

28 September 2023

Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO
Chair Multicultural Framework Review Panel
Department of Home Affairs
PO Box 25
Belconnen ACT 2616

Dear Mr Dellal and Panel Members

Darebin Council welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Federal Government's Multicultural Framework Review. We also welcome the appointment of the panel who will lead and co-author the Review. As advisers to the Government, we hope our submission adds further insights into the Panel's report.

According to the 2021 Census Australia is now a majority migrant nation, with 51.5 percent of residents either born overseas or having at least one parent born overseas¹ and more than 5.6 million (26.6 percent) Australians speak a language other than English at home². The Panel should consider this significant population shift to inform the Review. In addition, to this Council requests broadening of the scope of the review to ensure that the wider Australian community is addressed as part of the Panel's deliberations.

For Darebin, a review of the Multicultural Framework is an opportunity to shape a long-term policy and a national commitment to multiculturalism where the benefits of Australia's diversity are unlocked through a coordinated whole-of-government and inter-governmental approach. This Review will build a future where Australia's multicultural heritage is recognised, celebrated and everyone has equal opportunity to belong and contribute.

Overview of Darebin and its diversity

Situated on the traditional lands and waters of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent more than 1 percent of Darebin's population³, one of the highest proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in inner Melbourne. Council recognises the City of Darebin is a significant gathering place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the home to 17 significant Aboriginal peak bodies and organisations.

Darebin has a significant culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse community. According to the 2021 Census, 31.4 percent of Darebin residents were born overseas⁴ and 58.9 percent of Darebin residents have either one or both parents born overseas⁵. Many people have come from all over the world and made Darebin their home, as well as a place to work, study, worship and socialise, bringing a diversity of life experiences, knowledge, and skills. In addition, Darebin is home to many refugees and people seeking asylum who are making their first home and community in Australia.

1 <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/snapshot-australia/latest-release#culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities>

2 <https://profile.id.com.au/australia/language>

3 First Nations population statistics | City of Darebin | profile.id

4 <https://profile.id.com.au/darebin/birthplace>

5 2021 Darebin, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)



the place
to live

Darebin City Council
ABN 75 815 980 522

Postal Address
PO Box 91
Preston VIC 3072
T 03 8470 8888
F 03 8470 8877
darebin.vic.gov.au



National Relay Service
relayservice.gov.au

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



Speak your language
T 03 8470 8470

العربية

繁體中文

Ελληνικά

हिंदी

Italiano

Македонски

नेपाली

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

Soomalii

Español

اردو

Tiếng Việt

Council recognises there is intersectionality and diversity within diversity which brings into consideration one's multiple identities including socio-economic status, gender, age, ability, race, culture, ethnicity, language, sexuality, sex characteristics, gender identity, beliefs, occupations, income, education, carer, and visa status.

We recognise diversity is a civic asset and we strive to build a City that harnesses its greatest strength, the diversity of our people. Council is committed to delivering inclusive programs, policies and services that reflect the needs and aspirations of our diverse community. Our commitment is to ensure we create opportunities for all members of the Darebin community to participate.

We are committed to developing the next iteration of our Cultural Diversity Action Plan to guide the future work Council will deliver with our partners and the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. This Plan will build on the initiatives outlined below which showcase Darebin's leadership in diversity and inclusion.

Acknowledgment of new citizens to Darebin by Traditional Owners

In 2019, Darebin renewed and strengthened Council's long-standing commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Darebin through a 'Statement of Commitment'⁶ In 2019 Darebin held the inaugural Ganbu Gulin event, created in collaboration with Traditional Owners and the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee. It is an annual inclusive celebration where new citizens to Darebin, their families and friends are formally welcomed to Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Country by Traditional Owners.

World class intercultural gathering space

In 2023, Darebin opened an award-winning Intercultural Centre, a purpose-built space co-designed in partnership with Traditional Owners and members of our diverse community including representatives from our Interfaith Council and Welcoming Cities Reference Group. The Centre is a place where people from across the community can build respect and understanding for each other's cultures and identities through conversations, programs, activities, and events. Council offers the Panel the use of the Darebin Intercultural Centre to undertake community engagement activities as part of the review process.

