

Developing the Darebin LGBTIQ+ Action Plan

Summary of Stage 1

Community Engagement Results

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 we now call Darebin and pays respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

We pay respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Darebin.

We recognise, and pay tribute to, the diverse culture, resilience, and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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

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1.Introduction

1.1 Report Purpose

On 18 December 2023 Council approved a two-stage process of engaging the community in informing the development of the Darebin LGBTIQA+ Action Plan. Stage 1 community engagement process formally concluded on 31 March 2024.

During the engagement period, ideas and perspectives were contributed by:

- Twelve community organisations and peak bodies - via face-to-face group discussions, email or formal submission
- 104 community members responded to the Your Say Darebin survey,
- 30 community members from five Council community advisory groups

Approximately 150 community members were directly engaged with in discussion with Council officers at three community events and festivals¹, and were encouraged to complete the Your Say Darebin engagement survey.

This report summarises the key findings from the engagement conducted by Darebin Council. The findings will be provided to internal and external stakeholders, including the Darebin LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee and inform the development of a draft Darebin LGBTIQA+ Action Plan.

1.2 Engagement context and objectives:

The City of Darebin (Council) is developing Darebin's LGBTIQA+ Action Plan (the Plan) to deliver on Council's commitment to create a safer and more welcoming Darebin for LGBTIQA+ community members.

To guide the development and implementation of the Plan, Council is conducting a range of engagement to understand the communities' views and aspirations for the new Plan. The objectives of the engagement, development and implementation of the Plan is to:

1. To understand the experiences of the members of LGBTIQA+ communities living, working, studying or accessing services in Darebin.
2. To determine the priority areas for Council to address in its work to support the inclusion, rights and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ communities.
3. To identify potential actions to be considered for inclusion in the Action Plan; and
4. To better understand the impact of intersectionality on the inclusion, rights and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ communities in Darebin.

¹ Engagement at community events and festivals included Midsumma Carnival on 21 January 2024, Northcote Rise Festival on 18 February 2024 and HOT Pride Makers Market in Thornbury on 23 March 2024.

2.Engagement approach

The engagement consisted of the following engagement methods:

2.1 Submissions from two major stakeholders

- Formal submissions received from Your Community Health and Victorian Pride Lobby

2.2 Stakeholder interviews – in person, online interview/email

- Ten (10) interviews with stakeholders, partners and peak bodies were held between 26 February to 25 March 2024.
- Organisations provided with choice of attending in-person interview or online interview (with relevant staff member from Council).
- They were requested to respond to the interview questions via phone or by sending an email.
- Interview questions (Appendix 2)

2.3 Engagement with Council's Community Advisory committees – in person

- Discussions with five (5) Council Advisory Committees were conducted, within their usual meeting.
- Names of Community Advisory Committees & Interview questions (Appendix 2).

2.4 Your Say Darebin Survey – online

- A survey was run from 11 January 2024 to 31 March 2024 via Darebin Your Say page.
- There were 1,174 views on the page.
- 104 community members made contributions to the survey.
- Survey questions (Appendix 1).

2.5 Issues in & limitations of the engagement approach

- There is a significant discrepancy between the number of views (1,174) on the Your Say Darebin online survey, and only 104 contributions being made. This could be due to privacy related concerns relating to the requirement to register and/or provide contact details. Another could be that potential respondents did not want their responses to be tracked or traced back to them
- This report reflects the views of participants who participated in online engagement, face to face/interviews or submitted written letters only; these views may not be representative of the wider community.
- Information has not been validated as it is a summary of participants' opinions, ideas and feedback. It is not research data.

- A range of responses were received which were not in keeping with Your Say Darebin's moderation requirements and/or did not reflect the intent and objectives of the engagement (as described in Section 1.2 Intent and Objectives). This includes because they were hateful, harmful or vilifying; did not reflect the spirit and intent of the engagement; did not address or respond to the questions or were inappropriate.

See section 3.3.1 for more information and some analysis, and section 3.4 for some potential considerations within the Action Plan development. The Moderation policy is attached as Appendix 5.

3.Engagement Findings

3.1 Written Submissions from Stakeholders – Your Community Health and the Victorian Pride Lobby

Your Community Health and the Victorian Pride Lobby provided comprehensive submissions during the engagement period. The submissions have been attached as appendices to this report (Appendix 5 and Appendix 6).

Your Community Health (Appendix 5) has been helping people in Melbourne's North Metro region meet their health and wellbeing goals for 50 years. Operating in the Darebin region and surrounds, Your Community Health delivers a wide range of services and support, including medical, dental, allied health, counselling, AOD, health promotion and social support. The organisation is Rainbow Tick accredited (in 2023), and proactively works towards their services and workplace being inclusive, culturally safe and gender-affirming for LGBTIQA+ clients, community members and staff. It also provides several LGBTIQA+-specific services and programs including a Trans Health Peer Support service and Rainbow Gym.

The Victorian Pride Lobby (Appendix 6) is a community-based advocacy group that works towards equality, social justice and advancing human rights for the Victorian LGBTIQA+ community.

Both submissions include expert and informed advice on what they understand to be the priority areas of need as well as the opportunities for Council's work in, partnering with and on behalf of LGBTIQA+ people and communities with a connection to Darebin.

3.2 Stakeholder interviews: Combined feedback from LGBTIQ+ Stakeholders & Darebin Community Advisory Committees

Personal data has been de-identified to protect the privacy of respondents.

This section provides the main feedback and the overall themes that emerged from the analysis of ten discussions (face to face, over Teams or via email), which took place from February 26 to March 25, 2024.

The LGBTIQ+ Stakeholders who contributed feedback were as follows:

1. AGMC – Australian GLBTIQ+ Multicultural Council
2. Queer Sporting Alliance
3. Bisexual Network
4. Bridge Darebin
5. Many Coloured Sky
6. Melbourne Inclusive Church
7. Transgender Victoria
8. VACCA – Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association
9. Thorne Harbor Health
10. Victoria Police GLLO based at Preston Police Station

The Community Advisory Committees who contributed feedback were as follows:

1. Darebin Disability Advisory Committee
2. Darebin Active & Positive Ageing Committee
3. Darebin Gender Equity Committee
4. Darebin Interfaith Committee
5. Darebin LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee

Summary of feedback by theme from the consultation with the stakeholders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ community

- There is a lack of data on First Nations LGBTIQ+ service provision in Darebin. Anecdotally, it is known that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ people are funnelled into mainstream services which may not be culturally safe.
- Diversity could be acknowledged and celebrated by giving a platform to queer First Nations artists, embracing diversity, showcasing Darebin's history, focusing on diverse talent in festivals, and providing businesses with "You are welcome" stickers.
- Queer Wurundjeri Elders to deliver Welcome to Country. Recognise the cultural load of Aboriginal people who are LGBTIQ+. Always recognise, support & remunerate Elders.

Council leadership

- The important role of local government in inclusion at a grassroots level and in advocacy to other levels of government for change. The importance of leadership which supports inclusion, leadership from LGBTIQ+ members of the organisation, a culture that

celebrates the LGBTIQ+ community, and policies, procedures and documentation that supports LGBTIQ+ people.

- It's not just about writing a strategic action plan, but also how Council takes action to build trust within the community.
- The two main priorities highlighted for the council are safety and accessibility.
- A neighbouring Council has invested funds to conduct a gap analysis and research; something that Darebin could consider.
- There is a mistrust of government and council services, and concerns about police brutality against queer people.
- Darebin is viewed as a progressive and queer-friendly municipality where people generally feel safe.

Council services and programs

- Council services could be improved by celebrating days of significance with events, flag raising, and having a consultative committee of community members.
- Ensuring that every service Council provides is culturally safe and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ people.
- Council could include / promote programming delivered by Queer Sporting Alliance in their leisure program.
- Importance of co-design, not making assumptions, and asking residents.
- Council services could be improved by using council spaces to support organisations to host events, being mindful of language use in communications, and considering bathroom facilities.
- Suggestions for improving services included offering events for queer people, providing mental health services, ensuring facilities such as toilets and change rooms are inclusive, and offering staff training on the use of inclusive language. Providing information in languages other than English to acknowledge intersectionality was also suggested.
- Council services could be improved by offering events for queer people, providing mental health services, ensuring facilities such as toilets and change rooms are inclusive, and offering staff training on the use of inclusive language. The council should also provide information in languages other than English - recognise intersectionality.
- The council could improve its services, programs, and facilities by making them more accessible and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ communities. This includes updating facilities to include all-gender spaces.

Cultural and linguistically diverse LGBTIQ+ community

- Council is doing well but needs to focus on the next layer, which includes considering multicultural or multifaith people in their LGBTIQ+ focused events. Increasing workers from multicultural and multifaith backgrounds could help in this regard.
- The needs of multicultural and multifaith LGBTIQ+ communities vary across generations. A safe environment where people can be themselves without necessarily out to other people, to feel comfortable.

- Support for LGBTIQ+ individuals who are refugees or asylum seekers from various countries. The needs and challenges of these individuals vary depending on their visa status and family situation.
- The pandemic has highlighted the lack of support for newly arrived communities who identify as LGBTIQ+.
- There is a demand for English language classes as some individuals have found existing classes [at a service provider-level] to be homophobic.

Economic development

- Council should work on attracting organisations and services for LGBTIQ+ communities and consider how to make use of empty buildings for this purpose.
- Conducting detailed studies and research into LGBTIQ+ tourism could help understand visitation to Darebin and how to increase it.

Events and celebrations

- Diversity and contribution of LGBTIQ+ community members in Darebin could be acknowledged and celebrated through events like the Premier's multicultural gala dinner, focusing on the LGBTIQ+ multicultural cohort perspective.
- Diversity could be acknowledged and celebrated by making better use of the High Street that connects all three big suburbs, possibly hosting Midsumma events along there.
- Council to collaborate with service providers on events and celebrations.
- Celebrations should be inclusive of all, including the trans community, and that everyone should be invited to the party.
- Diversity could be acknowledged and celebrated by creating a space to celebrate queer contribution.
- Council can utilise LLO (Victoria Police's LGBTIQ+ Liaison Officers) for police presence or for community information / interactions.

Health and wellbeing

- Lack of capacity in LGBTIQ+ specific services (such as homelessness or mental health) and a lack of bulk billing GPs.
- There is a lack of mental health support and community events for bisexual people, and a need for funding.
- LGBTIQ+ people often have worse outcomes when it comes to housing and mental health; a need to address this issue. Service provider highlighted large demand for their services than anticipated, particularly among long-term homeless residents with major mental health concerns.
- There is a need to shift towards a wellbeing perspective. Some service providers advertise themselves as LGBTIQ+ friendly but may not ask enough questions to truly understand and meet the needs of these communities.

- Funding is a significant barrier to queer participation in sports – addressing this would make a real difference to health and wellbeing.

Partnerships:

- The council should consider partnering with organisations like Midsumma, Bridge Darebin, and neighbouring councils to combat LGBTIQ+ discrimination and establish an LGBTIQ+ community hub in the north.
- Explore potential partnerships in the LGBTIQ+ inclusion space, such as providing training, using council facilities for their events, and being involved in a consultative committee.
- Council services could be improved by inviting community members/service users to provide feedback.
- Council partnering with organisations and peak bodies to organise bigger events for multicultural cohorts.
- Council partnering with organisations to provide culturally safe mental health services and address homelessness.
- Council services could be improved by ensuring toilets are inclusive of all gender identities and considering programs for LGBTIQ+ older people.
- Council should consider implementing meaningful partnerships (not tokenistic) with Aboriginal organisations and work with Elders more.
- Collaboration with the council to provide feedback and guidance and offering workshops on how to be more bi-inclusive.
- It's crucial to develop action plans in consultation with the community. The plan should be a council-wide responsibility, not just limited to the Equity and Diversity area.

Safety

- Prioritise local laws that address vilification and hate against LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Police presence at events should ensure safety without making it about them, as police are often seen negatively at these events.
- LLOs work as liaison officers between the police and LGBTIQ+ communities, helping to break down barriers between LGBTIQ+ people and the police. LLOs. They provide feedback on risk assessments and increase police presence if needed at community events.
- Improving lighting in Darebin is a way to help segments of the community that experience more violence, such as trans folk.

Toilets and changing rooms

- Toilets and changing rooms have not been an issue from a safety concern perspective to the police so far.
- All-gender facilities should be a given in any building upgrades, and that more services tailored to the needs of the LGBTIQ+ community, such as a trans swim night at RLC, should be offered. The visibility of businesses that offer such services should also be improved.

- There is a need for clear signage and separate all-gender bathrooms that are not lumped into disabled bathrooms. Gendered bathrooms are still needed for cultural reasons.

Visibility and recognition

- Darebin could be more welcoming by improving the visibility of LGBTIQA+ events and celebrations. Suggestions include an LGBTIQA+ Awards Ceremony or Queer leaders in community for IDAHOBIT celebration, and better communication about these events.
- Council should consider implementing visible support by leaders at council for the LGBTIQA+ community and have visible councillors and staff who are part of the LGBTIQA+ community on website/socials.
- Council needs to be more proactive in promoting inclusivity, such as showing up at community events and being more affirming in its actions.
- Introduce targeted actions for specific groups within the LGBTIQA+ communities to ensure inclusivity and representation.
- Diversity could be acknowledged and celebrated by increasing representation and visibility, and by celebrating Bisexual Visibility Day in September. It's not just about raising the flag, but also having people from the community represented.
- There is a need for greater awareness of the diversity within the LGBTIQA+ community among service providers.
- There is a need to go beyond stickers to celebrate the diversity in Darebin. Suggestions include using the Progressive Pride Flag, opening communities that are not just cis queer men, and having more specific places and activities for certain cohorts and communities.
- Importance of affirming TGD people's gender through the use of preferred name and pronouns and having visible signs of acceptance such as rainbow and trans flags.
- Acknowledging and celebrating the diversity and contribution of LGBTIQA+ community members in Darebin through initiatives like a Community Flag Schedule.
- Visible signs and bathroom signage were mentioned as key aspects.
- Increasing the visibility of the Bi+ flag and promoting out and proud Bi+ people were suggested as ways to make the environment more welcoming. The visibility of the 'B' in the LGBTIQA+ acronym is crucial, and the language used in queer events and policies should reflect this.
- Recognising the diversity within the LGBTIQA+ community and not making assumptions about people's identities.

