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## AGENDA

Hearing of Submissions Committee Meeting to be held  
at Darebin Civic Centre,  
350 High Street Preston  
6pm Tuesday, 9 June 2026

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# Agenda

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

### 1. MEMBERSHIP

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis (Mayor)  
Cr. Kristine Olaris OAM  
Cr. Matt Arturi (Deputy Mayor)  
Cr. Connie Boglis OAM  
Cr. Ruth Jelley  
Cr. Julie O'Brien  
Cr. Alexandra Sangster  
Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos  
Cr. Angela Villella

### 2. APOLOGIES

### 3. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

### 4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS HEARING OF SUBMISSIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That** the Minutes of the Hearing of Submissions Committee Meeting held on 13 October 2025 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

## COUNCIL'S OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

## 5. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

### 5.1 HEARING OF BUDGET SUBMISSIONS - DRAFT BUDGET & DRAFT OUR DAREBIN ACTION PLAN

**Author:** Coordinator Management Accountant

**Reviewed By:** General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 28 April 2026, Council resolved the following documents be made available for community exhibition and feedback for a four-week period between 30 April to 27 May 2026:

- Draft 2026-27 budget (incorporating the 4-year financial outlook),
- Draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan
- Draft 2026-27 Fees & Charges Schedule,
- Draft 2026-27 to 2029-30 (4 year) Capital Works Program,
- Draft 2026-27 Operating Projects,
- Declaration of the public waste service charge,
- Declaration of the service charge for kerbside collection services,
- Granting of the three concessions aligned to equity principles to support waste cost recovery charges,
- Granting of a Council Pensioner Rebate within general rates, aligned to equity principles, for pensioners who are not eligible for the Kerbside Waste Collection Charge Pensioner Concession; and
- Granting of a 100% concession for general rates for all properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a 'registered agency', relating to the provision of affordable housing.

Council placed the draft budget & associated documents on public display, with any person requesting to be heard in support of their written submission to be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee at 6.00pm on 9 June 2026.

Council is required to adopt a Budget each financial year and will consider adoption of the budget on 30 June 2026, including consideration of all submissions.

**Officer Recommendation**

**That Council:**

- (1) Notes the submissions received from the community (**Confidential Appendix A**)
  - (2) Thanks all submitters and presenters for addressing the Committee in support of their budget submission.
  - (3) Refers all submissions for further consideration to the Special Council meeting to be held on 30 June 2026 as part of Council's deliberations in adopting the Budget 2026-27, Our Darebin Action Plan 2026-27 and associated matters.
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**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION****Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 28 April 2026, Council resolved (as a high level summary):

*That Council:*

- (1) *Endorse the following draft 2026-27 Budget Documents to proceed to community exhibition:*
  - (1) *the draft 2026-27 Budget (incorporating the 4-year Budget) (**Appendix A**) and associated fees and charges (**Appendix B**), Capital Works Program (**Appendix C**) and Operating Projects (**Appendix D**), to resource the Our Darebin Plan 2025-29 and draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan,*
- (2) *Endorses the draft Our Darebin Action Plan 2026-27 (Appendix A) to proceed to community exhibition.*

It should be noted that all amendments to the draft documents resolved by Council at its 28 April 2026 Council meeting, were made to the respective documents via either addendums or physical updates prior to releasing them on community exhibition.

**ALIGNMENT TO 2041 DAREBIN COMMUNITY VISION**

Pillar 1: Vibrant, Healthy and Connected

Pillar 2: Respectful and Inclusive

Pillar 3: Sustainable, Green and Liveable

Pillar 4: Collaborative, Transparent and Responsible

**ALIGNMENT TO OUR DAREBIN PLAN 2025-29**

Strategic Direction 6: Decision Making, Community Engagement and Transparency - A City that is well-managed, transparent and trusted by its community and partners, with clear and respectful communication that builds confidence in Council's decisions.

## DISCUSSION

### CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2020) PRINCIPLES

#### Financial Management

The draft four-year budget has been prepared to ensure that the overall budget is financially sustainable in the long run and Council operates within its means. To achieve this, the draft budget incorporates significant savings targets. To operationalize these targets, robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms are necessary, especially regarding unplanned cost pressures.

