

Culture Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan Engagement Report

September 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

Paper Giant acknowledges the Wurundjeri, Bunurong, Ngannawal, Ngambri, Manbarra and Turrbal people as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we regularly meet and work throughout Australia.

We also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We recognise that this is unceded land. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present.

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1. Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Our Community Engagement has given us a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of Darebin's culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Key Findings

Darebin's diversity is both its greatest strength and challenge. Our comprehensive engagement included 230 survey respondents, one community workshop with 30 participants, and 16 interviews (10 with community leaders and 6 with organizational representatives). Additional engagement included site visits to community organizations, a meeting with the Somali Council, consultations with community elders, and discussions with 3-4 residents from refugee housing. This engagement reveals a community where 2 in 3 feel highly accepted, yet 1 in 3 experience discrimination. This paradox defines the inclusion landscape: public housing residents face the highest discrimination (48%) while reporting the strongest sense of belonging (71.4%), demonstrating that community support networks can buffer exclusion.

Language emerges as a critical fault line. Limited English speakers experience the lowest belonging (46.7% vs 64.7% for native speakers) and face compound barriers accessing services. Only 37% feel confident navigating Council services, while 76% cite language as their primary barrier. Even those who speak English "well" struggle—suggesting integration challenges extend beyond basic communication to cultural navigation of Australian systems.

Racism and discrimination dominate experiences, with 47.3% of incidents in workplaces, 32.4% in public spaces, and 31.1% in Council facilities. Safety concerns linked to racism consistently impact daily life. Employment barriers fall heaviest on overseas-born residents, who find work twice as difficult as locals. Being born overseas—regardless of English ability—remains the strongest barrier, as time in Darebin cannot fully replace the local knowledge and networks of those born here.

Opportunity Areas

Transform service delivery from "welcoming" to "reaching": Communities explicitly reject passive approaches. They want Council to come to them—in neighbourhood houses, cultural centres, and shopping precincts. The One Stop Shop concept bringing multiple Council services together in a single, accessible location and the Business Walk programme where Council staff visit local businesses directly to build relationships and gather insights exemplify this active outreach model.

Address the belonging-discrimination paradox: Replicate community development approaches such as resident-led initiatives, peer networks, and local support programs that build resilience in public housing and can be extended across other vulnerable populations.

Target racism and workplace discrimination systematically: Racism emerges as a persistent concern across Darebin, with refugees and asylum seekers, limited English speakers, and visible minorities bearing disproportionate impacts. With nearly half of all discrimination occurring in employment settings, workplace interventions represent a critical opportunity to address both overt racism and subtle exclusionary practices.

Bridge the civic knowledge gap: With two-thirds of residents unsure how to engage with Council processes, there is an opportunity to invest in civic education and outreach. Programs that explain Council roles in plain language, delivered through trusted community networks, could unlock participation and leadership from currently excluded communities.

Insights Across Welcoming Cities Categories

The **Welcoming Cities Standards** provide a national framework that helps local councils assess and strengthen their approach to cultural diversity and inclusion. The categories guide the structure of our findings.

1.

Leadership

Communities demand strong Council leadership on key challenges. Feedback from workshops and advisory committees consistently highlights the need for visible Council action, particularly following the Northland extremist protests that shook community confidence. One-on-one interviews reveal residents want Council to model inclusive leadership and take clear public stances against discrimination. The gap between those wanting to influence decisions and those who know how to engage points to a critical leadership opportunity: Council must not only act on community concerns but visibly demonstrate how residents can shape those actions.

4.

Learning & Skills Development

Language proficiency strongly impacts access to services. Only 37% of limited English speakers confidently access Council services versus 70% of native speakers. In addition to language, cultural navigation also plays a critical role. The community idea "School Transition Hub" helps families understand Australian systems, in addition to translate forms. Young people emerge as vital bridges across both language and culture. The community suggestion of a Young Leadership programme positions them as active change agents, not passive service recipients.

2.

Social & Cultural Inclusion

The belonging paradox: 58.3% feel accepted while public housing residents face highest discrimination (48%) yet report strongest belonging (71.4%). Language creates the deepest divide—limited English speakers show 46.7% belonging versus 64.7% for native speakers. Cultural events dominate wishes (34.3%), but residents want year-round neighbourhood celebrations. Communities reject being "welcomed"—they want Council to actively reach into their spaces.

5.

Civic Participation

Two-thirds don't understand Council engagement processes. Multilingual residents face greater barriers—74% lack knowledge of Council processes versus 60% of English-only speakers. Understanding of civic processes doubles participation (62.5% vs 27.2%), but isn't sufficient alone. Communities highlight difficulties accessing information in preferred languages, and call for engagement through trusted intermediaries and presence in familiar community spaces, rather than expecting navigation of unfamiliar government structures.

3.

Economic Development

Workplace discrimination dominates at 47.3% of all cases. Overseas-born residents find work twice as difficult (38% vs 18%), with birthplace creating 20.6% additional difficulty. Communities prioritise skills training (57%) and workplace English (55%) over welfare. Community ideas such as The Business Walk programme exemplifies solutions: direct education-to-employment pathways. With 72% unable to navigate qualification recognition, significant human capital remains untapped.

6.

Places & Spaces

While 74% report feeling safe overall, those experiencing discrimination feel markedly less safe, particularly in public spaces where 32.4% face discrimination. Refugees (47% discrimination rate) and public housing residents (48%) report heightened safety concerns. Geographic mobility determines usage: high-mobility residents access 6.5 facilities versus 3.9 for those with limited mobility. Creating belonging requires both accessible infrastructure and culturally safe spaces where racism is actively prevented.