3.3: Online Survey via Darebin's Your Say page.

3.3.1 Issues in the Your Say Darebin findings

As touched on in section 2.4, a number of responses received via the Your Say Darebin engagement were assessed as not reflecting the intent and objectives of the engagement or meeting the moderation policy requirements. These responses have not been included in this report. They have been analysed by the Human Rights Lead and some broad themes extracted, as follows:

1. Enough has been done by Council for LGBTIQ+ people and no more work is needed (n=21).
2. Everyone should be treated the same and therefore a focus on LGBTIQ+ people is not justified and potentially discriminatory (n=12).
3. Council should focus on other issues and not allocate resources to work in the LGBTIQ+ area (n=14).

Additionally, some responses breached the Moderation Policy (attached as Appendix 4) by including words, phrases or concepts which were assessed to be discriminatory and/or vilifying (n=56). These responses have not been included in this report. They have however been analysed by the Human Rights Lead and some themes extracted as below, which could still usefully inform and guide the development of the Action Plan:

Some responses included concerns about user **safety in changeroom, bathroom and toilet facilities**. Some included a request for Council to provide / continue to provide binary gendered facilities (male/female).

Some responses called for more recognition of, and a more nuanced response to **differing needs and experiences across people and groups within the LGBTIQ+ acronym**. Some asked specifically for lesbian-only spaces/events.

The LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee will be asked to provide further advice to Council on the issues raised in this section of the report.

3.3.2 Overview of Key themes from Qs. 2-6 in the Your Say Darebin online survey

These are the key themes identified in the online survey with sub-themes included by frequency of appearance in responses. All survey responses received are provided verbatim in the following pages.

Q2 What contributes to a welcoming, safe and inclusive Darebin?

1. Visible signs of support (22%)
2. A welcoming and safe Darebin community (20%)
3. Celebrations and events (12%)
4. Queer friendly venues and places (9%)
5. Council capability (9%)

Q3 What could be done to make Darebin more welcoming, safe and inclusive?

1. Community meetups, events & celebrations including to respond to loneliness & isolation (22%)
2. Inclusive and safe Darebin Council / municipality (22%)
3. Visible signs of support (15%)
4. Accessible, safe bathroom facilities (3%)

Q4 How could Council improve its services, programs and facilities to make Darebin more welcoming, safe and inclusive?

1. LGBTIQ+-specific programs and facilities (26%)
2. Support & promote LGBTIQ+ inclusion (24%)
3. Capacity building including in/of Council staff (14%)
4. Safe and accessible facilities including bathrooms (12%)

Q5 How could we acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and contributions of LGBTIQ+ community members?

1. Celebrations, awards and events (22%),
2. Recognition of LGBTIQ+ community leaders and achievements (19%)
3. Tailored approaches for different needs, experiences (10%)
4. Capacity building: mentoring, training & grants (5%).

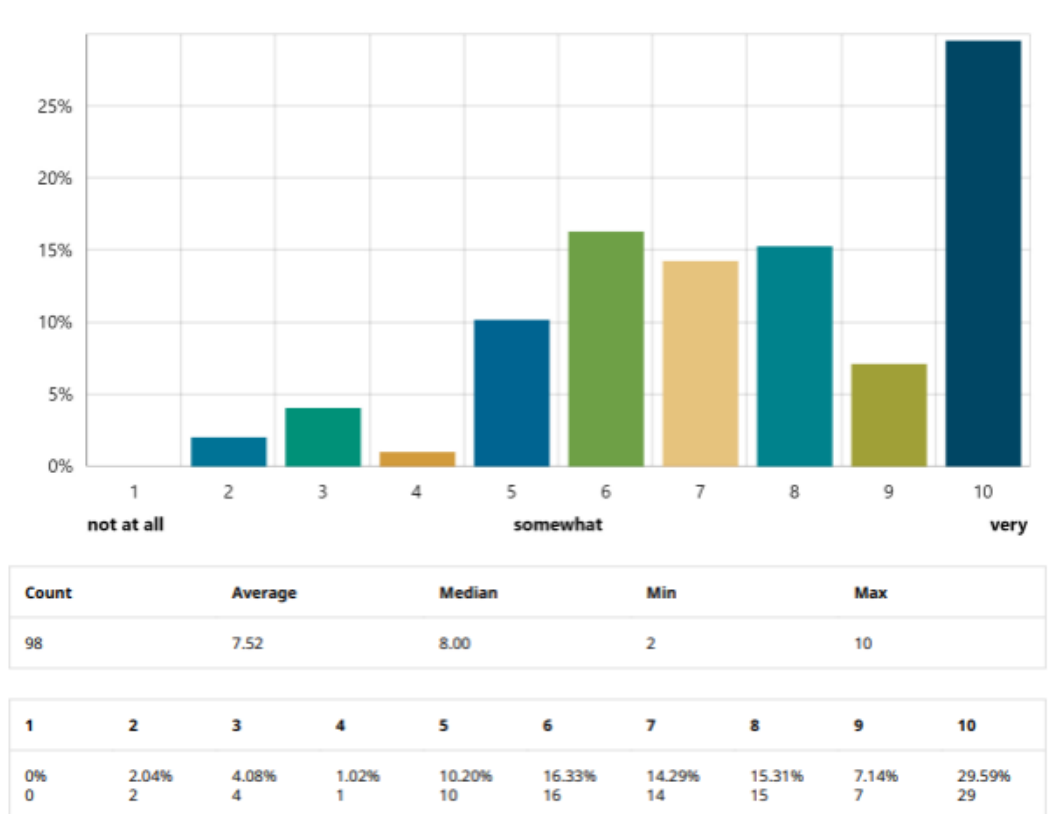
Q6 What other actions could Council implement with partners?

1. Education, capability and awareness raising (24%),
2. Advocacy and campaigns (16%),
3. Capability building (10%)
4. Celebrations and events (8%)

3.3.3 Q1. How welcoming, inclusive, and safe is Darebin for members of LGBTIQ+ communities? (rating from 1 Not at all to 10 Very)

A total of 98 (94.2%) survey respondents answered the required slider question, and 6 respondents skipped providing a response to this question (see Figure 8 below). Average rating of 7.52 out of 10 suggesting that Darebin is considered welcoming, inclusive, and safe for members of LGBTIQ+ communities.

Figure 8: How welcoming, inclusive, and safe is Darebin for members of LGBTIQ+ communities?



3.3.4 Q2. What are some of the key aspects that contribute to a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for members of LGBTIQ+ communities in Darebin?

A total of 97 (93.3%) survey respondents answered the short text question, and 7 respondents skipped providing a response to this question.

The five key themes were:

1. Visible signs of support (22%),
2. A welcoming and safe Darebin community (20%)
3. Celebrations and events (12%)
4. Queer friendly venues and places (9%)
5. Council capability

Verbatim quotes from survey respondents to question 2:

Theme 1: Visible signs of support

“Active visible supports/support systems, visible/explicit denunciation of queer/trans hate/phobia.”

“ ... visible support and leadership from Darebin Council.”

“Lots of rainbow stickers in many establishments, a rainbow accreditation tick would be a great initiative. Staff and patrons in shops and bars seem quite happy to be inclusive of everyone. All ages of LGBTIQ+ are included in many events and activities”.

“Knowing that the Council is aware and sensitive to many of our needs. Seeing Council information and advertising being inclusive...”

“Rainbow imagery in council buildings, having an LGBTIQ+ advisory committee, knowing that Darebin Youth Services aspires to have Rainbow Tick Accreditation.”

“All facilities to have signage to show it’s an inclusive facility including staff training on inclusive language. Calling out homophobic and exclusive language.”

“Town Hall flying Rainbow Flag, City of Darebin having this policy.”

“I liked that you kept the rainbow flag up during the marriage equality survey. Felt seen, respected, and supported.”

“Explicit and vocal support from Darebin council, flying the Pride flag at key times in the year (Midsumma, Pride etc.)”

“Visible signs of support, like "welcome here" stickers in shops, posters in libraries, also the library IDAHOBIT book displays. I have been to IDAHOBIT events run by Council. I also remember the "yes" campaign Darebin ran for marriage equality.”

“Display of pride/ally symbols, inclusion of gender-neutral bathrooms in newer facilities”

“Unisex toilets, LGBTIQ+ signs/symbols (e.g. rainbow)”

“Visual safety queues (welcoming flags etc), Direct language, Active work on Anti-homophobic and Anti-Transphobic commentary, graffiti”

“Visible support by Council (having inclusive policies, Mayor attending LGBTIQ events etc); participation in major LGBTIQ events like Midsumma; including diverse people (including LGBTIQ) in Council publications, websites etc”

“Visibility - tackle the fear of the unknown; challenge homophobic policies and behaviour particularly through religious institutions; highlight role models from LGBTIQ+ communities 'we are everywhere!' e.g. doctors, teachers, lawyers, athletes.....”

“Seeing flags/stickers around (rarer the further up you go)”

“Events, visibility, activism, queer art and spaces”

“Visual representation through online and print media, normalise same sex families.”

“Visibility of City support through programs and events”

“Rainbow stickers, asking for pronouns, non-tolerance of hateful behaviour and/or speech, not assuming someone is cis gender or heterosexual.”

“Signage on local businesses, events, seeing people in the community that are open and freely who they with support from the rest of the community.”

“Shops having signs signifying queer safety up, Melbourne inclusive church.”

“Flag stickers on shops. Likeminded people in the area, inclusive atmosphere. Most of the churches approve.”

“Visible flags/representation, LGBTIQ+ specific venues, community events.”

“The library has queer and diverse librarians, posters on inclusion.”

“Sometimes I see pride stickers on stores/businesses.”

“Visibility, Safety, Diversity, Inclusivity, Education”

Theme 2: A Welcoming and safe Darebin community

“ .. Being able to live in an area that is accepting and generally has a demographic that is supportive and normalising.”

“The people in general are passively inclusive.”

“My queer neighbours, a council that shows unconditional support of LGBTIQ+ issues.”

“Representation, local businesses and events, council commitment”

“Well educated community”

“Community members in general are accepting, lots of medical services in the area are very open to and provide fair treatment regardless of identity”.

“Decreased homophobia compared to other suburbs, LGBTIQ+ friendly venues, Community representation feels prominent.”

“So many diverse people live in Darebin. I myself am diverse and always feel very safe in expressing myself and being able to live authentically, as I am.”

“It's known throughout Melbourne as being 1 of the most gender welcoming areas.”

“Absence of obvious violence”

“Absence of hate speech and infrastructure to protect against late night violence.”

“LGBTIQ+ events.”

“Business that cater demonstrate their services E.g. marketing that includes same sex couples, language that doesn't assume heteronormative”.

“The Preston Market sitting area, The Reservoir Pool trans-inclusive evenings, The accepting nature of a lot of the citizens.”

“Same as those you provide for every resident. Clean council facilities. Kindergartens, support & activities for youth & the elderly. Library services.”

“LGBTIQ+ events and groups and representation and visible welcoming and support of community members that goes beyond a simple window sticker. Intersectional support in other marginalised communities.”

“Generally, people just been polite, accepting, a diverse cross section of people living in Darebin.”

“Being treated fairly like everyone else. Taking responsibility. Not taking away others' rights.”

“All people in Darebin are respected and respectful regardless of their identities.”

“Respect for all members, events focused on inclusion.”

“Equal treatment for all including lack of discrimination”.

“Representation, zero tolerance for discrimination, community connection”

“The area feels very safe”.

“A recognition by council as to the specific needs of this community. Community consultation. The action plans. the committee, which I'm assuming will also have community representation?”

“Encompasses all age ranges, encourages older LGBTIQ+ folks to engage, provides welcoming environment in council spaces so trained staff ensures participation of older LGBTIQ+ folks on committees.”

“LGB people need to have the right to set boundaries and self-determine, so lesbians, gays, bis, as well as trans and queer, can each gather to the exclusion of the others, and each work towards their different and specific interests.”

“Acceptance, Diversity, Respect, Social inclusivity, education”

“Representation; it feels like there is a presence of other queer people. This is supported by Establishments (bars, cafes, gyms etc.) that also seem welcoming and have queer representation. Acknowledgement/discussion of queer folk and issues. Events”

“Non-homophobic attitudes amongst citizens”

“Safe spaces owned and operate by queer people, inclusive sporting clubs, rainbow signage, seeing diverse people in the community.”

“Group specific get togethers, demonstrating support from council and surrounds, having events/venues for the community, availability of info and resources for the community.”

Theme 4: Queer-friendly spaces and places

“Queer spaces, unisex toilets, queer community spaces. Support.”

“Seeing other queer folks, visual displays, queer events.”

“Dedicated accessible and available spaces to meet, establish a budget for LGBTIQ+ communities that demonstrates commitment to the needs and interests of the community.”

“Diverse shopping, entertainment, work & living environment which are lively and community close.”

“Traders who display rainbow stickers”

“Public visibility, welcoming spaces, clear anti-discrimination policies (that are enforced)”

“That we are acknowledged & somewhat supported.”

“Making positive statements despite negative comments, creating safe spaces, creating opportunities for all.”

“Queer businesses, queer community markets”

“Places we meet up. Shared spaces (not that-many). Reservoir is home for many LGBTIQ+ members.”