#### Community Engagement

The Darebin community demonstrated strong engagement throughout the process, with 1,245 visits to the online *Your Say* page, 110 attendees at in-person pop-up sessions, and 168 budget submissions/feedback items received. Additionally, 30 submitters requested to present at the Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting.

A Summary of communication channels utilised for 'exhibition' of the draft budget are as follows:

Engagement / Communications Activity	Number of participants/ people engaged	Target group	Demographic information
<b>Feedback Survey</b>	<b>168 submissions received in total:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>137 via Have Your Say Darebin page</li> <li>31 via email</li> </ul>	Darebin City Council Residential/commercial residents	Darebin community members who live, work, own a business, study and visit our municipality
<b>Your Say Darebin page</b>	1,860 visits by 1,245 visitors	Darebin City Council Residential/commercial residents	Darebin community members who live, work, own a business, study and visit our municipality
<b>3 X Community pop-ups in Reservoir, Thornbury and Preston</b>	Pop-up #1 Spring street Reservoir: 60  Pop-up #2 Mayer Park Thornbury: 25  Pop-up #3 Preston Market: 25  Total people engaged at pop-ups= <b>110</b>	All Darebin residents, particularly residents who would not normally engage with us online.	Pop-up #1 Spring street Reservoir: Pensioners, families, local residents, traders.  Pop-up #2 Mayer Park Thornbury: Dog walkers, families, local residents, walkers.  Pop-up #3 Preston Market: Local residents, traders, business owners, pensioners, multicultural people from across Darebin.
<b>Darebin Community News article</b>	Article regarding budget engagement included in Autumn 2026 DCN – delivered to all homes	All Darebin residents	All Darebin residents
<b>Printed Posters</b>	30 x posters distributed to customer service locations, libraries, Council venues and community hubs	Darebin City Council Residential/commercial residents	Darebin community members
<b>Translated poster</b>	Poster including comms summary in 12 languages printed for pop-up sessions	Darebin City Council Residential/commercial residents	Darebin community members who speak a language other than English

Engagement / Communications Activity	Number of participants/ people engaged	Target group	Demographic information
<b>Fact Sheets</b>	Printed fact sheets about the 26/27 Budget	Darebin City Council Residential/commercial residents	Darebin community members
<b>E-Newsletters</b>	May editions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your Darebin</li> <li>What's on for Families</li> <li>Business enews</li> </ul> 12,363 total recipients	Darebin City Council Residential/commercial residents	General community members Families Business owners
<b>Social Media Posts</b>	Mayor video on FB and IG + 4 social media posts on IG and FB	Darebin City Council Residential/commercial residents	Community members who follow DCC social media accounts

### Promotion to the community was conducted via:

- Your Say Darebin page and email to 1,433 Your Say subscribers
- 3 X community- pop ups in Reservoir, Thornbury and Preston
- Darebin City Council website news article and Budget page
- Darebin Community News
- Video for social media
- Facebook, Instagram, organic posts
- Article in e-newsletters:
- Your Darebin
  - Sustainable Darebin*
  - What's on for Families*
  - East Preston Community Centre news*
  - Disability Access and Inclusion*
  - What's on for Older Active Darebin*
  - Darebin Business Update*
- Poster, fact sheets
- Hard copy information distributed to customer service centres, libraries.

### Summary of feedback received at the pop-ups

At each pop-up, community members were invited to write a single message to Council about the budget on a 'post it' note. Overall, the written comments indicate that participants were focused on practical, visible local issues that affect their everyday experience of Darebin.

Across the three pop-ups, many people raised concerns about the condition and maintenance of public spaces. Common issues included potholes, footpaths, street sweeping, graffiti, overgrown vegetation, lighting and public toilets. There was also a clear expectation that Council will continue to invest in parks, leisure centres, libraries, and arts and cultural facilities, while ensuring that existing assets are safe, clean and well maintained.

Several comments highlighted the importance of community safety, inclusion and accessibility. This included requests for improved lighting, safer park infrastructure, more accessible facilities, support for anti-racism initiatives, and services or spaces that better meet the needs of older people, culturally diverse communities, families, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness.

Some feedback was specific to locations. In Reservoir, comments focused on Reservoir Leisure Centre, Edwardes Lake Park, public toilets, and local amenity around shops and laneways.

In Thornbury, feedback centred on park upgrades, pavilion improvements, road maintenance, and the Merri/Crank Creek area.