2.

Introduction

Introduction

Darebin City Council is committed to creating a fair and inclusive municipality where culturally diverse communities can thrive and belong.

As Australia's first "Excelling Welcoming City," we're undertaking a Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (CDIP) to build on this foundation.

This Report

This engagement report synthesises findings from comprehensive community consultation undertaken between June and August 2025, capturing the voices of Darebin's diverse communities through three interconnected activities:

- **Community Survey:** 230 respondents provided quantitative and qualitative insights across the Welcoming Cities framework, with 151 paper surveys ensuring inclusion of digitally excluded residents
- **Stakeholder and Committee Engagement:** Systematic consultation with Council's advisory committees and key community organisations, alongside direct outreach to individuals and community members through visits and meetings with local organisations.
- **Community Workshop:** Deep-dive session generating 11 community-led initiatives addressing systemic barriers to inclusion
- **Elder Consultations:** Engagement with community elders, including WWCHAC Elders, to gather wisdom and perspectives on cultural inclusion and ensure First Nations leadership in the engagement approach

The report reveals both the successes and challenges of Darebin's diversity journey, providing evidence-based direction for the Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

Our Approach

Our engagement methodology prioritised reaching communities often excluded from traditional consultation.

We deliberately went where people gather — neighbourhood houses, cultural centres, libraries, trusted local service providers such as Your Community Health, and Council community hubs (e.g., East Preston Community Centre, Youth Hub, Darebin North East Community Hub) rather than expecting them to come to us. This approach yielded critical insights: 59.6% of respondents were born overseas, 16.5% report limited English proficiency, and 10.9% live in public housing.

The engagement principles of cultural safety, equity focus, and working through trusted intermediaries ensured we heard from those experiencing the sharpest end of exclusion. Paper surveys captured voices of older residents and those with limited digital access. Multilingual support and culturally appropriate settings created safe spaces for honest feedback.

This careful attention to inclusive methodology revealed patterns invisible in standard consultation—like public housing residents' paradoxical experience of high discrimination yet strong belonging, or how even fluent English speakers born overseas struggle navigating Council services.

3. Engagement Process

Engagement Principles

Through stakeholder consultation, we've developed six principles to guide our work.

Go to the people

We will conduct engagement where communities already gather rather than expecting them to come to us. This means hosting activities at neighborhood houses, community centers, libraries, and cultural events where people naturally congregate, making participation easier and more comfortable.

Equity focus

We will prioritise engagement with communities that have been historically overlooked, particularly in East Reservoir and East Preston. Our approach recognises the socioeconomic divides in Darebin and aims to address structural barriers to participation through targeted outreach and resource allocation.

Cultural Safety

We will create environments where people feel their cultural identity is respected and valued. This includes working with cultural liaisons, providing appropriate language support, respecting cultural protocols, and ensuring our methods are culturally responsive to the diverse communities of Darebin.

Work through trusted intermediaries

We will leverage existing relationships and trusted community organisations to facilitate engagement. This approach recognises that trust is built over time, and by working through established channels, we can create more meaningful connections during our limited engagement period.

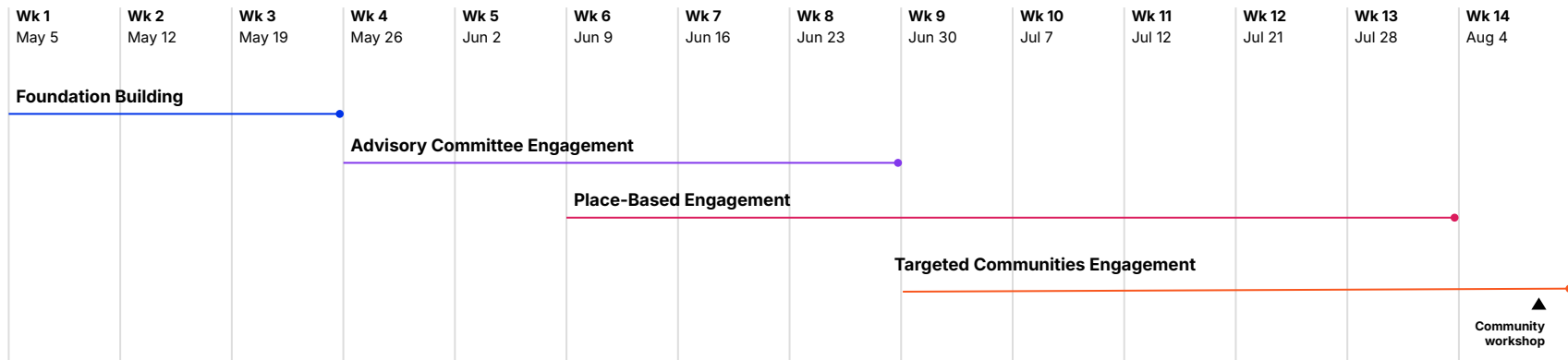
Mixed-method Approach

We will employ multiple engagement techniques to ensure all voices can contribute in ways that suit them. This includes formal and informal methods, from structured workshops and surveys to conversations at community events and pop-ups, capturing both quantitative and qualitative insights.

