

## Darebin Energy Upgrades Program

### Artist Commission – Character & Comic Strip Project

#### *Background*

The City of Darebin is committed to helping residents reduce energy bills, improve home comfort, and transition to clean energy through the Darebin Energy Upgrades Program. The program provides access to trusted suppliers, tailored advice, and financial support for upgrades such as insulation, efficient heating and cooling, solar PV, and electric appliances. As many of these concepts can be complex, Council is seeking to commission an artist to develop a recognisable character and a series of illustrated comic strip that communicate energy efficiency and electrification in a simple, engaging and accessible way for the community.

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#### *Project Vision*

The vision for this project is to create a relatable character who embarks on a series of “energy adventures”, discovering ways to make their home more comfortable, efficient, and all-electric over time.

Through these stories, the character will help demonstrate:

- how small actions can improve energy efficiency
- how households can transition away from gas over time
- how energy upgrades improve comfort in winter and summer
- how residents can access support through Council programs

The character will evolve across multiple comic strip and may become an ongoing communications asset used in future climate and energy campaigns.

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#### *Creative Direction*

Artists are invited to propose a unique and engaging character capable of appearing across multiple illustrated comic strip.

The character should:

- be relatable and accessible to a broad community audience
- help communicate complex ideas through simple storytelling
- support behaviour change through positive and practical examples
- have the potential to evolve across multiple future campaigns

Comic strip may explore themes such as:

- improving home warmth in winter (insulation, draught proofing)

- staying cool in summer
- switching to efficient electric appliances
- installing solar or other energy upgrades
- navigating the journey towards an all-electric home

Council encourages creative interpretations, including humour, storytelling, and imaginative approaches to communicating energy concepts.

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### *Scope of Commission*

The successful artist will develop:

- One original character design
- Six illustrated comic strips
  - black and white
  - one page or less
- One request for change from Council per comic strip
  - Additional changes will be charged at an hourly rate

For each comic strip, Council will send a small brief of the concept they will need to capture. Each comic strip will illustrate a short narrative demonstrating an energy upgrade or behavioural change that improves home energy efficiency or supports electrification.

These comic strip will be used in:

- printed educational material
- social media and digital campaigns
- community engagement activities

Approximately 1,000 printed copies of each comic strip will be produced.

Subject to future funding, additional comic strip may be commissioned in future financial years.

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### *Intellectual Property*

The commissioned character and comic strip designs will become the intellectual property of the City of Darebin. Council will retain the right to reproduce, adapt, and further develop the character for future campaigns.

The artist will be acknowledged as the original creator of the character.

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## Commission Application Process

### *Stage 1 – Expression of Interest*

Interested artists are invited to submit a short response to the project brief.

Expressions of interest should include:

- a brief artist statement outlining the proposed approach to the project (maximum 300 words)
- a short description or rough concept for a character suitable for this project
- confirmation of availability to meet the proposed timeline
- Curriculum Vitae (maximum 1 page)
- up to 10 digital images of previous relevant work (JPEG format), including an image list with project dates and descriptions

From the expressions of interest received, Council will shortlist a small number of artists to progress to the Concept Development stage.

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### *Stage 2 – Concept Development – TBC if required*

Shortlisted artists will be invited to develop a concept proposal for the project.

Shortlisted artists will receive a concept development fee. The shortlisted artists will be paid \$250 each.

Concept proposals should include:

- character concept sketches or visual direction
  - outline of the proposed visual style
  - a short comic strip concept demonstrating how the character might communicate an energy-related story
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### *Stage 3 – Commission*

The selected artist will enter into a commissioning agreement with the City of Darebin to develop the final character and comic strip series.

The commission will include:

- refinement and finalisation of the character design
- development of six completed comic strip
- delivery of final digital artwork suitable for print and digital use

Each storyboard will be commissioned at \$685 per comic strip.

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## Selection Panel

The selection panel will comprise Council officers and relevant advisors.

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## Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- artistic merit and quality of previous work
  - ability to translate complex energy and climate concepts into engaging visual storytelling
  - creativity in encouraging small behavioural changes related to energy efficiency and electrification
  - strength and relatability of the proposed character concept
  - potential for the character and visual style to evolve across future campaigns
  - suitability of the visual approach for both print and digital communications
  - demonstrated ability to deliver the project within the proposed timeline
  - willingness to work collaboratively with Council staff
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## Timeline (Indicative)

Expression of Interest Opens: 19 March 2025

Expression of Interest Closes: 9 April 2025 by 5pm

Shortlisting: 9 April 2025 – 17 April 2026

Concept Development: 17 April 2025 – 7 May 2026 (TBC)

Winner selection: 7 May – 15 May

Final Commission:

Development of character and comic strip completed within two months of appointment.

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## Contacts and submission

If you have any questions or to submit your expression of interest please send to:

[energyupgrades@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:energyupgrades@darebin.vic.gov.au)

For more details on the programs Darebin has on electrification visit:

<https://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Waste-environment-and-climate/Climate-and-sustainability/Save-energy-and-go-electric>