“1. Police out of queer events 2. Gender neutral toilets 3. Auslan interpreters 4. Wheelchair accessibility 5. Water”

“Single sex public toilets and changing rooms as well as mixed sex toilets (disabled, and family toilets). Disability access to libraries, train stations, bus stops, etc., Anti-discrimination federal and state policies that protect everyone already.”

“Having LGBTIQ+ people employed in Darebin! The Reservoir Leisure Centre had a wonderful trans woman who served us and made us feel so safe and welcome!”

“Accessible health, education & housing”

“1. All-gender toilets...”

Theme 5: Celebrations and events

“Welcoming in, involvement in key LGBTIQ+ events/conferences/celebrations, more on the ground service provision by/at Darebin Council, partnering with key LGBTIQ+ services, visibility, Multicultural visibility”.

“Access to services, events and visibility”

“Having queer events such as Queer night at ice skating rink and Leisure Centre”

“Venues/bars/social spaces that are inclusive (e.g. queer nights, welcoming staff, queer performers), available services for queer people, queer celebrations and events ...”

“Community event, culturally diverse activities and celebration, community engagement program, wellbeing awarenesses program”

“Queer events, resources and messaging at libraries (e.g. rainbow story times, plus talks etc. for adults) flags etc. on council buildings, critical mass of existing LGBTIQ+ community, queer friendly community health services (which PANCH seems to be)”

Theme 6: Council capability

“... actual education on gender identity for ALL levels of staff. Still to this day staff repeatedly misgender or deadname people.”

“2. Staff who have had training LGBTIQ+ inclusion - specifically around inclusive language (e.g. - don't assume someone's gender, learn how to use gender neutral pronouns, don't assume a child has a 'mum and dad' etc.”

3.3.5 Q3. What could be done to make Darebin more welcoming, inclusive, and safe for members of LGBTIQA+ communities?

A total of 93 (89.4%) survey respondents answered the long text question, and 11 respondents skipped providing a response to this question. The four key themes were:

1. Community meet-ups, events & celebrations (22%),
2. Inclusive and safe Darebin Council / municipality (22%)
3. Visible signs of support (15%)
4. Accessible, safe bathroom facilities (3%)

Verbatim quotes from survey respondents to question 3:

Community meetups, events & celebrations including to respond to loneliness and isolation

"1. A dedicated ongoing meeting place for all LGBTIQA+ people who live work or study in Darebin that is accessible at least once a month 2. regular events and activities for and by LGBTIQA+ community that are Council led 3. LGBTIQA+ community development activities and or projects that are community led."

"For LGBTIQA+ multicultural and multifaith communities, safety will be of utmost importance. It is imperative that the community feels safe and secure, without having to navigate and blend in. A workplace that is diverse without micro discrimination and provides equal opportunity to all employees. A public area that provides a safe space allows the communities to seek shelter when unwanted events occur."

"It might be nice to see some services in shopping centres or places where the public visit that enable community and connection for LGBTIQA+ people".

"... Visibly celebrating queer culture, hosting events etc"

"I think more events or activities that bring the community together more".

"In my opinion, there should be more LGBTIQA+ events in the community. For example, an annual pride march in Darebin, education in schools and business about sexual diversity, programs which make it easier and safer for Queer people to come out or express their sexuality, Businesses to promote social inclusion (For example, Clubs, cafes or queer themed events), A Darebin pride centre with for example, A drop in program where older queer people can socialise or meet up."

"More queer events, social connections/groups and markets/events."

"Provide more LGBTIQA+ community events. Provide more LGBTIQA+ info sessions on issues of interest. Conduct focus groups."

"More events and safe spaces"

"Maybe have more LGBTIQ+ community events and advertise them more in notices/bulletins to normalise it more for the people that think that we don't/shouldn't exist."

"Queer focused events and spaces"

"Ongoing programs of support rather than one off events. More visibility of what is on and available in Darebin".

"Specific LGBTIQ+ spaces and events. Working with local businesses to educate them on diversity. Perhaps having things such as GSA's in schools and tertiary education, or other LGBTIQ+ groups of a similar fashion."

"We attended the Northcote town hall for a kids play the rainbow tree - 10/10. Thank you for that. We Loved it! Loved we could go Northcote from Thornbury (local) to see a quality, meaningful, funny show."

"I use the Northside Clinic in Nth Fitzroy and the Preston community health centre which are both very accommodating but difficult to access from the main area of Preston. More open sit down and chat areas would be helpful to interface with other LGBTIQ+ and fellow citizens, parks and gardens are nice, but the weather can play havoc at times. A dedicated space for educational and recreational resources for the younger members, art/food/performance spaces, more inclusive facilities (toilets, dressing areas) and perhaps even a bi-monthly catwalk session for those more extroverted. This would help with acceptance from the more broader community, knowing there was a tribe, a culture that also enriches their area. The Westgarth area has been highly visible for quite some time, but its L not T or NB."

"More events for diverse people, targeted at specific groups within the LGBTIQ+ spectrum. Bringing people together removes isolation and creates a sense of belonging. Recognition of intersectionality existing in the community."

"... More grassroots participation in queer events, rather than sponsorship from pink dollar marketing. Continued arts & cultural support for queer arts, crafts, designers, makers, storytellers. Intersectional representation. Provide safe places, but don't back out of commitments to queer events- have a safety plan."

"Having a LGBTIQ+ social or community group in Darebin would make a huge difference - currently the only offering is Bridge Queer Gathering which runs infrequent events and is not a consistent group."

"More community events that include queer positive messages. Including exercise sessions targeting LGBTIQ+ community (or subsets within it) at the council owned sports and aquatic centres. Promotion of playgroups for rainbow families (this may already happen, my kids are grown, and, in my day, we had to self-organise), ditto for new mothers/parents' groups, queer friendly and INFORMED maternal and child health services (again, maybe this happens now, but in early 2000s it was patchy at best, often unfriendly, unwelcoming and unconsciously exclusive/judgemental). More library events."

"A range of queer events, e.g. Queer Iftar, Queer sports, e.g. swim night, teams, public statements on queer issues"

“Develop more community meeting areas. (For instance, the dog parks at Edwardes Park Lake have become an unexpected meeting area because so many of us have dogs.). Developing the Boat house into a meeting room could become another. The library could encourage book groups for our community to read and discuss books written by and for our community.”

“More LGBTIQ+ community groups, support sessions, communities. Volunteer opportunities”

“More community run queer spaces, street parties, art festivals. Queer artist support grants. Queer run collectives. Queer art murals for visibility”

“I think greater intersectionality between issues, like disability, mental health, sexuality, race, and culture makes things better for everyone. Plus, more TGD swim nights, and LGBTIQ+ inclusive sports in general.”

“Having LGBTIQ+ only spaces and continue to highlight and elevate queer events.

Inclusive and safe Darebin Council / municipality

“Make sure that all marketing/communication is inclusive - include diverse range of families in images used. All staff should be trained on how to use LGBTIQ+ inclusive language (e.g. - don't refer to group of people as ladies and gentlemen or girls and boys. Don't assume a child has a 'mum and dad' etc.)”

“Better training for staff ... Older LGBTIQ+ folks still exist and need a voice”.

“Staff wearing ally badges or a rainbow badge or lanyard (as long as staff can genuinely opt into wearing them)”

“I have lived in Darebin as a lesbian woman for over 30 years. It has always been a great place to live as a lesbian and I have never had any issues here.”

“Intentionally hiring queer people within Darebin!”

“It already is safe, welcoming and inclusive.”

“Darebin does a great job on the whole...”

“Move to an active inclusiveness... promote "unity AND diversity"... council can actively promote LGBTIQ+ at all levels ... including council services, council events, businesses (I'm sincere when I say chase the pink dollar) ... and while I support a "positive" focus on specific community groups for a time to wind back or correct past negatives... I suggest the goal is to have all diversity promoted and welcomed and included and feel safe in Darebin... including old white hetero males like me”.

“Dedicated support from government by working together with other orgs such as police, healthcare providers, schools and encouraging intersectional support by Darebin leading outreach to other groups to ensure that LGBTIQ+ are represented and supported”.

“Have a communications campaign about why Darebin plays a role in acknowledging and supporting LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other minority groups. So

many in the community (especially in the north) think Council should stick to Roads, Rates and Rubbish. They don't understand that an inclusive community for all is better for all!!"

"Having a free playgroup for rainbow families was incredibly inclusive. Unfortunately, this has since been cancelled due to venue being repurposed, and no alternative venue has been offered, so the one council funded safe space for young LGBTIQA+ families in Darebin has been shut down, with no alternative. This is incredibly disappointing and saddening as we felt very included and welcome, and now we feel excluded and forgotten."

"Further support for queer artists/creatives/performers/venues to create and strengthen spaces for queer people. More queer people in leadership positions. Increased community safety in some areas - I am anecdotally aware of an increase in violence toward trans people."

"Attempt to identify particular areas where problems have shown up. Certain suburbs, groups of people and some workplaces have shown a reluctance to be accepting of all. Approaching them with a view to help them understand and accept LGBTIQA+ as a part of the community and try to find a way for them to be more inclusive."

"Our local High school markets itself as LGBTIQA+ friendly but my kids have seen the reality. It's a scary place if you're questioning or associated with the LGBTIQA+ community. A fair play sports day recently had nobody from Darebin - they got Banyule groups in to run activities. What a pity."

"Try just treating us as human beings rather than placing us on a target for everyone to have a say. Leave us alone we don't need council to come to bat for us."

"Address street violence and discrimination. I have not had positive experiences at all when trying to report these experiences to police, including when I was assaulted outside my front door. Many of us have simply lost trust and faith in Victoria Police."

"Less aggressive & othering behaviour of transport police."

"Use coloured lighting like around the new train stations to give scary spaces more appeal at night".

"I feel welcome."

"Already doing a great job."

"Displaying pride symbols, including preferred pronouns in communications and on name badges, and shining a spotlight on queer members of the Darebin community are all great ways to normalise and promote acceptance of queer people. However, many people will see these actions as tokenism unless more substantial changes are made; For example, designing gender-inclusive spaces and providing support services for queer people experiencing hardship."

"Maybe providing easily accessible information on what it means to be a member of the LGBTIQA+ community provided my members themselves and info on what each of the letters specifically mean to educate anyone who might not know. Many members of the LGBTIQA+ community are also disabled in some way, having information about certain

disabilities especially neurodiversity's would make a lot of people feel more welcomed as many people currently don't have the correct info about most disabilities."

"Increased access/visibility of services, programs"

"Ally training for community members and service providers?"

"Community education, sharing positive stories, empowering people with lived experience in decision-making".

"We have built our own communities in Darebin over many decades. It's good that the Council now supports us and is extending upon the action plan previously implemented. We now need services that cover all demographics, particularly recognising those longer-term residents who first started many of the LGBTIQA+ venues and events around this area. This support should include inclusive events, and support for those organising such activities. EG; Financial and promotional support."

"Please provide more support for queer inclusive businesses. For example, my roller derby club plays in Darebin and have very expensive rent, and many barriers for new members. We have over 80% of our members as queer and would benefit from council support to increase our financial sustainability. Other places like pony club gym, or captain darling are good examples of queer businesses to support, and showcase using council time and resources."

Visible signs of support:

"More visible representation - flags, posters, health campaigns. Community working groups and social groups that are well advertised. Spaces/stores which are queer owned or focused. Health services which are well advertised and represented for LGBTIQA+ people."

"Fewer police, active visible support (banners, posters, hosting events, stickers at the front doors of government buildings etc). "

"More light on high street/other major roads at night, currently very dark and unsafe, I and other friends have been accosted by drunks leaving the pub on multiple occasions."

"More trans signs on shop fronts and all trams"

"Involve the local Muslim communities in LGBTIQA+ issues and seek their input."

"Using public spaces to show diversity (e.g. murals, brighten up the older train stations)"

"Gender neutral toilets. Visibility of Rainbow flags/stickers on businesses. A rainbow crossing(?) Encouragement of LGBTIQA+ run businesses and encouraging local businesses and services to consciously consider the needs and safety of LGBTIQA+ people."

"Develop tools business can use to develop services which remove [sic] such as heteronormative, able bodies etc assumptions. E.g. his and hers packs, Mum, and Dad, Consider the use of Principles of Universal design".

"Maybe Rainbow flag on footpath, like what has been done in some other council areas".

“More visible signs of support (e.g. free stickers / pins to wear or put up at your local cafe), regular events, Drag story time for children, LGBTIQ+ youth groups and peer support groups”.

“Less police presence, or at least plain clothes, Accessible venues and bathrooms”

Accessibility and safety in bathroom facilities:

Gender neutral toilets in all council spaces.”

“A unisex toilet option EVERYWHERE

“Maintain sex segregated toilets”.

“Unisex toilets at all local cafes, restaurants etc”

Additional comments

“More community housing, accessible health care including mental health & sport, well-funded public education.”

“Being misgendered by business staff is still a major problem. I could take legal action under the Sex Discrimination Act (covers gender identity since 2013, and the introduction of the new positive duty to prevent harassment last December makes businesses' obligations even clearer), but it simpler, less expensive/time consuming and less stressful for me just to never go back there. The absence of clear demonstration of support by businesses is also reason - on the basis of lived experience - to be wary of using them.”

3.3.6 Q4. How could Council improve its services, programs, and facilities to make them more accessible, safe, welcoming, and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ communities?

A total of 92 (88.5%) survey respondents answered the long text question, and 12 respondents skipped providing a response to this question (see image 5 below).