Accessibility

We will ensure our engagement is accessible to all by providing multilingual materials, interpreters when needed, flexible timing options, and culturally appropriate food and refreshments. We will also consider physical accessibility, transportation barriers, and childcare needs to enable broader participation.

Engagement Timeline



Foundation Building

~3 weeks

Established relationships and launch core engagement tools. Includes initial stakeholder interviews, Council staff consultations, survey development, and setting up coordination systems.

Advisory Committee Engagement

~3 weeks

Systematic consultation with Council Advisory Committees to gather structured input on diversity and inclusion priorities. These consultations provided institutional knowledge and formal community representation perspectives.

Place-based Engagement

~4 weeks

Supported targeted locations to engage their communities through the use of our community survey. This phase also included 16x interviews with organisation representatives about the needs and opinions of their communities.

Targeted Communities

~4 weeks

Focused outreach to historically overlooked or marginalized communities through culturally-specific approaches. This included both site visits to key community locations, interviews with leaders, and facilitation of a targeted workshops with up to 30 participants.

Engagement Methods

Our multi-method approach ensures diverse experiences and perspectives will be heard.

1.

Structured Interviews

16× 1:1 interviews (10 with community leaders and 6 with organisation representatives) using consistent question guides aligned with the Welcoming Cities framework.

These interviews gathered rich qualitative data about community needs and experiences.

Assistance from Darebin

- Identification & Introductions to ~10x community leaders
- Prioritisation and co-ordination of ~6x organisational interviews

2.

Targeted Workshops

One facilitated workshops with 30 participants, focused on priority communities. Each workshop included culturally appropriate food, visual activities, and collaborative exercises to generate detailed insights on community experiences.

Assistance from Darebin

- Collaboration on workshop cohort design
- Logistics and catering for workshops
- Contribution to workshop design

3.

Survey

Multilingual questionnaire available in both online and print formats distributed through community networks and key locations. Using simple language, the survey extends our reach while gathering consistent data across the Welcoming Cities framework. We exceeded our target of 150 responses, achieving 230 survey responses in total.

Assistance from Darebin

- Final sign off
- Translation into chosen languages
- Upload to YourSay / Print written surveys

4. Survey Findings

Key Survey Findings

1.

Leadership & Communication

Council's lack of action and visibility on anti-racism undermines trust. While 74% of residents want stronger Council action against racism, many perceive little to no visible commitment. Recent extremist protests crystallised fears, with residents calling for Council to take a stronger stance. Arabic speakers prioritise anti-racism at 24.5% versus the 16.1% average, reflecting their heightened experiences of discrimination.

4.

Learning & Skills Development

Language proficiency strongly impacts access to services. Only 37% of limited English speakers confidently access Council services versus 70% of native speakers. In addition to language, cultural navigation also plays a critical role. The community idea "School Transition Hub" helps families understand Australian systems, in addition to translate forms. Young people emerge as vital bridges across both language and culture. The community suggestion of a Young Leadership programme positions them as active change agents, not passive service recipients.

2.

Social & Cultural Inclusion

While 58.3% report high belonging, limited English speakers achieve only 46.7% versus 64.7% for native English speakers. Public housing residents face the highest discrimination (48%) yet strongest belonging (71.4%), showing that community networks buffer exclusion. Cultural events dominate wishes (34.3%), but residents want year-round neighbourhood celebrations. New arrivals' belonging scores drop from 4.0/5.0 to 3.36/5.0 within 3–5 years of arrival, indicating critical intervention windows.

5.

Civic Participation

Knowledge barriers collapse democratic participation. Two-thirds lack basic Council engagement understanding. Multilingual residents face worse barriers—74% lack civic knowledge versus 60% of English-only speakers. Knowledge doubles participation (62.5% vs 27.2%) but isn't sufficient alone. Successful methods of engagement rely on going to communities, rather than expecting them to navigate government structures.

3.

Economic Development

Workplace discrimination drives economic exclusion. Employment settings account for 47.3% of all discrimination in the past 12 months. Overseas-born residents find work twice as difficult (38% vs 18%), with birthplace creating 20.6% additional difficulty. Information gaps compound barriers—74% don't know where to get business help, 72% can't navigate qualification recognition. Communities prioritise skills training (57%) and workplace English (55%)

6.

Places & Spaces

Infrastructure gaps prevent full participation. While 74% report feeling safe, racism continues to shape perceptions of safety, and infrastructure gaps prevent full participation. Parks (65%) and libraries (62%) succeed broadly, but sports facilities reach only 9.3% of youth. Geographic mobility drives access—high-mobility residents use 6.5 facilities versus 3.9 for constrained residents. Belonging requires inclusive built environments that reflect cultural diversity, with physical spaces accommodating the varied needs of different communities.

4.1

Who Responded to the Survey?

Sample overview

Total

230

79

Online Responses

151

Paper Surveys

Relationship to Darebin

74.8%

Live in Darebin

18.6%

Work in Darebin

7.1%

Study in Darebin

Demographics

67%

Women

28.7%

Men

1.3%

Non-binary

54.8%

Own own home

10.9%

Public housing

65.9%

Speak English at home

16.5%

Don't speak English well
or at all

59.6%

Born outside of Australia

11.7%

Recent arrivals

15.7%

Refugees / Humanitarian entrants

(including asylum seekers, UN humanitarian program entrants, and
other protection visa holders)

Who responded to the survey?

Our engagement plan was successful at reaching diverse and underrepresented groups in Darebin City.