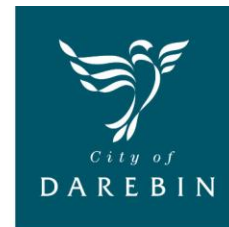
Council acknowledges the importance to recognise and value of cultural diversity across Australia as a multicultural society, consideration should be given by the Panel for a greater focus on meaningful interaction between different cultural groups for enhanced understanding and communication through dialogue, respect, and collaboration.

Reflecting our migrant and multicultural community through place naming

In 2023, Council adopted a Place and Road Naming Policy which set priorities for different categories of names for places and roads. One of these priorities is to name assets such as council-owned buildings, pavilions, and laneways to reflect the rich multicultural communities and their connection with Darebin's history as one way to create belonging and inclusive meaningful spaces.

Multilingual communication, engagement, and resources

Almost 33 percent of our community speak a language other than English at home⁷, with approximately 6 percent of these residents, speak English not well or not at all. As part of Council's commitment to harness the ideas and listen to diverse community voices, we acknowledge engagement cannot rely on the provision of information in English or online activities alone. Council has developed a Multicultural Communications and Engagement



the place
to live

Darebin City Council
ABN 75 815 980 522

Postal Address

PO Box 91
Preston VIC 3072
T 03 8470 8888
F 03 8470 8877
darebin.vic.gov.au



National Relay
Service
relayservice.gov.au

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



Speak your
language
T 03 8470 8470

العربية

繁體中文

Ελληνικά

हिंदी

Italiano

Македонски

नेपाली

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

Soomalii

Español

اردو

Tiếng Việt

⁶ StatementofCommitment2019pdf.ashx (darebin.vic.gov.au)

⁷ <https://profile.id.com.au/darebin/language>

Toolkit to support staff in delivering inclusive communications and engagement, with a requirement to translate all important information and correspondence into Darebin's top 12 community languages. Our libraries also provide physical as well as digital collections in community languages as another way to provide everyone the opportunity to learn and participate.

An important lesson from the pandemic was the willingness of all three levels of government to work together to share vital health information in languages for CALD community members. Through this concerted effort, we saw a significant increase in testing, reporting and vaccine uptake. For the Framework to deliver significant outcomes in Australia, Darebin believes that all three levels of government need to replicate this effort and work together.

A Welcoming City

As a member of the Welcoming Cities Network, Council committed to an Australia where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic, and civic life. Council is working towards accreditation as a Welcoming City with the aim of becoming accredited at the highest level by June 2024, the first for any local government in Australia.

Increasing inclusion through sport

Council has introduced a performance subsidy program for sporting clubs which is linked to fees and charges to increase social and gender inclusion with a focus on groups at risk of exclusion. As a result, we have been able to measure an increase of participants from a culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from 847 in the 2021/22 season to 1968 participants in the season of 2023/24.

Support for refugee and asylum seekers communities

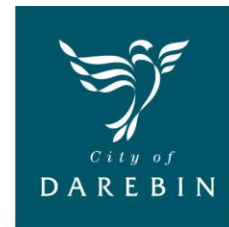
Council has a commitment to supporting and advocating for the rights of newly arrived, refugee and asylum seeker communities. Darebin's active involvement and commitments to state, national and global initiatives include being an Executive Member of the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum, a Refugee Welcome Zones declaration signatory, and a member of the Refugee Welcome Zone Leadership Group. These activities reaffirm our commitment to welcome refugees to Darebin. While Council notes that the framework review does not consider immigration, visa processes or timeframes, these are important ongoing matters for our community.

Multifaith and multicultural relationships

Almost 50 percent of Darebin's community members belong to one of 40 religions⁸ and council has longstanding relationships with many multifaith groups. Council established an Interfaith Advisory Committee to provide advice to Council on issues affecting faith communities, improve interfaith relations, and provide advice on program, policy and service delivery showing the intersectionality between faith and culture. For example, in Darebin, around 4 percent of residents identify themselves as Muslims, and Council has had a twenty-year partnership with the Islamic Society of Victoria (Omar Bin Al Khattab Mosque) known as the Preston Mosque. This long-standing relationship is formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Supporting culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families