The four key themes were:

1. LGBTIQ+-specific programs and facilities (26%)
2. Support & promote LGBTIQ+ inclusion (24%)
3. Capacity building including in/of Council staff (14%)
4. Safe and accessible facilities including bathrooms (12%)

Verbatim quotes from survey respondents to question 4:

LGBTIQ+- Specific programs and facilities

"Invite LGBTIQ+ communities to participate in creating or co-designing services, programs and facilities that are welcoming and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ communities. This will maximise engagement with LGBTIQ+ communities in the long term"

"More free programs like the Pride Centre have for trans people to try on binders, get gender affirming haircuts etc".

"Queer focused health needs"

"As the LGBTIQ+ (and broader) community ages, we are facing numerous challenges. It is imperative that programs aimed at assisting people stay in their homes are maintained - and not outsourced or privatised. Also, sporting facilities should support the health and well-being of our community. Affordable golf, lawn bowls, tennis, etc. Programs to encourage participation and, where possible, the equipment to play them."

"More community-based programs for LGBTIQ+ adults and youth. More opportunities to connect."

"Programs- a monthly meeting for LGBTIQ+ to discuss issues or just to be a part of a community!"

"Having a free playgroup for rainbow families was incredibly inclusive. Unfortunately, this has since been cancelled due to venue being repurposed, and no alternative venue has been offered, so the one council funded safe space for young LGBTIQ+ families in Darebin has been shut down, with no alternative. This is incredibly disappointing and saddening as we felt very included and welcome, and now we feel excluded and forgotten. Having a free playgroup for rainbow families was incredibly inclusive. Unfortunately, this has since been cancelled due to venue being repurposed, and no alternative venue has been offered, so the one council funded safe space for young LGBTIQ+ families in Darebin has been shut down, with no alternative. This is incredibly disappointing and saddening as we felt very included and welcome, and now we feel excluded and forgotten."

"A Pride celebration would be wonderful. Gender neutral bathrooms where possible, spaces and services for young LGBTIQ+ + community members. Supporting and advocating for

intersectional conversations within other communities, such as religious, cultural, and ethnic communities. Offering support and outreach to all LGBTIQA+ communities' members to provide social and health supports, such as groups and festivals, specific days at community orgs. i.e. Neighbourhood House, Your Community Health especially in less progressive areas such as Reservoir."

"Community boards alerting community member when and where events are being held and what's happening around Darebin".

"In my opinion, it would be beneficial for the community to create a hub in the Darebin area where meetings and celebrations can be held. Ensure that all communication has translation options and encourage service providers to go through a diversity awareness program. Accessible public spaces, such as bus stops, tram stops, and train stations."

"It would be great to see more, I haven't seen any programs services or facilities yet. Making them more well known by advertising or on social media would be awesome."

"... try to pay local queer people to oversee your projects and do mystery shopping at your leisure centres. Even though you have a queer friendly gym, how trans friendly is it really? A good example might be partnering with our derby club to sponsor our team to complete free or discounted workouts at the gym. Then you are actively enriching the lives of queer people through programs. I would showcase already queer business, and help them reach more people through grants, and funding. I would ensure the leisure strategy supports queer sporting clubs. Particularly those who are not tenants of council facilities."

"Ensure programs and facilities cater to gender diverse people and people with a disability. Many LGBTIQA+ members in Darebin are getting older but services, programs and facilities do not necessarily cater to us. Ask us when we could attend meetings, not just tell us what times certain actions will occur."

"Invest in sporting venues that build LGBTIQA+ access - ROLLER DERBY!!!"

"... Subsidized places in community programs for LGBTIQA+ community members, e.g. discounted tickets to events, free places in community groups, etc. Council participation in pride events around Victoria - represent Darebin in Mardi Gras, pride parades, and campaigns..."

"LGBTIQA+ specific support groups (usually support groups are for mainstream and my community usually do not access them due barriers of not being part of the mainstream)..."

"In my opinion, Darebin should have its own LGBTIQA+ health centre. For example, with programs which promote love and safe sex amongst the community. Also, its own pride cinema which displays quality queer films which will help normalise sexual diversity in the community. Further, an aged care facility which will care for older Darebin residents who are facing homelessness, or familial exclusion. Safe sporting programs. For example, A Rainbow Bocce group for older Queer Darebin residents."

"Facility hire/access that removes barriers for queer people/groups/users to using the space (this could be cost, awareness/visibility of the spaces, suitability of spaces, spaces being welcoming through gender neutral toilets, policies, signage etc). Programs and Services that are targeted to LGBTIQA+ TIQA+ people, that meet need of specific cohorts, and are co-

designed with LGBTIQA+ people/community. Consider intersectionality when designing programs/services/projects. If a Council facility/program/service has staff, have they received LGBTIQA+ inclusion training - including training the use of pronouns etc? This can be an effective (and fairly cheap/easy) way to make a space/service a lot more welcoming and safer. People often think about infrastructure/physical aspects, which is also important, but the interactions with people are often the most impactful. It's not enough to state that it is welcoming/inclusive, staff need practical information, skills, training, and guidance on how to apply this in their role day to day. This should be reflected in policies, planning for programs/services/projects, and in their leadership/supervisors. I think this is particularly important when setting up outsourced relationships with companies managing facilities on Council's behalf, as this can often be lost when a third party is involved."

"Ensuring safety of patrons especially if it late at night after LBGT+ events. This might involve extra security, police presence or other community-based protection programs.

"... more funding for LGBTIQA+ programs and services. Fund a Rainbow Shed for all LGBTIQA+ and gender diverse communities in Preston/Reservoir."

Support & promote LGBTIQA+ inclusive practice

"Emphasise that services, programs and facilities are LGBTIQA+ inclusive and that intolerance won't be tolerated."

"Homophobic behaviour: no tolerance, no funding, no service. Support awareness activities and initiatives that celebrate and support LGBTIQA+ communities and topics. Collaborate and promote the Victorian Pride Centre. Improve visibility, including corporate online content"

"Including diverse people (including LGBTIQA+) in Council publications, websites etc - showing the full breadth of our diverse community".

"Diversity needs to be a lived, visible reality in our LGA. It's not (yet). Frankly I don't feel safe to be out in parts of Reservoir. We deserve to be safe and actively celebrated".

"The services you have linked to, and the statements of support for, for LGBTIQA+ people are good, and that should be acknowledged"

"Signage that is supportive of diverse sexualities and genders at council sites (libraries and leisure centres). More LGBTIQA+ staff. Stand firm against those who aren't inclusive".

"Just a simple logo on official docs."

"Publicising mental health supports for LGBTIQA+ people that are easily accessible, along with doctors and referral sheets would be an excellent initiative."

"I would like to see links so businesses in the area could understand their obligations - these don't need to contain anything other than a link to the relevant sections of the Australian Human Rights Commission website (and note the positive duty requirement includes sexism, racism). Including a statement that you are aware of and working to address the positive duty requirement would be good for the city, and also set an excellent example for

businesses in the community. It might be worth adding SB, as per <https://theconversation.com/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-must-be-at-the-centre-not-the-margins-of-lgbtqia-plans-and-policies-209221>

“Include non-binary and other options on forms, including options for relationships that are less hetero-centric.”

“Anti-hate posters/advertising - a tip line for hate crimes. Large visual representation in council spaces - ALL GENDERS WELCOME signs and pride flags. ALL GENDER/GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOMS PLEASE.”

“Respect and advocate for female only spaces and events.”

“Community grants for LGBTIQA+ initiatives/activities - creative projects, peer support groups, etc. Council having an LGBTIQA+ advisory board who are regularly consulted regarding community needs and things, and these individuals being listened to, and their recommendations actually implemented. Supporting LGBTIQA+ people to access affordable/public housing (rent is going up and queers are struggling).”

“Follow through on the supports you already claim to provide, and actually fulfill those obligations. You cannot even currently manage your own staff with constant support shortages, I have zero faith you could possibly improve things until you have resolved your own glaring internal issues.”

“The harder you push division, and that people are somehow separate from each other is an illusion. This is not what true unity looks like.”

“No police at queer events!”

“Think about times and locations. e.g. Northcote feels a lot safer and more accessible than Preston”.

“As above - LGBTIQA+ is not a singular 'community'. Good community services as offered to all other residents will serve anyone who is lesbian or gay.”

“The Council already does a great job making services, programs and facilities inclusive for everyone. Maybe more thought could go into disability services and safety.”

“there is no exclusion. I work as a support worker & see every day how the person who I support has to navigate her life because she is in a wheelchair. Obviously design of the urban and built environment needs to be taken into account. Examples such as foot paths that are well maintained and wide enough. Seating in cafes that allows the person in the wheelchair to be able to enter and exit easily and that all facilities have access to disabled toilets.”

“ ... Schools! We are 2 dad family with a grade 1 at a local primary school. I see no representation of our family within the school or by the school. Within the school - there are no library books I can see that normalise our family as 2 parents and the school has not even mentioned Pride month despite my emailing the principle to offer my time, resources, and team to commemorate or acknowledge Pride. NOT even a response to my email. The large rainbow flag that was on display within the school has been removed in 2022 because it was there in 2021 not there at the start of 2023. I wanted to join the school council, but I DO

NOT feel I belong. Our primary school is a champion of inclusion but as a rainbow family I never been asked or approached about how we are feeling about our inclusion in the system. We are fine, resourceful parents but that's the issue! We appear fine and we are. However, a gay man/parent I am not the heterosexual normative that surrounds me, I don't feel I belong. I am friendly get on with it but the school environment I live in, is not the comfort of my own. community. We focus on our son who is thriving, but the school and the environment have no reference point for him to see having 2 dads normal. Education is not only reading, maths and science it's about life."

"... Make sure the LGBTIQA+ community has lots of local information, perhaps via the monthly Darebin Newsletter. If possible ensure all schools/educators have an open LGBTIQA+ policy with accessible staff that will ensure those discovering their sexuality are able to accept themselves and if they wish, help them to come out, tell their parents, friends etc."

Capability building including of/ in Council

"As above for training of staff delivering services. Connect with Switchboard's Out n About program to understand older needs."

"Education is probably the most important, in a general sense. Especially when it comes to trans and gender diverse individuals. I'd like to be able to walk into my local library or government office, for example, with the comfort of knowing I won't have to explain or worry about my identity. General community workshops for non-lgbt people to help educate and understand would also be helpful."

"Make this priority. When I served on the SSGAC it felt like some of the council members were not keen to prioritise matters related to the rainbow community"

"More education around who the LGBTIQA+ community is"

"Staff training, campaigns about why it's important for Councils to take a lead role in being inclusive."

"Ensure their LGBTIQA+ staff are more inclusive, welcoming, visible and active within the LGBTIQA+ community and sector. Partner with neighbouring orgs and key LGBTIQA+ key stakeholders in major events"

"Including signage is great for sending a message (progress flag etc) but needs to be backed up by staff behaviour. Make sure that events are not cancelled if they are targeted by anti-LGBTIQA+ protesters, because this sends a terrible message to queer communities, especially young people. Ensure that trans people are welcome, and not made invisible through using LGBTIQA+ as a label but not thinking about what that means. Ensure that council documentation does not assume gender binary on forms, databases, correspondence sent from council, etc. (including not assuming seemingly male names should be prefaced with Mr and female names with Ms - use either what individuals have nominated, or else use first + last name). Maybe consider running an event in Darebin during Midsumma. Pride centre and most of Midsumma being increasingly focused on port Philip

and elsewhere gives the impression Darebin has less queer community and it's not a focus here. If this is already happening, maybe more promotion of the events."

"Communicate to the community how and why Darebin is currently not accessible, safe and welcoming. Provide analysis of existing hazards / risks resulting in accessibility, safety and welcoming issues which directly correlate to the consequences, also ensuring they are directly correlated. Seek agreement from specialists if proposed mitigations to these risks will result in other potentially worse risks to other members of the community. Seek agreement from community if the analysis outcomes are acceptable by majority of the community."

"I have found most Darebin services, programs and facilities to be quite inclusive. Continue to educate new staff, providers etc to ensure this remains an essential part of Darebin."

Safe and accessible facilities including changerooms, bathrooms & toilets

"Having gender neutral toilets wherever toilets are provided by Council (Council buildings, pools, libraries, and public toilets). Inclusive language on all forms, especially for library and pool access; currently Darebin Libraries ask for a title but have no gender-neutral options like Mx."

"Facilities -unisex toilets everywhere. Free counselling drop-in centres for queer youth/sexual health centres"

"All gender bathrooms in all public spaces. More queer programs for older adults, people with disabilities, kids, and CALD folks"

"Having gender neutral toilets at all public locations/facilities. Many members of the LGBTIQ+ community are also disabled in some way, ensuring that facilities are equipped for different disabilities would be great."

"Cleaner toilet facilities for all"

"Facilities: all gender change rooms, inclusive posters and signage"

"A list of safe spaces for the community. Data published on the community, shared with the community i.e. mini census."

"Building gender neutral bathrooms that are not disabled bathrooms (so disabled people still have exclusive bathrooms that gender non-conforming ppl don't have to take up as a resource), more swim nights for trans and queer folks at Northcote Aquatic Centre, LGBTIQ+ funded sports teams"

"Consider the use of Principles of Universal design."

"Toilets and change rooms are really important, especially for sporting clubs and venues. If trans and gender diverse people don't feel safe to use a toilet or get changed somewhere, they won't use that facility/service. Make sure all of Darebin's community sporting clubs are inclusive of trans women and are ready to welcome and support them. Make sure they are informed about the rights of transgender women to use women's change rooms and

participate in community sport. Make sure all men's toilets also have sanitary disposal facilities (same as women's)"

"The inclusion of gender-neutral bathrooms in newer council facilities is a great step for inclusiveness and acceptance. An even better solution is non-gendered bathrooms; Wherein bathrooms are separated into many fully enclosed cubicles, all of which are equipped with a toilet, sink, mirror, and wastebin. This is how many newer train stations designed, albeit the train stations have gender plaques on the door to each cubicle. Switching to this design would mean that gender-queer people could use a gender-neutral bathroom without the risk of outing themselves, as is present when there exists a choice between male, female, and gender-neutral bathrooms."