Gender Skew

Women make up 67% of respondents compared to 28.7% men, suggesting the findings will strongly reflect women's experiences of inclusion in Darebin.

This is somewhat higher than usual but consistent with typical Council engagements, which often skew toward women. While this overrepresentation can provide valuable gendered insights, it also means male and non-binary (1.3%) perspectives may be underrepresented — an imbalance ideally reduced in future engagements.

Multi-cultural representation

Nearly 60% of respondents were born outside Australia, with 16.5% reporting they don't speak English well or at all. By comparison, Darebin's population overall is 38.7% overseas-born and 4.6% report limited English proficiency.

This strong multicultural voice provides critical insights into migrant experiences and language barriers. The higher representation in our survey demonstrates that the outreach plan successfully reached under-represented communities and voices

Paper vs Online

Paper surveys captured 151 responses versus 79 online, demonstrating the value of multiple channels for inclusive engagement. This mix likely helped reach residents with limited digital access, including older residents, those in public housing (10.9%), and those with English language barriers.

The stronger paper response suggests digital-only consultation would have missed critical community voices, reinforcing the need for multi-modal approaches in the action plan implementation.

4.2 What did we learn?

4.2.1

Belonging and Inclusion

Belonging & Inclusion

Darebin achieves moderate belonging success (58.3% high belonging, 3.55/5.0 average) but reveals critical intervention windows and a concerning belonging-discrimination paradox that challenges traditional assumptions about community integration.

Key Findings

- Public housing residents face highest discrimination (48%) yet report highest belonging (71.4%) - the only statistically significant demographic finding. Strong community networks buffer external discrimination.
- Limited English speakers show lowest belonging across all metrics (46.7% vs 64.7% for native speakers).
- 47.3% of all discrimination occurs in employment settings, with public spaces (32.4%) and Council facilities (31.1%) creating additional barriers to community participation.

Key Opportunities

- Replicate the community development approaches such as local networks, peer support, and neighbourhood-based activities that create 71.4% high belonging despite 48% discrimination rates across other housing types and vulnerable populations.
- Nearly half of all discrimination occurs in employment - employer partnerships and anti-discrimination training could impact the largest single source of exclusion.
- 38 residents (16.5%) reported low belonging. Analysis shows this group overlaps with residents who face multiple barriers including limited English proficiency, recent arrivals, and public housing tenants. Tailored interventions for these cohorts could yield measurable community-wide improvement, rather than relying solely on broad demographic programs.

4.2.1A

Darebin is split on belonging – **58.3% feel highly accepted** while **16.5% feel excluded**, with **1 in 3** experiencing discrimination in the last 12 months.

A Community Divided on Belonging

58.3% of survey respondents reported high belonging (scores 4-5/5), feeling genuinely accepted and respected by their community. But 16.5% experience low belonging (scores 1-2/5), representing 1 in 6 residents who feel actively excluded or disrespected.

The remaining 25.2% sit in the middle (score 3/5) - neither fully accepted nor rejected.

With an average score of 3.55/5, Darebin **achieves moderate success while leaving significant segments disconnected.**

Discrimination Affects 1 in 3 Residents

32.2% of our survey respondents experienced discrimination in the past 12 months, occurring primarily in workplaces (47.3% of cases), public spaces (32.4%), and shopping centres (31.1%).

Discrimination doesn't always impact belonging - those experiencing discrimination average score of 3.64/5 belonging vs 3.51/5 for those without.

This resilience suggests **strong community support networks help people maintain connection** despite negative experiences.

Vulnerability Shapes Experience

Discrimination rates reveal stark inequities: Public housing residents (48%), refugees and humanitarian entrants (including asylum seekers) (47.2%), and those with limited English (36.8%) face discrimination rates up to double the general population (23.6%).

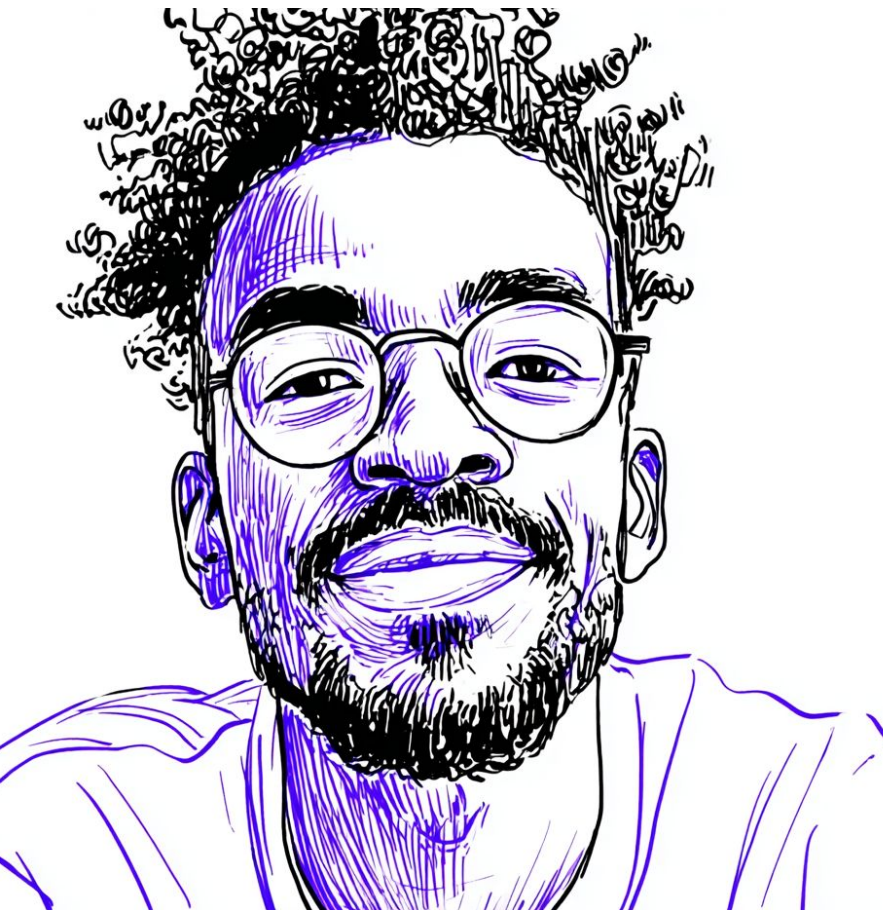
Paradoxically, public housing residents also achieve 71.4% high belonging despite highest discrimination. Yet, those with limited English show lowest belonging at 46.7%. This further suggests that **community support systems matter** more than discrimination alone in determining who feels they belong.