In Preston, comments were broader in scope, with interest in High Street, Preston Market, arts and culture, libraries, street cleaning, footpaths, and planning for local business and activity centres.

While the number of written comments is relatively small, the feedback provides useful insight into the issues that were top of mind for participants during the pop-ups.

### Draft Budget Submissions/Feedback Results

The community feedback received has been organised into themes, and a breakdown of this categorisation is presented below.

Theme	No. of submissions	% of total submissions
Environment, Parks & Sustainability	84	50.0%
Leisure, Recreation & Community Services	14	8.3%
Other General Matters	10	5.9%
Sustainable Transport	48	28.6%
Supporting Business/Community Grants	2	1.2%
Culture, Equity & Inclusion	2	1.2%
City Planning, Approvals & Design	3	1.8%
Buildings & Facility Management	5	3.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>

Detailed submissions/feedback received from the community, along with Management responses, is available in confidential **Appendix A**. Submissions with personal information redacted will be shared publicly as an attachment to the future report to Council on 30 June 2026 at which it will consider adoption of the budget.

*Note: At the time of writing, Council officers were finalising Management responses on a small number of submissions. Once finalised, an updated attachment will be circulated to Councillors.*

The methodology for promoting and receiving submissions allowed everyone an opportunity to participate, however it was not a representative method and cannot be used to make conclusions about views of the 'whole community'.

A total of 30 submitters originally indicated their intention to present at the Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting on 9 June 2026. A list of speakers is provided in confidential **Appendix B**.

**Note:** *At the time of writing, Council officers were in the process of confirming the final number of presenters, as well as their preferred presentation format (virtual or in-person). A final, confirmed list will be established over the next week and to be socialised with Councillors in advance of the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 26 meeting.*

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- (c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- (g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
- (h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- (i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act;

### **Strategic Planning Principles**

- (a) an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted;

### **Service Performance Principles**

- (a) services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community;

## **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations (including Climate Emergency)**

The strategic documents are designed to provide resources to:

- implement the Our Darebin Plan which sets out Council's strategic directions and key initiatives in regard to environmental sustainability.
- deliver services through many of which Council has integrated environmental sustainability considerations and practices including climate mitigation and resilience work.
- fulfill Council's duties and functions relating to environmental sustainability including under the Planning and Environment Act, the Water Act, the Local Government Act, the Environment Protection Act and the Building Act amongst others.

**Equity, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Human Rights Considerations:**

The strategic documents are designed to provide resources to:

- implement the Our Darebin Plan which sets out Council's strategic directions and key initiatives in regard to Equity, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Human Rights.
- deliver services through many of which Council has integrated equity and inclusion considerations.
- fulfill Council's duties and functions relating to various equity and human rights considerations in legislation.

**Economic Development and Cultural Considerations**

The strategic documents are designed to provide resources to implement the Our Darebin Plan which sets out Council's strategic directions and key initiatives in regard to economic development and cultural considerations.

This draft budget proposes to continue a concession for general rates for all properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a 'registered agency', relating to the provision of affordable housing, in accordance with s169 (1d) of the Local Government Act 1989, and the exemption from general rates for properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria for charitable purposes, excluding those used for affordable housing.

**Operational Impacts**

The strategic documents are intended to fund all of Council's operations and implementation of the Council Plan. Price increases, well beyond revenue growth, mean that Council's budget does not fund as many operational activities as it used to.

To remain financially sustainable, this draft budget incorporates savings targets that must be achieved each year through operational changes – either securing additional revenue or reducing costs.

**Legal and Risk Implications**

Council has an obligation to meet various requirements in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020 as they apply to the budget, Long Term Financial Plan and Council Plan*, and *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 which specifically relates to the Council Plan*.

The operational risks of our spending decisions are a key element in the decision-making process. Full consideration will be given to the risk impacts.

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**

- **30 June 2026 Special Council Meeting:** Adoption of the 2026-27 budget and other associated documents.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Community Vision 2041
- Public Transparency Policy
- Darebin Community Engagement Policy
- Toward Equality Framework
- *Local Government Act 2020*

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*

**Attachments**

- Community Feedback 2026-27 Draft Budget, Our Darebin Action Plan & Associated Documents (**Appendix A**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- List of HoS Speakers (**Appendix B**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of 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.

**6. CLOSE OF MEETING**