	No disclosures were made
4	Planning for upcoming meetings	No disclosures were made
5	Meeting close	No disclosures were made

Assembly of Councillors

27 June 2019

The Assembly concluded at 8.00pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name:	Disa Linden-Perlis
	Officer Title:	A/Preventing Violence Against Women Officer



ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS PUBLIC RECORD

ASSEMBLY DETAILS:	Title:	Councillors/ CEO Briefing
	Date:	Monday 1 July 2019
	Location:	Council Chamber
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr. Susan Rennie (Mayor), Cr. Kim Le Cerf Cr. Trent McCarthy, Cr. Susan Rennie, Cr. Susanne Newton, Cr. Lina Messina, Cr. Julie Williams, Cr. Steph Amir, Cr. Tim Laurence
	Council Staff:	Sue Wilkinson
	Other:	
APOLOGIES:		Cr. Gaetano Greco

The Assembly commenced at 5.45pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	General Discussion	No disclosures were made.

The Assembly concluded at 7pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name:	Sue Wilkinson
	Officer Title:	CEO

13. REPORTS BY MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

Recommendation

That Council note the Reports by Mayor and Councillors.

14. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL

The Chief Executive Officer, pursuant to section 77(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), has designated the following items to be confidential:

14.1 Home of Football EOI

This item is designated confidential because it is a contractual matter pursuant to Section 89(2) (d) of the Act.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Recommendation

That in accordance with section 89(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council resolves to close the meeting to members of the public to consider the items designated confidential by the Chief Executive Officer.

RE-OPENING OF MEETING

Recommendation

That the meeting be re-opened to the members of the public.

15. CLOSE OF MEETING

**CITY OF
DAREBIN**

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