Spotlight: Discrimination and Belonging in Darebin

There are specific priority groups within Darebin that experience significantly more discrimination than others.

Group	n	Discrimination %	Avg Belonging (5)	High Belonging %	Low Belonging %	Key Insights
Overall Survey	230	32.2	3.55	58.3	16.5	Community baseline
Priority Groups						
Public housing residents	35	48	3.91	71.4	8.6	Highest discrimination BUT highest belonging
Refugee/asylum seekers	36	47.2	3.64	63.9	13.9	Very high discrimination above-average belonging
Limited English proficiency	45	36.8	3.33	46.7	24.4	Lowest belonging scores across all metrics
Recent arrivals (<5 years)	27	33.3	3.56	59.3	18.5	Close to community average
Comparison Groups						
No priority vulnerabilities*	123	23.6	3.51	56.1	15.4	Lowest discrimination moderate belonging
Native English/Born in Australia	68	32.4	3.72	64.7	10.3	Highest belonging group with adequate sample
Homeowners	103	29.1	3.53	52.4	13.6	Lower discrimination moderate belonging

*No vulnerability means none of: Recent arrival, low english ability, minority group identification. **Bold means statistically significant.**



High Belonging Despite Daily Discrimination

Ahmed's Paradox

(Composite case study – fictional character created from multiple community experiences)

Ahmed represents the 35 public housing residents (15.2% of our survey) in Darebin. Despite facing the highest discrimination rates in our community, his story reveals unexpected resilience and connection.

The Discrimination Reality

Ahmed is among the 48% of public housing residents who experienced discrimination in the past year - more than double the community rate of 32.2%. This makes public housing the only demographic group with statistically significant higher discrimination ($p < 0.05$).

The Belonging Paradox

Despite facing more discrimination than any other group, Ahmed reports strong community connection. He's part of the 71.4% of public housing residents who feel highly accepted - the highest rate of any demographic group and statistically significantly above the 58.3% community average ($p < 0.05$).

The Community Buffer

Ahmed faces discrimination in workplaces (affecting 47.3% of all cases) and public spaces. Yet strong neighborhood networks in public housing create belonging scores of 3.91/5.0 - higher than homeowners (3.53/5.0). Only 8.6% of public housing residents report low belonging vs 16.5% community-wide.

4.2.1B

New arrivals to Darebin feel they belong, and then the honeymoon ends

The "Honeymoon Effect"

Recent arrivals (0-2 years) show significantly higher belonging (4.0/5.0) than any other time period, representing the strongest statistical effect in our belonging analysis.

When controlling for age groups, time effects lose statistical significance, indicating the "honeymoon effect" may reflect young migrant optimism rather than be purely about time in Darebin.

Recent arrivals are the youngest on average (33.5 years).

The 3-5 Year "Reality Adjustment" Drop

The steepest decline in perceptions of belonging occurs between years 3-5, where belonging drops 0.64 points (from 4.0 to 3.36) - the largest decrease across any transition period.

This is when at-risk populations have most likely experienced discrimination and other barriers to daily life, and where initial support services may leave gaps.

Long-term Belonging Stabilizes Below Initial Optimism

Even 20+ year residents never return to initial belonging levels (3.2/5.0), suggesting permanent adjustment to realistic expectations rather than cyclical patterns.