Darebin recognises that supporting children and families in the early years is important to access universal services such as kindergarten, Maternal Child Health services, and supported playgroups. As a participant in the Victorian Best Start program, Council is taking responsibility for the interests of all children, especially Aboriginal children and children experiencing vulnerability including culturally and linguistically diverse children to access these services. Through State Government funding, Council has recruited Multicultural



the place
to live

Darebin City Council
ABN 75 815 980 522

Postal Address
PO Box 91
Preston VIC 3072
T 03 8470 8888
F 03 8470 8877
darebin.vic.gov.au



National Relay Service
relayservice.gov.au

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



Speak your language
T 03 8470 8470

العربية
繁體中文
Ελληνικά
हिंदी
Italiano
Македонски
नेपाली
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Soomalii
Español
اردو
Tiếng Việt

⁸ <https://profile.id.com.au/darebin/religion>

Outreach Early Years Workers and continues to build the capacity of staff and services through activities, and resources.

Formal education of languages

In Darebin there is one bilingual primary school (Spanish/English). We also are fortunate to have the Victorian School of Languages based in Darebin. This government school provides programs for students in Years 1 to 12 who do not have access to the study of languages in their mainstream schools. The school offers over 40 languages around Victoria to 13,000 students in face-to-face classes and 1400 students in distance education. It will be important to strengthen and invest in the formal learning of languages other than English by the Federal Government in partnership with state governments by widely expanding well-resourced bilingual education for all Australians.

Addressing barriers to reporting racism

Council is committed to building a more inclusive community for all by supporting Darebin's multicultural communities, reducing discrimination, and taking a stand against racism. This includes empowering the community and building its capacity to respond to racism. Council partners with the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (VEOHRC) to make it easier for the community to report on racism and discrimination by hosting and promoting the VEOHRC Community Reporting Tool. Council also has employed an Anti-Racism Program officer to progress this work with the community.

Darebin acknowledges there are key systemic barriers to reporting racism and discrimination with a need for more accessible reporting pathways within the current legislative framework. To combat racism, reporting is important not only for the affected people but also for their respective communities and society. Reporting on racism holds individuals, organisations, and institutions accountable for their actions; addresses and contributes to the prevention of further incidents; raises awareness of the issue; educates people about the harm it causes; offers support and validation to affected people; and captures data to support the development of programs to help community better understand the problem and solution.

Our recommendations for the Panel's consideration

Consideration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

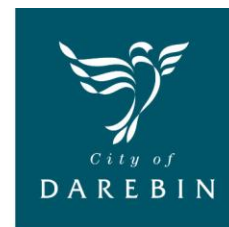
The Review should consider how the connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and multicultural and migrant communities can be strengthened to build cultural awareness and cultural safety practises for all. The approach should significantly deepen knowledge and understanding of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and history in the spirit of truth-telling and self-determination.

Leadership required from the Australian Public Sector

Council encourages the panel to include in the Review a recommendation that all States and Territories introduce a Cultural Diversity Equity Act, modelled on the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020. The Act would require the public sector, corporate and non-corporate Commonwealth entities, government agencies, ASX companies, aged care facilities and education institutions to take positive action towards achieving workplace cultural diversity and equity, promote equity in their policies, recruitment, programs, and services. To do this, governments would need to provide education, support the implementation, and enforce compliance, which could take the form of a Public Sector Cultural Diversity and Equity Commission, or other body.

Addressing the climate emergency

Council recommends that the Panel considers and promotes climate justice and assists with building resilience within CALD communities to meet the challenges and impacts of the climate emergency. To do this well, the Review should consider resourcing initiatives to



the place
to live

Darebin City Council
ABN 75 815 980 522

Postal Address
PO Box 91
Preston VIC 3072
T 03 8470 8888
F 03 8470 8877
darebin.vic.gov.au



National Relay Service
relayservice.gov.au

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



Speak your language
T 03 8470 8470

العربية
繁體中文
Ελληνικά
हिंदी

Italiano
Македонски
नेपाली
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Soomalii
Español
اردو
Tiếng Việt

address the barriers faced by CALD community members, particularly those new or recently arrived in Australia, to access information and resources about how to stay safe, and connected.

Inclusive engagement

Council asks the panel to consider an inclusive engagement strategy to inform the Review, ensuring the inclusion of the voices, lived experiences and perspectives of community members from all age groups and backgrounds. It will be critical to provide time and resources for a true consultation process where community members are given time and support to be heard in their preferred language.

Address barriers to reporting racism.