"... New buildings/facilities built with a focus on agender bathrooms (enclosed cubicles with shared or individual hand-washing basins)."

"All gender toilets across the municipality and all facilities..."

3.3.7 Q5. How could we acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and contribution of LGBTIQ+ community members in Darebin?

A total of 84 (80.8%) survey respondents answered the long text question, and 20 respondents skipped providing a response to this question (see image 7 below).

The four key themes were:

1. Celebrations, awards and events (22%),
2. Recognition of LGBTIQ+ community leaders and achievements (19%)
3. Tailored approaches for different needs, experiences (10%)
4. Capacity building: mentoring, training & grants (5%).

Verbatim quotes from survey respondents to question 5:

Celebrations, awards and events

"Continue to put on events and having positive messaging".

"Annual community consultations with LGBTIQ+ TIQA+ TIQA+ community members, develop high profile events and activities on weekends and after work hours to celebrate special LGBTIQ+ days.

"Through specific events - and a visible presence during events like Midsumma. Public events, public acknowledgement, concerts/art festival/kids fair etc"

"As stated above, more queer/LGBTIQ+ specific spaces and events. If we feel there is a space for us, we are more likely to feel safe here."

"Pride parades/events e.g. Pride days at the Preston Markets, Trans Day of Remembrance event, IDAHOBIT community fare, etc. LGBTIQ+ spotlight at the library promoting queer literature. LGBTIQ+ art galleries and music events"

"... Participate in Pride March."

"Events - perhaps aligned to the annual Midsumma program. NARC might be a venue to consider for an event. Joining the Rainbow Cities Network might be a consideration
<https://www.rainbowcities.com/>"

"Perhaps a form of festival/ street party. A safe room where LGBTIQA+ could meet regularly and discuss issues & or organise social events."

"Gatherings are great widely publicised to encourage attendance and/or celebrate gender diversity"

"Supporting local trans musicians and events".

"Don't cancel queer events - be proactive about making them safe".

"Queer focused arts and cultural events"

"A Pride festival would be great. This could have satellite events such as an art exhibition, celebrating LGBTIQA+ community members who have some a lot for the community, specific events to different ethic of communities or. Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders, or youth. Specific Leisure Centre days or evenings and other such activities going over a week, culminating in an outdoor, family friendly event. This would be especially significant if it was held in an area traditionally considered less progressive and affluent, such as Reservoir or Preston".

"Acknowledging they are welcome at all events. Create more events that are queer run, but community/council funded. Grants etc. support small queer owned businesses".

"Perhaps Darebin could play a larger part in the Victoria's Pride Street Party or even hold a similar mini event in one of the local parks on another day? Invite openly LGBTIQA+ and other personalities to perform, sing, talk, dance, and display their artworks and other skills.

Encourage Darebin businesses to acknowledge and celebrate our diverse community by participating and promoting their business in the Pride march. Events or festivals. Such as events in line with Midsumma festival. This would provide opportunities for the queer community to meet and celebrate.

"Celebrating things like pride month etc are a small way to show support and celebrate,

"See 'rainbow footpath' corner Smith and Gertrude Street introduced by City of Yarra. We could do the same corner Gower/High Street in celebration of Midsumma 2025".

"Gatherings are great widely publicised to encourage attendance and/or celebrate gender diversity".

"... Have awards ceremonies acknowledging LGBTIQA+ community members work/achievements. Run competitions including prizes for various categories"

"Awards would probably be the most direct, most beneficial additional action, but I don't know if that could be sustained on an annual basis unless it is a few adjoining Cities/Councils. I would particularly like to see this used to acknowledge and encourage young/upcoming/new contributors, including migrants/people from other cultures."

“Programming at key spaces like Darebin Arts Centre that supports and celebrates queer performers/musicians/artists. Example 1# - CODE Northside - Preston based Self-Defence Training for vulnerable people (big focus on queer/gender diverse people, First Nations people, very welcoming space) - was formed in 2021 by the coaching and admin team after an increase in threats, bullying and intimidation of vulnerable people in Melbourne northern suburbs. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/northside-community-defence-code>. Example 2# - Pony Club Gym - Super inclusive gym for queer and gender diverse people - Preston - <https://www.ponyclubgym.com/> Happy to chat about other examples.”

“The celebration of Pride should be ongoing and not limited to one calendar year. Developing Darebin's own pride event calendar and ensuring the event is held in an area that encourages diversity and inclusion.”

“Promotion and scheduling of events in Midsumma (and such) and investment in youth programs designed to promote inclusivity.”

“Implement community events.

“Perhaps a form of festival/ street party. A safe room where LGBTIQA+ could meet regularly and discuss issues & or organise social events.”

“More events or community support programs, maybe walking groups or other activity based events”

“Running events for LGBTIQA+ community members, especially around the Midsumma and Victoria Pride period, Wear it Purple day and IDAHOBIT. Involving LGBTIQA+ people in the arts, with LGBTIQA+ art, writing or photography events and competitions hosted by libraries or the arts centre.”

“By keeping police out of queer events. By employing local queer artists and organisers. By making events as accessible as possible. Always gender-neutral bathrooms.”

“Removing the heteronormative Australian National Flag and replacing it with the Rainbow Flag on an ongoing basis. Paint all footpaths on major activity centres rainbow”.

Recognition of LGBTIQA+ community leaders and achievements

“I won ELAA volunteer of the year in early childhood for my services at a local kinder. I was an openly gay man but that doesn't define me. I won that award for bringing all the community together and the inclusion we showed ALL our family. Despite my wanting to promote this award to bring attention to this across all Darebin within your Darebin News outlet it went nowhere. I tried to champion, and it went up the chain of command but nothing. A huge, missed opportunity to promote (not me!) but the meaningful and significant work under my rainbow leadership. So, recognise, promote our achievements when they arise.”

“Social events highlighting these people and their contributions in Darebin, perhaps some sort of queer directory etc”.

“Awards for recognition of LGBTIQA+ persons excellence”

“ ... even something as simple as shops having flags or stickers in their windows.”

"Shining a spotlight on queer role models in the community is a great way to promote acceptance and provide positive role models for young queer people. To avoid this being seen as tokenism, it's important that creative control over such a project be given largely to queer people from a variety of backgrounds."

"An annual pageant celebrating achievements and a come-as-you-are day for those less extroverted. I personally would like to see an annual David Bowie memorial celebration as a yearly catharsis and to draw attention to those of a more flamboyant nature."

"... Community awards for LGBTIQA+ leaders, businesses, volunteers, and individuals..."

"Annual awards for top LGBTIQA+ leaders, programs and recognition would be great. Providing funding for queer programming. Queer of the year could be fun."

"Council provides information to celebrate local gays and their contributions to Darebin"

"... arts programs which celebrate the artistic contributions of people in the LGBTIQA+ community (For example, an annual arts festival which showcases the talents and achievements of Queer musicians, artists, etc.)."

"Include stories in council newsletter. Exhibition of work by local LGBTIQA+ artists. In conversation events with prominent local LGBTIQA+ artists/writers/musicians. Make everyone proud to be part of the community by sharing their voice. Host events (e.g. art exhibition, markets) where all artists/stall holders are LGBTIQA+. All are welcome to attend / buy products, but only LGBTIQA+ members can contribute / supply the products."

"Local LGBTIQA+ resident of the month/ year, even acknowledge anonymously with a profile piece about what they do for Darebin."

"Bring achievements to the forefront and publicise the work of various organisations working in Darebin."

"Award night, music/performing arts training programs or performance opportunities"

Tailored approaches for different needs, experiences

"Have a range of options for different aspects of the community. Have some that embrace all aspects plus broader community. Provide services for older lesbians who get lost in the crowd now."

"Acceptance is a far healthier focus than celebration. Let's celebrate everyone based on their achievements instead."

"Acknowledge the diversity in perspectives and political interests of people ostensibly included within the LGBTIQA+ acronym."

"I see the TIQA+ communities already have a lot of events going on. What are other ways (they) should be celebrated? ...in addition to the many other awareness days every month of the year til December? are more necessary?"

"Recognition, along with all the other diversity that makes up our wonderful community... there are 12 months to the year. we could have LGBTIQA+ month, Faith month (Christian,

Muslim, Buddhist, etc) Education month, Local Sports month, Garden / Sustainability month, Library month, Your Council month... Neighbourhood / Community House month, Health & Exercise month”

“By listening to LGBTIQ+ people and maybe some gay AF murals. initiatives for BIPOC, disabled etc LGBTIQ+ people.”

“I’m sure there are many things you are doing. Maybe consider different comms to promote existing activities? Also, is there a queer newsletter, or something similar? If so, please add my email which is below.”

“Make sure all council forms allow for all gender identities. Show genuine support for your LGBTIQ+ staff. Include LGBTIQ+ content in a web sites, brochures etc. sponsor LGBTIQ+ arts events. Consider the needs of ageing gays and lesbians in aged and community services planning”.

“Look at the intersection of LGBTIQ+ and cultural background - we have a really diverse community, but acceptance is not always the same based on culture. For example, there is an Arab social dance I have been to before. What are our major cultural groups and how could we enhance acceptance by running some activities for the LGBTIQ+ members of these cultures?”

“More trans literature in libraries”

Capacity building: mentoring, training, spaces & grants

“Establish a community leadership program for LGBTIQ+ communities to develop skills that can be strengthened through Councils proactive opportunities as in my previous responses”

“... Reducing hoops to access funding. Ensuring queer funding goes to owned and operated companies more than mainstream groups doing LGBTIQ+ 101 training.”

“... An increase in political representation in the Darebin council.”

“A grant for LGBTIQ+ community groups to run their own events [even if unincorporated].”

“Offer a safe space for a future rainbow family playgroup.”

“Permanent spaces for rainbow health and well-being organisations”

3.3.8 Q6. What other actions should Council consider implementing together with its partners to combat LGBTIQA+ discrimination?

A total of 84 (80.8%) survey respondents answered the long text question, and 20 respondents skipped providing a response to this question.

The four key themes were:

1. Education, capability and awareness raising (24%),
2. Advocacy and campaigns (16%),
3. Capability building (10%)
4. Celebrations and events (8%)

Verbatim quotes from survey respondents to question 6.

Education, capability and awareness raising

"Council should have a strong zero-tolerance for discrimination applying to all council workers and contractors. Council cannot control the behaviour of every person who lives or works within Darebin, however it's critical that everyone representing Council mirrors the ideas of inclusion and acceptance that Council holds. Council should offer support services for queer people, especially the most vulnerable members of the queer community. For example, support services targeted towards young people experiencing discrimination at home."

"Education, positive and impactful protection"

"Widely publicised anti-discrimination posters and similar at council and other workplaces, kindergartens, universities, primary and secondary schools, and other learning areas. Verbalise councils' abhorrence of LGBTIQA+ discrimination at any opportunity. Announce councils welcoming of our community at ceremonies celebrating new Australian citizenship."

"Train your staff so that when I refer to my wife, they, they're not surprised or embarrassed."

"LGBTIQA+ awareness training for all council staff."

"Train your own staff as a baseline. Set up initiatives that support LGBTIQA+ youth, actually train your staff beyond "some people identify as a different gender and you need to respect that" honestly, the level of education of the VAST majority of council staff is equivalent to your average highschooler in the 90's. None of your staff seem remotely sensitive or understanding of gender diverse or queer issues, they do not understand the unique challenges, they do not understand the terminology, they do not understand the concept itself. Until your own staff can reliably gender people correctly, any attempt to convey support for the LGBTIQA+ community will be blatantly flagrant attempts to hide the council's inability to manage or educate its own staff."

"Ensure that Coordinators/Managers/Executives in Council, and Councillors, are well trained, skilled, and knowledgeable to provide strong leadership."

"Posters in venues, and numbers of q-life and other helplines"

"An educational leaflet in assorted languages for residents to read. (Hoping this makes a difference)"

"Educating security guards to be queer conscious and trauma informed in order to support someone in a crisis at an event. And abuse either verbal or physical will not be tolerated. Unisex toilets everywhere!"

"Again, education, especially around trans and gender diverse identities. Creating safe spaces for youth who may not have support at home, and resources for them to help live their fullest lives."

"Organise a panel discussion with the grass-roots organization so that the community can share their story at the pride event."

"Having places (public locations, shops, medical services etc) be certified by the council to be LGBTIQ+ inclusive; having the Council assess places and certify them which they could include on websites or advertise in windows so that community members know they would be welcomed there."

"Being more vocal in support of the community and condemnation of intolerance, discrimination, and abuse. Actively, creating safe spaces and use of services with gender neutral toilets and focusing on LGBTIQ+ families within the community i.e. parent's groups. Encouraging intersectional groups within groups dedicated to particular marginalised groups, such as elderly citizens, disability, ethnic communities. Facilitating events with clear accessibility provisions, information and health and anti-discrimination discussions."

"Don't cancel LGBTIQ+ facilitated programs without offering another space to run that program".

"Background checks on speakers/caterers etc on publicly funded events to make sure they are not spreading hate speech. Fast action on discriminatory graffiti, posters and other things presents in the council. Partners' values align with Darebin's (zero discrimination tolerance). Educate and provide opportunities for exposure. Mental/emotional/well-being support services. Representation across council and partners"

"A LGBTIQ+ reference/advisory group. Hosting LGBTIQ+ events. Programs for LGBTIQ+ residents. Availability of information, promotion in Darebin news and website. I believe some (much) of this is already being done which is great."