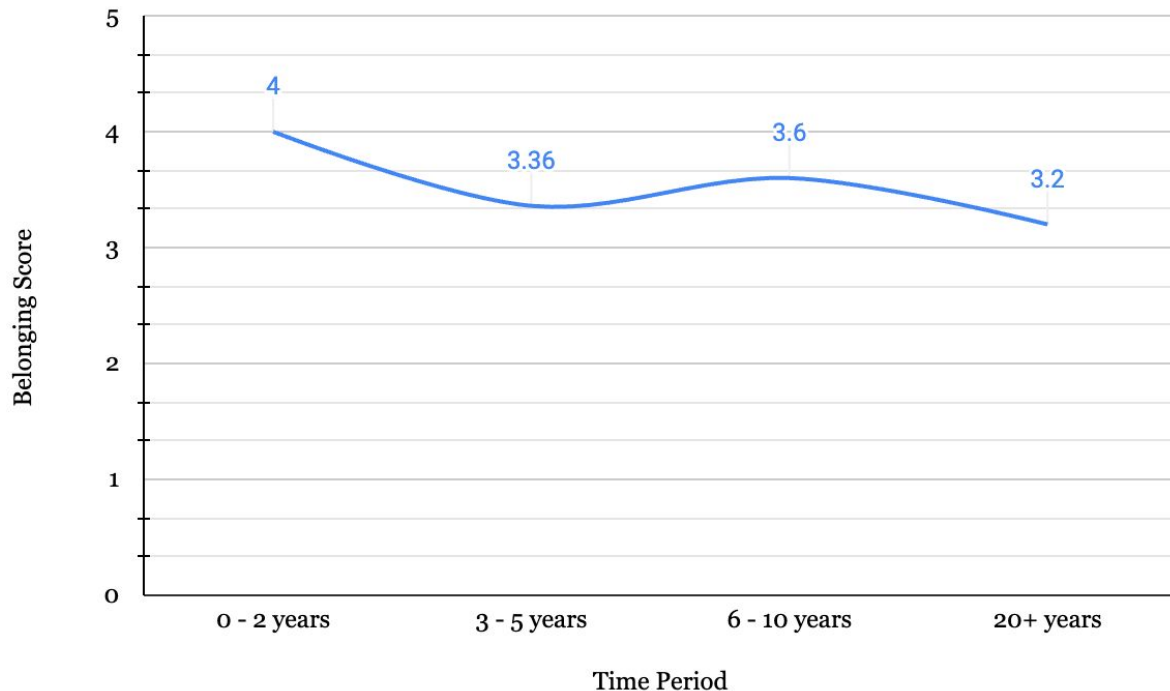
Spotlight: Acceptance and respect over time.

New arrivals to Darebin are statistically more likely to feel accepted and respected.

Recent arrivals (0-2 years) show significantly higher belonging (4.0/5.0) than any other time period, representing the strongest statistical effect in our belonging analysis.

When controlling for age groups, time effects lose statistical significance, indicating the "honeymoon effect" may reflect **migrant optimism** rather than be purely about time in Darebin.

Recent arrivals are also the youngest on average (33.5 years).



4.2.1C

Language proficiency creates Darebin's deepest divide – 46.7% belonging for limited English speakers vs 64.7% for native speakers

Limited English speakers face double the challenge

Among survey respondents, 36.8% of those with limited English proficiency reported experiencing discrimination, the highest of any group. They also record the lowest belonging scores (3.33/5) and are 2.4x more likely to report low belonging compared to native speakers.

Only 46.7% of those with little or no English ability feel accepted in the community, compared to the 58.3% average.

Language barriers cascade through every interaction

Language barriers cascade through every interaction. Limited English speakers are 60% more likely than native speakers to feel excluded.

Even bilingual residents with good English show lower belonging scores than native speakers who only speak English, suggesting that accent and cultural markers continue to create barriers beyond language ability.

Workplace discrimination hits language minorities hardest

With 47.3% of all discrimination occurring in workplaces, limited English speakers face compounded employment challenges.

This may create an economic participation gap that reinforces social isolation and reduces opportunities for language improvement through workplace interaction.



It's not just language - it's about feeling welcomed, seeing yourself reflected

- Community member discussing that inclusion and cultural safety needs more than just translation services

4.2.1D

Workplace discrimination is the most common, and it happens everywhere.

Workplaces are discrimination's primary battleground

47.3% of all discrimination cases occur in workplace settings, making employment the single largest context for exclusionary experiences in Darebin.

This concentration suggests systemic barriers within Darebin's employment ecosystem that affect community integration at its most fundamental economic level.

Public spaces create visible exclusion

32.4% of discrimination incidents happen in public spaces like streets and parks, creating barriers to basic community participation.

When combined with shopping centres (31.1%), retail and public environments account for nearly two-thirds of non-workplace discrimination, suggesting visibility-based targeting.

Council facilities show concerning patterns

31.1% of discrimination occurs within Council facilities themselves, indicating barriers at the very institutions designed to serve all residents.

This institutional discrimination undermines trust in local government and creates access barriers to essential services, from libraries to community centers to administrative services.

Spotlight: Discrimination and Belonging in Darebin

Workplaces are statistically more likely than any other place for discrimination to present itself.

Location	Percentage of Cases	Total Cases	Description
Workplace	47.3	35	Employment settings - hiring practices, career advancement, workplace culture
Public spaces	32.4	24	Streets, parks, public areas - visible targeting community, participation barriers
Council facilities	31.1	23	Libraries, community centers, admin offices
Shopping centres	31.1	23	Retail environments commercial spaces - service discrimination or public profiling
Healthcare settings	29.7	22	Medical facilities, health services - access and treatment barriers
Schools/education	27	20	Educational institutions, learning environments
Other locations	16.2	12	Various other contexts not specified above
Public transport	13.5	10	Buses, trains, trams, stations - mobility and access discrimination

No vulnerability means none of: Recent arrival, low english ability, minority group identification. **Bold means statistically significant.*

4.2.2

Spaces and Places

Spaces & Places

Physical spaces send powerful messages about who belongs. While Darebin's facilities are well-used, geographic constraints and lack of cultural accommodation in infrastructure limit full community participation.

