



## INTRODUCTION

**The purpose of this Charter is to ensure Darebin staff communicate and connect with a diverse community through meaningful and respectful conversations about Council's project, services, and events. This is done in ways that acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are inclusive and accessible to all community members.**

This Charter aligns with the 'Darebin 2041 Community Vision' that presents Darebin as an: 'equitable, vibrant and connected community' that 'respects and supports First Nations People, values country, our diverse communities and places'.

The Charter also supports the goals of 'Towards Equality: Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019 -2029'. The Framework sets Darebin to be an accessible, equitable and inclusive organisation that responds to diverse needs of the community and supports people's participation in community life and in decisions that affect them.

In this Charter the term 'diverse' is used in its broadest sense referring to many intersectionalities, including but not limited to multicultural, multilingual and multifaith diversity.

At Darebin City Council:

### **1. We understand the local demographics, social circumstances and diverse composition of the city, so that we communicate effectively.**

- We use search tools such as Profile and Atlas ID, as well as advice from the Community Engagement Team, and where relevant, community development and outreach staff. This helps us identify demographic trends and social circumstances to establish the best methods to communicate.
- We regularly review and adapt to changes in the make-up of our city. We consider Aboriginality, age, culture, disability, education levels, English-language proficiency, ethnicity, gender identity, income, religion and sexuality of the community, and use this information to adapt our strategies. We do it to ensure the most appropriate communication channels are used to engage effectively, equitably and meaningfully with the whole community.
- We use the Multicultural Communications and Engagement Toolkit and seek Diverse Communications and Engagement advice to communicate effectively, equitably and meaningfully using appropriate tools and channels.

### **2. All publications comply with relevant guidelines to maintain a quality standard.**

- We ensure our communications comply with Brand Guidelines and the corporate style and are approved by the Communications, Brand and Digital Team prior to making them available to the community.

### **3. We use plain English, not industry jargon, to communicate clearly with our audience.**

- We keep sentences and paragraphs short, avoiding acronyms and abbreviations.
- We are clear and concise.
- We are sensitive to the way key messages may be interpreted by different people.
- We deliver translation and interpreting services of our content, for community members whose first language is not English. This helps provide fair and equal access to information and services.
- We follow Council's Publishing Policy, Corporate Writing Style Guide which refers to the Writing Guide for Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity,

the Aboriginal Cultural Protocols guide and Accessible Written Communication outlined in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, when putting together publications.

### **4. We ensure that design work and images are inclusive and reflect the diversity of the community.**

- We always reflect and pay respect to the fact that Darebin is on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country and has a long and strong Aboriginal history, and contemporary living culture. This is marked by the presence of 17 Aboriginal Community-controlled organisations in Darebin.
- Staff understand the diversity of the community and reflects on differences that exist among ages, cultures, disabilities, gender identities, religious beliefs, sexualities and differences in socio-economic status and places in Darebin. We reflect this diversity in communications material. We ensure we never uphold assumptions or stereotypes. When needed we tailor design and images to locations and specific demographics.
- We ensure our material promotes gender equality and avoids gender stereotypes, as required under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).
- We carry out research in the community to help create and identify messages and images that reflect our community groups.

### **5. Where possible, we engage with the community by going to them rather than expecting them to come to us. We recognise that we need to address that some of the groups within the community are underrepresented when engaging with us. We help overcome barriers people or groups may be experiencing.**

- We promote our services and events to the community by visiting places where groups in the community gather, including community centres, places of worship and public spaces and events.
- We adopt culturally safe and appropriate ways of engaging. We follow guidelines for inclusive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and recommendations of the Multicultural Communications and Engagement Toolkit.
- We strive to give the community the time they need to provide us with information and feedback.

**6. We constantly seek to improve and adapt our methods of engaging with the community to achieve the best possible outcomes. We encourage collaboration across all departments and ensure we coordinate our services effectively. This increases opportunities for community members to access information.**

- We will not only promote our own departmental services and events, but where possible communicate and promote inter-departmental services focusing on whole-of-Council information provision to the community.

**7. We promote Council's various methods of engagement with the community. We actively encourage community members to participate in Council consultation opportunities. We are mindful of the digital divide experienced by different groups in the community. Current communication channels include:**

- Council website and Your Say platform.
- Social media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram.
- Use of the hearing assistance equipment (portable hearing loop) in public settings.



- Email and telephone (including the National Relay Service).

- Digital and paper copies of Council publications and promotional materials that are circulated, including face-to-face, in community settings.

**8. We communicate our decision-making to our diverse community effectively and transparently.**

- We webcast Council meetings to provide greater accessibility for people who are unable to attend in person.

**9. We review and evaluate our larger communication campaigns, seek regular feedback on our communication approach and materials to improve and meet communication needs.**

- We seek feedback from community members and advisory committees where possible and take into consideration their suggestions about ways to improve communication with community members.
- We continually review and adjust all Council's key communication tools to ensure accessibility and equality is maintained to a high standard and meets the needs of community members.

**Please note:** If you have a project that needs Communications and/or Engagement support, in the first instance, please complete our online brief form and an officer will be in touch with you.

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If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service.

 Speak Your Language  
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