"Annual forum events to raise the profile of issues that contribute to LGBTIQ+ discrimination and what some of the positive practical solutions could be. I have copied my responses into a word document and will be expecting some follow up with me. Thanks"

"Ongoing education with CALD communities would be great, given some of the complexities of our wonderfully mixed demographic".

"Challenge homophobic policies and behaviour particularly through religious institutions. Increase visibility - tackle the fear of the unknown."

"Where possible ensure a good education program is provided in schools that includes an understanding of discrimination in all its forms."

“Support for LGBTIQ+ communities’ stance on cops out of pride/Midsumma (and do something about it pls), be vocal about anti-LGBTIQ+ discrimination (e.g. the banning of drag story time in NSW - maybe having drag story time in Darebin would be a good way to show support). just stay up to date and do something about it without us having to tell you to do something lol.”

“Demand greater responsibility and accountability. We all know which venues feel dodgy to go past.”

“Come meet rainbow families at the schools, listen. Gather if there are common themes you heard.

“Promote positive stories of LGBTIQ+ people in Darebin, work more with faith groups to build understanding and acceptance, start with faith groups that are already inclusive. Video series or stories of diverse faith and community members saying why they support human rights/ LGBTIQ+ inclusion.”

“Make a clear stance for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, and trans inclusion. Elevate and raise awareness of the groups already doing this work. Provide financial support to help us bring in more queer people. Doing this saves lives.”

“Advertise what the laws are & processes for punishment. Not focussed to LGBTI people but the perpetrators.”

“Highlight when discrimination is occurring, educate individuals demonstrating discrimination, educating community what discrimination is.”

“Consider running surveys to measure people’s experience of discrimination every few years, to see if its changing, and gauge people’s impressions of what is helping.”

“Where discrimination is identified provide some counselling type actions to help educate discriminators on the consequences of their actions/words and try to identify why this is happening.”

“Seminars/w/shops information sessions around Equal opportunity & Anti-discrimination. Sessions with Q+ Law around legal rights/pathways to dealing with discrimination. PD for whole of Darebin staff around LGBTIQ+ diversity/inclusion.”

“Work with sports clubs and local businesses to improve LGBTIQ+ inclusion. What about auditing local businesses that have toilets (cafes etc) and provide advice on best practice for gender inclusive toilet facilities? Some cafes for example, have two single stall toilets, but label one toilet 'men's' and the other toilet 'women's'. Why not just label both 'toilets'? Could there be incentives for businesses? What about providing Council branded Pride/ rainbow welcome stickers that businesses could stick on their window after either a) getting a tick of approval for providing gender inclusive toilet facilities. or b) completing LGBTIQ+ inclusion training.”

“Key messaging around diverse people being welcome and a strength-based approach would lead to improvements in this area.”

“Tackle negative stigma and stay strong against bigots.”

"LGBTIQ+ days, Scholarships, LGBTIQ+ friendly sexuality /respectful relationships training in workplaces schools, clubs ..."

Advocacy & campaigns

"Create clear pathways for LGBTIQ+ people to report discrimination, advertise these pathways widely. Create a role for an LGBTIQ+ officer and Neurodiversity officer within Council. Strive towards rainbow tick accreditation for other Council entities, especially the libraries and, if possible, pools."

"1/ ensure the Council abides by the anti-discrimination laws, in policy, action and hiring. 2/ proactively support local business and community welcoming activities."

"Advocate to the state government to establish an LGBTIQ+ + exclusive local government council."

"Increase support for trans people - there seems to be an increase of negativity/violence toward trans people locally and internationally. This could be by partnering with services/organisations who work in this space to see when Council can provide additional support for their work, continued visible support from Council. Investigate community safety specifically?"

"More visibility and making it known that discrimination is not tolerated might help make people realise that they're in the wrong and not us."

"Some public campaigns on bus stops or tram stops or buses about trans people - anti trans violence."

"... A visual promotion around the many families, people that make up the Darebin community."

"Educating the government school student and staff about the impact of homophobic language and actions and why they matter."

"Promotion of healthy, harmonious relationships and role models in the LGBTIQ+ community. In my opinion, this would help deal with the problem of homophobia that exists in society."

"Develop a campaign about why Darebin is unique showing all diversity standing side by side."

"... More information made available to the general public on LGBTIQ+ issues, easily accessed through community spaces. E.g. Flyers, web pages, posters, radio ads. If you see something say something campaigns with a focus on LGBTIQ+ hate."

LGBTIQ+-specific services and programs

"More services for LGBTIQ+ people with specific knowledge and experience in queer health, lifestyle, and history. E.g. General practice with LGBTIQ+ staff/doctors, services such

as Thorne Harbour Health having offices/a space in the area, specialists in LGBTIQ+ literature at the library, LGBTIQ+ officers in the police department.

“Consider having an e-mail subscription service for news - not only for LGBTIQ+ people, but other segments of the community. It's not interactive, but I am more likely to sign up to that than add your website to the long list of websites I try to follow.”

“Have 1/4 meetings and invite new voices.”

“Safety initiatives for victims of domestic violence”

“In terms of finding LGBTIQ+ news, I favour sites that have an email service first, then LGBTIQ+ sites, then human rights organisations, then the Victorian Parliament, and everything else largely falls off the list. Until I was told about this survey, I hadn't looked at your website since our last cat died. I do not use social media for ethical reasons - especially not X (formerly twitter) because of the transphobia which infests it from the top down, but also never anything owned by Meta. PS - I hope I will receive a copy of these comments to the email I nominated below.”

“... Social activities such as local meet ups. Regular activities for the community to attend as a social event.”

“ ...Gender neutral toilets, more family /gender neutral shower rooms at shops, pools and sports facilities, Clubs and activities giving primacy to LGBTIQ+ - of ALL ages, and stages of life, Funding for improved visibility and support e.g. preschool, youth, older folk, retirees, aged care, families.”

“Art programs or traineeships through Darebin Arts Centre with Queer mentors in writing, Drag, performances.”

Celebrations and events

“... Fair for multicultural and multifaith communities. Celebrations of culture as such, such as Chinese New Year, IFTAR, etc.”

“There is nothing like Acceptance awards to promote a positive attitude. A pet parade (cat show/dog show) that would get people of all diversities to mingle. (Can we remove those toilet statues on St Georges Rd or replace them with something a little less toilet-y?)”

“Activities during Midsumma and Pride, days of significance like Pride Week, IDAHOBIT, etc. Profile queer elders and leaders in Council newsletter.”

“A rainbow crossing would be a fun and inclusive thing- having Instagram photos taken at a rainbow crossing or LGBTIQ+ artwork would highlight Darebin's inclusivity....”

3.4 Responding to survey responses which did not meet the moderation rules

As noted in section 3.1, Your Say Darebin responses which did not meet Moderation rules can still be considered useful information insofar as they capture some current views and attitudes in our community. There will be opportunities for these to be considered and responded to in Stage 2 development of the Action Plan; potential responses include:

- Understanding these responses in light of state and national data on eg rising reports of homophobia, transphobia and intersex discrimination in the community.
- Ensuring that evidence of need and disparity is included in the Action Plan.
- Ensure that actions are informed by data where possible (while also noting the paucity of research data on LGBTIQ+ people, particularly at a local level).
- Include actions which continue to inform and educate the community on the experiences and issues faced by LGBTIQ+ people.
- More education on equity and human rights frameworks for understanding that treating everyone the same does not necessarily result in fair or equal outcomes.
- Explicitly counter negative, discriminatory and/or vilifying views in work in and with the Darebin community.
- Take deliberate action to ensure that transgender, gender diverse and intersex people in our community feel safe and are protected.

Appendix 1 – online survey questions

1. How welcoming, inclusive, and safe is Darebin for members of LGBTIQ+ communities?
2. What are some of the key aspects that contribute to a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for members of LGBTIQ+ communities in Darebin?
3. What could be done to make Darebin more welcoming, inclusive, and safe for members of LGBTIQ+ communities?
4. How could Council improve its services, programs, and facilities to make them more accessible, safe, welcoming, and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ communities?
5. How could we acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and contribution of LGBTIQ+ community members in Darebin?
6. What other actions should Council consider implementing together with its partners to combat LGBTIQ+ discrimination?

Appendix 2 – interview questions to LGBTIQ+ Stakeholders and Advisory Committees

1. What does your organisation do?
2. What are some of the key aspects that contribute to a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment for members of LGBTIQ+ communities, particularly trans and gender diverse people?
3. How could Council improve its services, programs, and facilities to make them more accessible, safe, welcoming, and inclusive for trans and gender diverse people?
4. How could we acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and contribution of LGBTIQ+ community members in Darebin?
5. What other actions should Council consider implementing together with its partners to combat LGBTIQ+ discrimination, particularly transphobia?

Appendix 3 Demographics of Your Say Darebin respondents

To understand who was reached through Stage 1 engagement, Council asked a series of questions related to demographics.

1.Location of residence

Table 1 shows that survey respondents predominantly reside in Reservoir (24), Northcote (22), Preston (21) and Thornbury (11). The 23 other responses reside in suburbs in Darebin and outside of Darebin as depicted in Table 1.

Location	Postcode	Contributors
NSW	2480	2
East Melbourne	3002	1
Pascoe Vale	3044	2
Coburg	3058	2
Fawkner	3060	1
Northcote	3070	22
Thornbury	3071	11
Preston	3072	21
Reservoir	3073	24
Fairfield/Alphington	3078	5
Heidelberg	3081	1
Bundoora/Kingsbury	3083	3
Macleod	3085	1
Watsonia	3087	1
Greensborough	3088	1
Blackburn	3130	1
Brighton	3136	2

Table 1: Contributions by location

2.Language spoke at home

Majority of survey respondents (78.79%) did not speak any other language apart from English. 21.21% of respondents spoke a language other than English. A total of 99 (95.2%) survey respondents answered the multi-choice question, and 5 respondents skipped providing a response to this question.

Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	78.79%	78
No	21.21%	21
Total	100.00%	99

Table 2: Do you speak a language other than English at home?

3. Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

5.05% of respondents identified as Aboriginal, 0% of respondents identified as Torres Strait Islander, 1.01% of respondents identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 10.10% of respondents preferred not to say and 83.84% of respondents did not identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (see Figure 2 and Table 3 below).

A total of 99 (95.2%) survey respondents answered the multi-choice question, and 5 respondents skipped providing a response to this question.

Answer choices	Percent	Count
No	83.84%	83
I prefer not to say	10.10%	10
Yes, identified as Aboriginal	5.05%	5
Yes, identified as Torres Strait Islander	0%	0
Yes, identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1.01%	1
Total	100.00%	99

Table 3: Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or both?

4. Connection to Darebin

Majority of survey respondents (79.61%) live in Darebin, 26.21% of survey respondents work in Darebin, 8.74% of survey respondents own a business in Darebin, 5.83% of survey respondents study in Darebin, 12.62% of survey respondents visit Darebin, 24.27% of survey respondents play in Darebin, 6.80% of survey respondents preferred not to say what connection they had to Darebin and 1.94% of survey respondents answered other (see Figure 3 and Table 4 below).

99% survey respondents answered the multi-choice question, and 1 respondent skipped providing a response to this question.

Answer choices	Percent	Count
Live	79.61%	82
Work	26.21%	27
Own a business	8.74%	9
Study	5.83%	6
Visit	12.62%	13
Play	24.27%	25
I prefer not to say	6.80%	7
Other	1.94%	2

Table 4: Your connection to Darebin

5.Age

Majority of survey respondents (29.59%) were aged 26 to 35, 20.41% of survey respondents were aged 36 to 45, 18.37% of survey respondents were aged 56 to 65, 15.31% of survey respondents were aged 46 to 55, 7.14% of survey respondents were aged 66 to 75, 7.14% of survey respondents were aged 18 to 25, 2.04% of survey respondents were 76 or older and 0% of respondents were under 18 years of age (see Figure 4 and Table 5 below).

A total of 98 (94.2%) survey respondents answered the multi-choice question, and 6 respondents skipped providing a response to this question.

Answer choices	Percent	Count
under 18	0%	0
18 to 25	7.14%	7
26 to 35	35 29.59%	29
36 to 45	45 20.41%	20
46 to 55	15.31%	15
56 to 65	18.37%	18
66 to 75	7.14%	7
76 or older	2.04%	2
Total	100.00%	98

Table 5: What is your age?

6.Member of LGBTIQ+ community

Majority of survey respondents (78.79%) answered Yes, 12.12% of survey respondents answered no, and 9.09% of respondents preferred not to say if they were a member of LGBTIQ+ communities.

A total of 99 (95.2%) survey respondents answered the multi-choice question, and 5 respondents skipped providing a response to this question (see Figure 5 and Table 4 below).

Answer choices	Percent	Count
No	12.12%	12
I prefer not to say	9.09%	9
Yes	78.79%	78
Total	100.00%	99

Table 6: Are you a member of LGBTIQ+ communities?

7.Disability

Majority of survey respondents (61.00%) answered no, 30.00% of survey respondents answered yes, and 9.00% of respondents preferred not to say if they had a disability.

A total of 100 (96.2%) survey respondents answered the multi-choice question, and 4 respondents skipped providing a response to this question (see Figure 6 and Table 7 below).

Answer choices	Percent	Count
No	61.00%	61
Yes	30.00%	30
Prefer not to say	9.00%	9
Total	100.00%	100

Table 7: Do you have a disability?

8. Place of birth

Majority of survey respondents (79.59%) were born in Australia in comparison to the 20.41% of survey respondents that were born overseas.

A total of 98 (94.2%) survey respondents answered the multi-choice question, and 6 respondents skipped providing a response to this question (see Figure 7 and Table 8 below).

Answer choices	Percent	Count
Australia	79.59%	78
Overseas	20.41%	20
Total	100.00%	98

Table 8: Were you born in Australia or overseas?