Key Findings

- 61% of survey respondents reported using 5+ civic facilities in the past year, yet 48% of respondents remain confined to just 1–2 areas. This geographic constraint particularly affects limited English speakers and recent arrivals.
- Parks (65%) and libraries (62%) achieve broad usage, while sports facilities reach only 9.3% of youth despite being designed for young people.
- 74% report feeling safe, yet qualitative feedback reveals persistent concerns about maintenance and cultural accommodation needs.

Key Opportunities

- Since high-mobility residents use twice as many facilities (6.5 vs 3.9), transport solutions and distributed services could dramatically increase civic engagement.
- Infrastructure must accommodate diverse cultural needs through prayer rooms, ritual washing facilities, multilingual signage, and flexible community spaces. These physical modifications demonstrate that belonging means practical accessibility - ensuring public facilities serve all residents, not just the dominant culture.
- Rather than centralising services, bringing programmes to the 48% with low geographic mobility could transform participation rates.

4.2.2A

Most people use community facilities, but transport barriers leave some residents behind

High Civic Facility Usage Across Community

Over 60% of survey respondents are "high users" visiting 5+ civic facilities in past 12 months, with only 23% showing "low usage" (0-2 facilities). Average usage is 5.4 facilities per person, demonstrating strong community engagement with libraries (63%), parks (65%), and Preston Market (63%).

Geographic Movement More Constrained

Nearly half (48%) have "low geographic mobility" visiting only 1-2 Darebin areas regularly, while just 14% achieve "high mobility" across 5+ areas.

This contrasts sharply with facility usage - **people access many services but stay geographically concentrated.**

Integration Gap Between Service Use and Movement

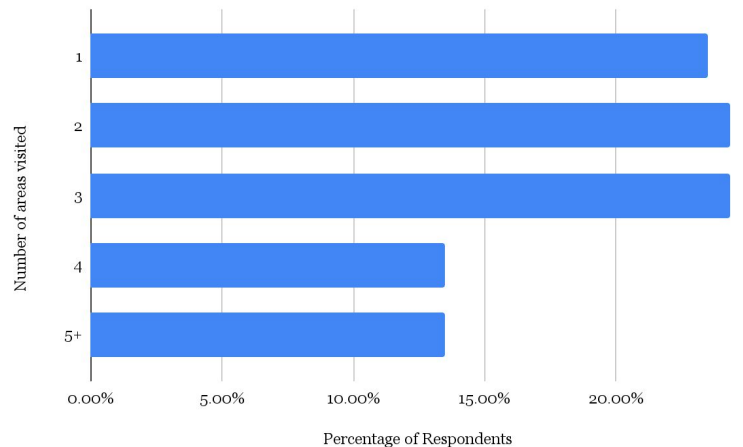
The data reveals a paradox: residents actively use civic facilities (61% high users) but remain geographically constrained (48% low mobility).

Survey data shows that English proficiency strongly influences mobility across Darebin. Residents with higher English skills move more easily around the municipality, while recent arrivals and those with limited English show the lowest geographic mobility.

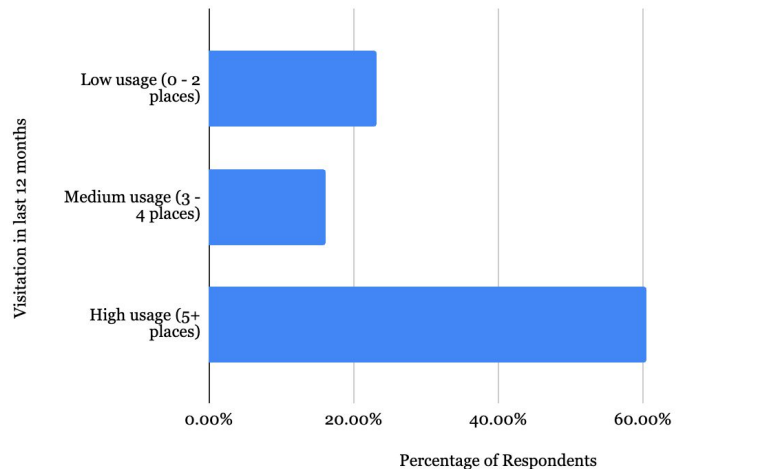
Spotlight: Mobility & Civic Service Access

People who get around to many areas (4 or more) use a lot more community facilities – about 6.5 different services on average. In comparison, people who stay in just one area only use about 4 facilities.

Almost half of survey respondents only visit 1 or 2 suburbs within Darebin.