Council requests that through the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework (NARF), that communities are provided with accessible and well-informed options for pursuing action, including practical ways to report for people who have experienced or witnessed racism. This will require reporting methods that address existing key barriers such as language and access to 'digital' methods. Council also suggests that the NARF includes long-term strategies to combat racism, including systemic forms of racism.

Further assistance for refugees and people seeking asylum.

Council encourages the panel to consider the additional barriers faced by refugees and those seeking asylum. The Review should recommend the need for investment in programs and services to support the wellbeing and inclusion of refugees and asylum-seeking backgrounds, including employment, health support, housing, education, cultural recognition, and celebration, addressing racism and discrimination, and creating opportunities for meaningful civic participation. Council is an executive member of the Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum; more specific recommendations which Darebin Council supports are included in this submission.

Investing in barriers to participation

As part of the Review, Council recommends that there is a need to invest in long-term strategies and policies that address systemic barriers to economic, political, social, and cultural participation in Australian society faced by all generations of Australians from culturally diverse backgrounds. Within this, Council recognises the importance of cautiously differentiating the challenges experienced by different groups as they are not the same, and their arrival periods, circumstances, and challenges are different.

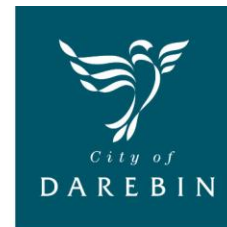
Consideration of those experiencing vulnerability

Council would also like to highlight those groups within CALD communities who are experiencing vulnerability, marginalisation, and discrimination, that the Panel considers identifying specific outcomes for Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM) groups as part of the Review.

A whole of government and inter-government approach and funding for local governments

To ensure a whole-of-government approach and provide opportunities for cross-portfolio collaboration at a Federal level Darebin recommends the Panel consider the re-establishment of the Office of Multicultural Affairs within the Cabinet to coordinate policy outcomes of the Framework and play an inter-governmental leadership role. As part of this, we ask the Panel to also consider the re-establishment of an empirically focussed Bureau for Immigration Multicultural and Population Research.

Darebin Council and local governments in general, are at the forefront of grassroots community engagement and help to deliver services to their communities. The Panel should consider allocating future funding to local governments to assist deliver services and capacity building programs for multicultural communities across a range of areas including



the place
to live

Darebin City Council
ABN 75 815 980 522

Postal Address

PO Box 91
Preston VIC 3072
T 03 8470 8888
F 03 8470 8877
darebin.vic.gov.au



**National Relay
Service**
relayservice.gov.au

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



**Speak your
language**
T 03 8470 8470

العربية
繁體中文
Ελληνικά
हिंदी
Italiano

Македонски
नेपाली
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Soomalii
Español
اردو
Tiếng Việt

arts, sport and cultural expression. Council programs for CALD communities are delivered best when all three levels of government work together.

Conclusion

Darebin Council thanks the Federal Government and the Panel for the opportunity to be a part of the Multicultural Framework Review. We believe all levels of government and decision makers share the responsibility to ensure community members feel safe and secure in a multicultural Australia. We look forward to the Review providing tangible and meaningful reform which enables Australia to be a country where everyone is included fairly, equally treated and barriers to participation are removed, safeguarding the prosperity and social cohesion for generations to come.

Further information

Darebin Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss and provide further information on our submission. Should assistance be required by the panel or to undertake engagement activities at the Darebin Intercultural Centre, please contact Council's Principal Advocacy and Government Relations, Kwabena Ansah on 03 8470 8480.

Regards



CR JULIE WILLIAMS
MAYOR
City of Darebin

Appendix

Darebin Council's work is guided by our *Towards Equality: Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029* (the Framework). The [Darebin Health and Wellbeing Profile](#) complements the Framework by examining data on health status and health determinants in the municipality to provide a deeper understanding of health inequalities in Darebin.



the place
to live

Darebin City Council
ABN 75 815 980 522

Postal Address
PO Box 91
Preston VIC 3072
T 03 8470 8888
F 03 8470 8877
darebin.vic.gov.au



National Relay
Service
relayservice.gov.au

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



Speak your
language
T 03 8470 8470

العربية

繁體中文

Ελληνικά

हिंदी

Italiano

Македонски

नेपाली

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

Soomalii

Español

اردو

Tiếng Việt