Appendix 4: Moderation Policy provided by Social Pinpoint Pty Ltd for Your Say Darebin

Version 2.0 – Effective from September 2021

This Moderation Policy (the “Policy”) describes the moderation services (“Moderation Services”) provided by Social Pinpoint Pty Ltd (ACN 164 471 425) (“we”, “us” or “our”) in respect of the services (“Services”) for access to and use of our Social Pinpoint Digital Engagement System (including any apps, databases, platforms, networks, websites and APIs) and any other related services.

You must ensure that all users of the Services (including Authorised Users) comply with this Policy at all times.

1. Scope of Moderation Services

Your Subscription may include Moderation Services provided by Social Pinpoint with regards to the monitoring, screening and appropriate publishing or removal of text or image content made by your End Users that are made publicly viewable on your website (public contributions) published using the Services.

Moderation Services are provided by a third-party supplier contracted by us and who supply ‘Moderators’ to assess all public contributions against our standard Moderation Rules.

If our Moderators interpret a public contribution as violating or potentially violating the Moderation Rules, they will act to remove the contribution from public view and refer it to your nominated Users for further assessment.

You are responsible for reviewing all contributions referred to you by our Moderators and making all final decisions as to whether to approve or reject any contribution as appropriate.

2. Moderation Rules

Contributions will be referred when they are perceived by our Moderators to be in violation of the following Moderation Rules:

1. Content may not contain personal attacks on other participants, staff or public figures;
2. Content may not intentionally or inadvertently disclose sensitive personal and/or confidential information about any other participants, staff or public figures;
3. Content may not contain discriminatory language relating to the gender, race, religion, culture, sexual preference, appearance, background or a person;
4. Content may not contain language perceived as threatening, inciting violence or encouraging, endorsing, approving or recommending the performance of dangerous or illegal acts;
5. Content may not contain language perceived as offensive including profanity;
6. Content is considered duplicate as it appears multiple times in a perceivably inappropriate way;
7. Content is considered off-topic or SPAM;

8. Content contains links to any advertising or illegal material; and
9. Content may not contain image content that is considered graphic as it contains portrayals of (for example) acts of violence, hate speech, terrorism, pornography, racism or [self-harm](#).

3. End User Terms

You are responsible for posting appropriate terms of use on the website regarding the moderation process to your End Users. These terms must include information on how moderation works, the Moderation Rules, and how the End Users can challenge a moderation decision.

You are solely responsible for communicating with your End Users including providing explanations of why a contribution has been rejected and resolving any moderation complaints and issues.

In instances of repeated violation of Moderation Rules by End Users, you must take appropriate action to the extent possible within the software to minimise the abuse of the Moderation Services.

We reserve the right to direct you in your use of the Services in relation to our provision of the Moderation Services and may require you to increase your level of user registration, implement pre-moderation workflows or suspend or terminate specific End User accounts.

4. Exclusions

The following content is excluded from our Moderation Services:

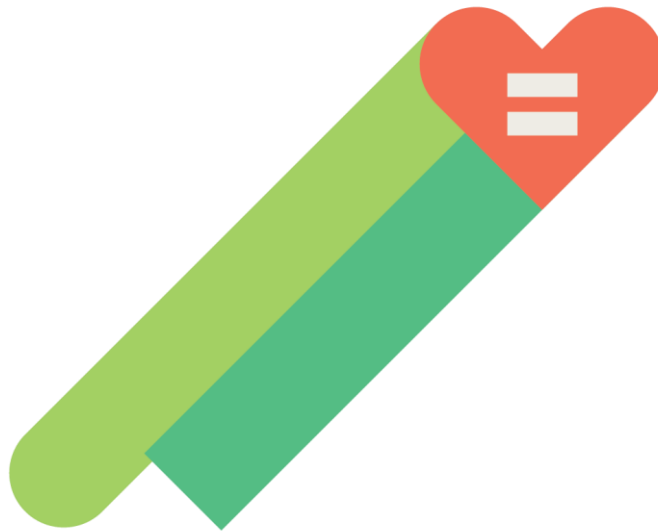
1. Content that appears in a language other than English;
2. Content within a text document or other non-image file; and
3. Usernames and profile images.

Appendix 5: Submission from Your Community Health



ACN 136 472 403
ABN 31 905 329 561

YourCH Submission: Darebin Council LGBTIQ+ Action Plan



Mailing address:
125 Blake Street
East Reservoir VIC 3073

T (03) 8470 1111
F (03) 8470 1107
E info@yourcommunityhealth.org.au

YOURCOMMUNITYHEALTH.ORG.AU



About YourCH

Your Community Health (YourCH) has been helping people in Melbourne's North Metro region meet their health and wellbeing goals for 50 years. Operating in the Darebin region and surrounds, YourCH delivers a wide range of services and support, including medical, dental, allied health, counselling, AOD, health promotion and social support. We deliver 1:1, family, and group-based services from our three centres in Darebin and through outreach services, are deeply engaged with the community, and collaborate with a wide range of agencies. Informed by the social model of health, we work in a holistic way and seek opportunities for early intervention and prevention of deteriorating physical and mental health. YourCH has a strong history of community co-design and elevates the voices of community to advocate for inclusive systems and policies. YourCH supported over 16,500 local residents in the last financial year.

YourCH is Rainbow Tick accredited, and we proactively work towards our services and workplace being inclusive, culturally safe and gender-affirming for LGBTIQ+ clients, community members and staff. Our latest staff engagement survey found that 21% of staff identify as LGBTIQ+ and were recently a finalist for the LGBTIQ+ GLOBE Workforce Inclusion award. YourCH delivers a range of LGBTIQ+ specific services and programs, such as LGBTIQ+ Carers network, Rainbow Gym and an innovative, peer-led Trans and Gender Diverse in Community Health (TGDICH) program. In partnership, YourCH delivers the TGDICH program, a Victorian-wide health service for trans, gender diverse and non-binary people that actively seeks to improve health and wellbeing outcomes through gender-affirming care and service navigation. This impactful program delivers the informed model of consent through Peer Navigation, General Practice, Counselling, Endocrinology and Psychiatry.

Background

A population health survey found that Darebin has one of the highest LGBTIQ+ populations in Victoria, an estimated 10.6% compared to the state average of 5.7% (VAHI, 2017). Whilst accurate data collection through the Australian Bureau of Statistics continues to be a barrier for LGBTIQ+ visibility, we know anecdotally that Darebin is a place where LGBTIQ+ people like to live, work and socialise.

It is well established in research that LGBTIQ+ people have disproportionately poorer health and wellbeing outcomes compared to the wider population, linked to increased experiences of discrimination, stigma and prejudice (Hill et al, 2021). LGBTIQ+ people report high rates of harassment, social exclusion and unfair treatment, and this is experienced at school, at home, when accessing services, at work and in the community.

As a direct correlation to discrimination, LGBTIQ+ people have higher rates of chronic health conditions, anxiety and depression, and are at significant higher risk of suicide and self-harm (Hill et al, 2021). In addition to mental and physical health impacts, LGBTIQ+ Victorians experience significantly higher rates of intimate and partner violence, homelessness, alcohol

use and financial insecurity (Hill et al, 2021). These risks are increased for LGBTIQA+ people that experience intersecting forms of discrimination, such as racism and ableism.

Despite facing much adversity, LGBTIQA+ people have a rich history of advocacy and collective action. LGBTIQA+ people have worked tirelessly to advance human rights, fighting for justice, safety and equality. Communities demonstrate resilience, solidarity and community support, paving the way for celebration and pride of identity and expression.

Darebin: an inclusive place to live and work

YourCH is proud to operate services within the Local Government Area of Darebin. The City of Darebin boasts a vibrant community with a strong arts scene, safe spaces for LGBTIQA+ people to meet, LGBTIQA+ specific health and wellbeing services, and a multicultural and diverse community. The area is not fully gentrified and has pockets of affordable housing, increasing its liveability to the LGBTIQA+ community who may experience employment and economic barriers.

The Darebin Council provides leadership in creating a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for LGBTIQA+ community members. Council should be proud of their progressive policies, programs and plans that promote an inclusive community culture, particularly:

- Presence at LGBTIQA+ events, such as Pride March
- Social media acknowledgement and observance of important LGBTIQA+ dates
- Funding/supporting LGBTIQA+ projects, such as Parklife
- Representation of LGBTIQA+ people in senior roles
- Intersectional approach to inequity, as articulated in the 'Towards Equality' framework
- Collaboration in community development projects
- The establishment of an LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee
- 'Find the Rainbow' community map, helping community members find inclusive spaces
- First Australian Council to affirm Darlington Statement

Suggestions for Darebin Council's next LGBTIQA+ Strategy

In order to maintain Darebin's strong reputation as a progressive and inclusive region to live and work, it is critical that Darebin Council look to embed inclusive policies, processes and programs across all areas of its operations. Suggestions include:

1. Make bathrooms in Darebin a safe place for trans and gender diverse community members

Bathrooms continue to be an unsafe space for trans and gender diverse people, with a major US study finding 55% of trans people avoid public bathrooms due to fear of assault and harassment (James et al., 2016). Avoiding going to the bathroom can lead to health problems,

such as urinary tract infections, kidney stones, bladder infections, cystitis and severe dehydration. The right to participate in public life is a human right, and trans and gender

diverse people should be able to safely access bathrooms that reflect their gender identity. Traditionally labelled male/female toilets exclude non-binary people, who are forced to choose a gender that is not reflective of their identity. YourCH recommends that Darebin Council:

- Audit public bathrooms in the region and implement plan to transition to all-gender bathrooms.
- Audit bathrooms at Council ran services and plan to transition to all-gender bathrooms.
- Create infrastructure grants to support organisations and businesses transition to allgender bathrooms.

2. Housing and homelessness efforts should prioritise and meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ people

Lack of affordable housing and rental stress are among the most reported concerns of clients accessing YourCH. LGBTIQ+ people are twice as likely to experience homelessness compared to the wider community (McNair et al., 2017). This is due to a number of factors, including discrimination, family rejection and violence. Despite the high prevalence of homelessness, there is a lack of LGBTIQ+ specific housing available, leaving people unsupported and with little options.

Crisis and emergency housing is often gendered (male/female only), resulting in unsafe environments for trans and gender diverse people leading to rough sleeping. We know that housing stress is exacerbated for LGBTIQ+ people, as they experience additional systemic barriers to access secure housing, such as only recently obtaining legal recognition that previously prevented access to financial benefits of marriage, as well as discrimination in tenancy applications. YourCH recommends that Darebin Council:

- Embed actions within Darebin Council's housing and homelessness strategy to ensure culturally safe and appropriate support and housing options for LGBTIQ+ people.
- Commit to utilising Council owned land to increase the supply of affordable housing, trialling collaborative approaches with LGBTIQ+ services to provide wrap-around care to promote sustainable tenancies through Victoria's Big Housing Build strategy.

3. Improve visibility of LGBTIQ+ people and their health and wellbeing needs by ensuring inclusive data collection

Despite LGBTIQ+ Australians experiencing poorer health and wellbeing outcomes than the wider Australian community, there remains a lack of understanding of LGBTIQ+ people and their needs. LGBTIQ+ Australians remain largely invisible to the local, state and federal governments charged with ensuring their health and wellbeing due to a lack of data-based insights and evidence-based research.

Most research and data collection surveys, including the Census, have failed to include sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex characteristic metrics alongside other demographic data, resulting in LGBTIQ+ people being consistently left out of policy and funding decisions. Having access to quality and accurate data on community health and

wellbeing needs better equips services like YourCH to provide targeted and tailored services to our community. YourCH recommends Darebin Council:

- Ensure that all community surveys, research and data collection points are inclusive of LGBTIQA+ people.

4. Build capacity of local community services and community through education and training

Whilst Darebin is known as an inclusive and culturally safe place to work, live and socialise, members of the LGBTIQA+ community continue to report experiences of discrimination when accessing local services and spaces. Misgendering, assumptions about gender and sexuality, and inaccessible forms, systems and facilities remain common experiences for LGBTIQA+ people. Local Councils can collaborate with LGBTIQA+ services, such as YourCH to provide leadership in ensuring that businesses, services and community members have access to information on LGBTIQA+ inclusion and experiences in order to reduce interpersonal and systemic discrimination. YourCH recommends Darebin Council:

- Develop key resources and deliver LGBTIQA+ education to services, businesses and community members.
- Utilise social media to educate community on inclusion, through sharing stories about LGBTIQA+ people, and disseminating useful resources that promote inclusion.
- Build partnerships with LGBTIQA+ specific services and networks and look for opportunities to share knowledge and examples of best practice.
- Include LGBTIQA+ inclusion criteria in grant guidelines and assessment weighting.

5. Ensure libraries are a place of belonging and reflect LGBTIQA+ stories and communities

Through YourCH's partnership with Darebin Libraries, we know that libraries can be a place where LGBTIQA+ people and families attend to access a peaceful and welcoming environment, connect with others, find stories and seek out information. They provide an opportunity for people to feel seen, welcomed and a sense of belonging. Unfortunately, the anti-trans movement has actively targeted libraries choosing to host drag queen events, making it imperative that libraries have clear guidelines around discrimination, hate-speech and safety.

Having access to information or stories that reflect people's identities and experiences is a positive way of affirming identity. Through utilising the search function on the online Darebin Library catalogue, the results yielded 8 options when typing in 'LGBTIQ' with several not actually relevant to LGBTIQA+ people. YourCH recommends Darebin Council:

- Increase the number of books and publications that centre LGBTIQA+ experiences and stories, for all ages.

- Include a specific category/catalogue for LGBTIQA+ stories, so people can easily find the options.
- For books and stories that are harmful to LGBTIQA+ people, such as works from trans exclusionary radical feminists, consider removing, or lack of promotion or labelling with a warning of harmful content.
- Ensure LGBTIQA+ books are easy to find, as people may be reluctant to out themselves by asking a staff member for help.
- Actively promote LGBTIQA+ related items and make them more visible, consider the inclusion of pride stickers on labels to assist community members with selections.
- Build relationships and conduct community engagement to understand local community ideas on how libraries can enhance LGBTIQA+ inclusion.
- Host LGBTIQA+ specific events and acknowledge/observe/celebrate key LGBTIQA+ dates through programs, displays and exhibitions.
- Establish clear anti-discrimination policies to combat homophobia, transphobia, interphobia and other forms of LGBTIQA+ discrimination that may occur within the library context.

6.Ensure Darebin Council Services are inclusive and welcoming to LGBTIQA+ people

Australian studies show that LGBTIQA+ people under-utilise community services and delay seeking help due to actual or anticipated experiences of stigma and discrimination from service providers (Waling et al., 2019.) People want to access LGBTIQA+ inclusive mainstream services where they feel supported and safe to be themselves, but often do not fully disclose relevant information about themselves in fear of discrimination. Darebin Council run a number of community services, including family and children, home support for older residents, kindergartens, gyms and libraries. These services are integral to the wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ residents, and therefore embedding inclusive and affirmative spaces, practices and processes is essential. YourCH recommends that Darebin Council:

- All Council ran services to be reviewed for LGBTIQA+ inclusivity and accessibility, consider rainbow tick accreditation where appropriate.
- All Council ran services to have their own LGBTIQA+ inclusion action plan, relevant to their context and scope.
- Ensure Darebin Council staff members (new and existing) attend LGBTIQA+ inclusion training.
- Provide LGBTIQA+ training opportunities for Councillors and include LGBTIQA+ key information as part of their orientation/induction.

7.Support LGBTIQA+ social connectedness and recreation activities that are inclusive

LGBTIQA+ people continue to experience interpersonal discrimination, that can lead to social isolation and lack of participation in recreation activities. Proud 2 Play estimate that 80% of individuals have witnessed or experienced homophobia on the sports field, 70% of LGBTIQA+ people do not feel sport is safe or welcoming, and 50% of trans people avoid playing sports they are interested in. It is important that LGBTIQA+ people are able to safely connect and participate in social and recreation activities, both within their own LGBTIQA+

community as well as within mainstream activities. YourCH recommends that Darebin Council:

- Attend 'Proud 2 Play' education workshops tailored to local government, promoting LGBTIQA+ inclusion across all facets of sports.
- Implement 'Rainbow Roadmap' – Proud 2 Play's structured five-step approach tailored for local governments to support LGBTIQA+ inclusion.
- Join 'Rainbow Sports Alliance' – a network of local governments, clubs and sporting associations, committed to creating an inclusive sporting environment.
- Provide opportunities for LGBTIQA+ people to join and connect with each other, with specific social offerings to older LGBTIQA+ people.
- Financially support LGBTIQA+ related projects and events through community grants program.

8. Partner with YourCH to progress LGBTIQA+ inclusion

YourCH is a specialist LGBTIQA+ health provider, facilitating a range of LGBTIQA+ specific services, influencing systems and policies through advocacy, with 21% of staff identifying as LGBTIQA+. As leaders within the LGBTIQA+ sector and the local community health provider, YourCH welcomes any opportunity to collaborate and progress LGBTIQA+ inclusion in partnership with Darebin Council. YourCH recommends that Darebin Council:

- Regularly meet with YourCH to discuss the needs of the LGBTIQA+ community and pro-actively identify actions to support community.
- Establish an LGBTIQA+ action plan working group, with membership from LGBTIQA+ advisory group, to ensure actions are delivered and implemented in collaboration, utilising the local service systems resources, knowledge and connections.
- Support YourCH's community events and campaigns.

9. Ensure intersectionality principle is applied in all LGBTIQA+ inclusion strategies

LGBTIQA+ people encounter obstacles to their civil participation not solely due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics, but also due to intersecting societal factors such as race, class, and ability.

To address these challenges comprehensively, we propose that the council integrate LGBTIQA+ voices into various aspects of their initiatives, including working groups, committees, projects, and programs designed for multicultural and multifaith communities. In addition, we suggest exploring the intersectionality of First Nations and LGBTIQA+ identities within targeted recruitment efforts and project work groups. It is crucial to ensure that events, projects, grants, and communication materials tailored for women and men are inclusive and representative of LGBTIQA+ people, with adequate safety nets for least understood subgroups under the rainbow umbrella; bisexuals, trans people, intersex people, and non-binary people.

10. Ensuring strong governance and accountability, with measurable goals

One of the keys to achieving successful change is ensuring that action plans are embedded into robust governance structures, have articulated measurable goals and accountability functions that inform community of progress. Noting the large gap between Darebin Council's LGBTIQ+ Action plans (no plan in place between 2017 and now), the new Action Plan should include the planning period and process for the subsequent Action Plan, to ensure momentum is not lost, learnings are embedded and there is continuous action.

11. Support YourCH in advocating for LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing equity

YourCH has a strategic commitment to demonstrate leadership in areas that impact health and social equity and elevate community voice in order to influence systemic change. Our approach to health and social equity has always been understood in the context of the social determinants of health, recognising that health and wellbeing outcomes are often influenced by external factors outside of an individual's control. This includes social, economic and physical environments which are informed by policies, norms, and political systems. YourCH has recently developed a set of proactive advocacy priorities, reflecting the areas of greatest need in our local community. One of YourCH's major advocacy priorities is for *'LGBTIQ+ Victorians to have timely access to inclusive, safe and gender-affirmative health and wellbeing services.'* Below is some context for our advocacy:

Research has found that LGBTIQ+ underutilise health services and delay seeking support due to actual or anticipated experiences of discrimination (Waling et al., 2019). This can lead to reduced screening for a range of physical and mental health conditions and an escalation of health issues and poorer prognosis. Only one third of trans and gender diverse people report feeling that their gender identity was very or extremely respected at a mainstream medical clinic or hospital and that LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to access and benefit from those services that they know to be consistently affirming of their identities and experiences (Hill et al., 2020).

Infants, children, adolescents and adults born with intersex variations are at risk of unnecessary and coercive medical interventions, designed to make bodies more typically female or male. These interventions deny body integrity, self-determination and physical autonomy, often resulting in long term negative physical and psychological impacts (Intersex Human Rights Australia, 2019).

In addition to the lack of LGBTIQ+ inclusive care providers, gender affirmative surgeries and therapies are costly and require multiple unnecessary approval processes, often making them inaccessible resulting in a deterioration of mental health and wellbeing. Trans and gender diverse specialist services are underfunded to meet the increasing demand, with very long wait-times and services/clinics that are often closed for referrals due to exceeding capacity.

Without timely access to required supports, mental and physical health often deteriorates. Community connectedness and relationships with peers have consistently been correlated with resilience for trans and gender diverse people, highlighting the benefit of integrating

peerbased models into mainstream health and wellbeing service delivery (Bariola et al., 2015).

YourCH welcomes any opportunity to partner in advocacy for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, specifically with our following asks:

- An increase in local, state and federal funding for affirmative health and wellbeing services for sex, sexuality and gender diverse communities.
- Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS), Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and all other private and public health insurance providers to cover or heavily subsidise gender affirmation therapies and procedures.
- Inclusion of all required MBS and PBS access at the appropriate level within primary care to fully implement the informed consent model of gender affirmation.
- Medicare gender markers to be expanded beyond male/female to ensure trans, gender diverse and non-binary people have an opportunity to affirm their gender identity.
- An increase in LGBTIQ+ inclusion education within mainstream health and wellbeing services, including Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy for Endocrinology specialists.
- Elimination of harmful and invasive medical treatments for people with intersex Variations.

Further enquiries

YourCH welcomes the opportunity to discuss the submission, key issue areas and recommendations further. For more information, please contact Wunambi Connor (LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Advisor on pride@yourch.org.au, Keira Leike (Trans and Gender Diverse in Community Health Manager) on keira.leike@yourch.org.au or Jennifer Tobin (Strategy, Planning and Advocacy Advisor) on Jennifer.tobin@yourch.org.au.

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Appendix 6: Submission from Victorian Pride Lobby

Victorian Pride Lobby

Locker 11
Victorian Pride Centre
79-81 Fitzroy Street
St Kilda, Victoria 3182
vicpridelobby.org



26 February 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the **community consultation on the proposed Darebin LGBTIQ+ Action Plan**.

The Victorian Pride Lobby is a community-based advocacy group that works towards equality, social justice and advancing human rights for the Victorian LGBTIQ+ community. To do this, we work constructively with trans and gender diverse, intersex, asexual and other community organisations that support our mission and vision.

In 2020, we launched the Rainbow Local Government campaign to recruit and support LGBTIQ+ candidates and allies to increase diversity and champion change on LGBTIQ+ issues in local government.

We note that this work builds on the Darebin Sexuality, Sex, and Gender Diversity Action Plan 2012-2015 (extended to 2017). Building on that, we people that the new Plan include the following actions to ensure Council is accessible, safe, welcoming and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ communities:

Build an organisation within Council that is inclusive and reflective of Darebin's diverse communities

- Appoint a permanent Strategic Project Officer to manage Rainbow Tick accreditation and implementation of the Action Plan;
- Maintain and support the Darebin LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee to enable LGBTIQ+ community participation and an LGBTIQ+ lens in the development of all Council policies and strategies, including the Climate Emergency Plan;
- Provide annual LGBTIQ+ inclusion training for officers, particularly those in front-line customer service delivery roles such as waste management to improve the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people accessing these services;
- Review emergency management policies and procedures to ensure that they are LGBTIQ+ inclusive in line with the recommendations of the research report *Identifying the experiences and needs of LGBTI communities before, during and after emergencies*;

- Review and update the Health Privacy Policy to ensure that it appropriately protects privacy in relation to infectious diseases;
- Urgently develop a Community Flag Schedule to guide the flying of the rainbow flag on days of LGBTIQA+ significance;
- Incorporate a non-discrimination clause and opportunities for LGBTIQA+ people into the Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy that prohibits contractors from discriminating against LGBTIQA+ service users and provides opportunities for LGBTIQA+ businesses to bid for contracts and support for LGBTIQA+ businesses through these processes;
- Conduct a review of the Public Art Framework to incorporate LGBTIQA+ art in open spaces, including temporary art installations such as rainbow yarn-bombing trees;
- Consider the disparate effect of climate change disasters on the health of LGBTIQA+ people in climate emergency and environment strategies and programs;
- Incorporate LGBTIQA+ perspectives into the Transformation Program;
- Create a policy on affirming gender in the workplace that includes gender affirmation leave for staff;
- Ensure that staff are able to access adoption leave, surrogacy leave, foster parent leave, family violence leave and other forms of personal leave in a way that does not force undue disclosure about their personal life;
- Develop or review equal opportunity and bullying and harassment policies for staff to ensure a safe workplace culture that recognise the way in which discrimination impacts each population group within the LGBTIQA+ community and the disproportionate harassment directed at LGBTIQA+ people;
- Ensure that appropriate risk management plans are in place to address health, safety, and wellbeing issues that may arise if LGBTIQA+ events are subject to attack; and
- Take measures to increase the number of women and non-binary people amongst the workforce that are technicians, trades workers, machinery operators, drivers, and labourers, including measures to increase capability in this area.

Build services and programs that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable

- Hold an annual pride swim night at Reservoir Leisure Centre;
- Hold an annual Bundoora Park Farm visit and Darebin Creek Trail walk for LGBTIQA+ communities as part of Bridge Queer Gathering's Queers in the Wild series, and support attendees to volunteer in bushland management;
- Coordinate an annual program of local events as part of the annual Midsumma Festival, including an LGBTIQA+ arts exhibition at the Bundoora Homestead Art Centre;
- Develop a program of property, infrastructure, and facilities renewal to incorporate all gender spaces in public toilets and recreation centre change rooms;

- Ensure appropriate facilities and grounds for the Darebin Falcons at Bill Lawry Oval;
- Incorporate rainbow decals into the transport fleet to promote LGBTIQA+ inclusion; and
- Install a rainbow crossing in Darebin.

Contribute to building inclusive and empowered Darebin communities

- Explicitly prohibit vilification under local laws;
- Ensure that LGBTIQA+ businesses and business-owners are represented on a future Darebin Chamber of Commerce;
- Develop a business case for an LGBTIQA+ Community Hub in the North with consideration to it being developed as major project or strategic asset in the capital delivery program;
- Undertake a study of LGBTIQA+ heritage in Darebin based on the Yarra Recognising Our LGBTIQA+ Heritage Project, with the findings of this study to be taken into account in future development, planning, building, and design;
- Incorporate LGBTIQA+ inclusion resources on the Business Resources and Support webpage;
- Advocate for a category award for LGBTIQA+ inclusion in the Northern Business Achievement Awards;
- Support LGBTIQA+ festivals and events to implement sustainability practices;
- Advocate for the inclusion of LGBTIQA+ public art in the designs for the remaining level crossing removals;
- Encourage residents to support LGBTIQA+ charities and groups through the Container Deposit Scheme;
- Conduct a study of LGBTIQA+ tourism in Darebin that measures the revenues that LGBTIQA+ visitors bring to Darebin and opportunities to strengthen that; and
- Develop a strategy to recruit more LGBTIQA+ venues and businesses to Darebin, including appropriate planning measures, particularly along the High Street Northcote corridor.

We welcome any opportunity to work together to develop your new LGBTIQA+ Action Plan and to ensure that the consultation responds to the needs of LGBTIQA+ people who live, work and recreate in Darebin.

Yours sincerely,

Sean Mulcahy, Jan Farrell and Chelsea Ayling

Victorian Pride Lobby - Rainbow Local Government campaign