Over 60% of survey respondents visit 5 or more civic places



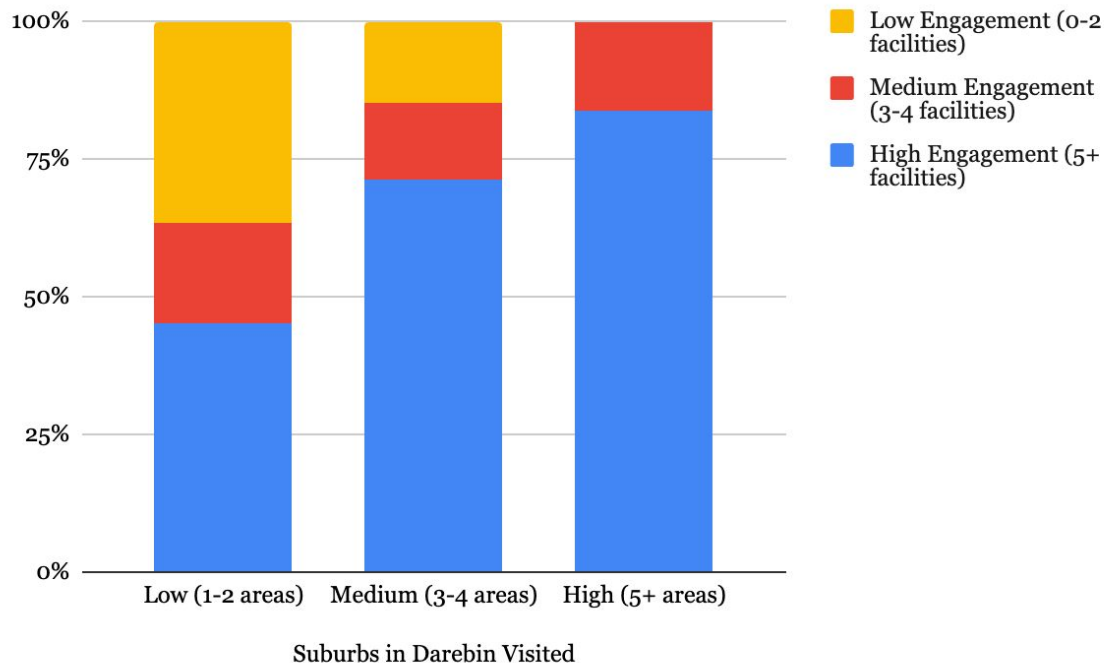
Spotlight: Mobility & Civic Service Access

Residents that are more mobile enjoy better access to council facilities.

Residents who visit 5+ Darebin areas show the highest civic facility usage, with 84% accessing 5+ facilities compared to just 45% of low mobility residents. This represents the most engaged segment of the community.

Nearly half of residents (48%) have low geographic mobility, visiting only 1-2 areas. Within this constrained group, 37% use few facilities (0-2), suggesting geographic limitations compound service.

The data reveals mobility as a key predictor of civic participation. Improving transport connections, service distribution, and mobility support for geographically constrained residents could unlock greater community engagement and service equity across Darebin's diverse population.





Low Mobility Despite Strong Community Desire

Maria's Isolation

(Composite case study – fictional character created from multiple community experiences)

Maria represents the 24% of very low mobility residents (visit only 1 Darebin area) in our survey. Despite wanting to explore more of her community, language barriers and limited transport options keep her geographically constrained, revealing how mobility restrictions compound social isolation.

The Mobility Reality

Maria is among the residents with limited English proficiency who average just 2.1 areas visited compared to 3.1 for native speakers. Only 14% of residents like Maria achieve high mobility (4+ areas), making them statistically significantly less geographically integrated ($p < 0.05$).

The Service Access Gap

Despite living in a service-rich municipality, Maria's low mobility means she accesses only 3.9 community facilities compared to 6.5 for high mobility residents. She uses libraries at 53% the rate of mobile residents and parks at just 34% the rate, missing crucial integration opportunities.

The Untapped Potential

Maria still feels positive about Darebin's safety (92% of limited English speakers report positive perceptions - higher than native speakers at 70%). Strong community support networks in her immediate area create high belonging scores, but geographic barriers prevent her from accessing the full range of services and spaces that could enhance her integration and community participation.

4.2.2B

74% feel safe in public spaces yet qualitative feedback reveals persistent concerns among vulnerable groups

Strong Results Show Most People Feel Safe

Nearly three-quarters of people (74%) say they feel safe in public spaces, agreeing that these spaces feel safe and welcoming. Only 11% say they feel unsafe.

Surprisingly, people with poor English skills actually report feeling the safest - 92% of those who speak little or no English say they feel positive about safety in public spaces.

Comments Reveal Concerns the Numbers Don't Show

Even though the survey numbers look positive, open text responses in the survey revealed different concerns. About 12% of written responses mentioned safety worries, another 5% pointed out maintenance problems, and 6% noted access issues.

This suggests that simple rating scales don't capture the full picture of people's experiences, and these concerns need a closer look.

Language Skills Show Unexpected Safety Pattern

People with poor English skills report feeling safer (92% positive) than native English speakers (70% positive).

There could be several reasons: people with limited English might stick to familiar areas where they feel comfortable, have stronger support from their own communities, or simply avoid places where they might face discrimination.

This doesn't necessarily mean they're actually safer - just that they feel that way.



Council must take a stronger stance against racism and extremist activity in the area. The recent Nazi protest at Northland deeply rattled many in the community - including migrant families, children, and elders who now feel unsafe.

- *Survey response*

4.2.2C

Parks and Libraries are universally popular, and specialised services show targeted engagement patterns.

Parks and Libraries Work for Everyone

Parks and libraries are Darebin's big success stories – about two-thirds of people use them (65% for parks, 62% for libraries).

These facilities work well for everyone, no matter their English skills, age, or housing situation.

They're the most inclusive services we have, appealing to all different groups in the community.

Specialised Services Reach the Right People

Some services are designed for specific groups and that's working well. The Darebin Intercultural Centre is used by about a quarter of all residents (24%), but it's especially popular with recent arrivals who need it most.

Senior centres in particular are successfully reaching their target audiences.

This shows a good mix – some services for everyone, others for specific groups who need them.

Getting Around More Means Using More Services

People who travel to many areas use far more services. Those visiting 4 or more areas use libraries at much higher rates (76% compared to 53% for people who stay in one area). The difference is even bigger for parks (77% versus 34%).

Since about a quarter of residents currently stick to just one area, helping them travel more could really boost their access to community services.

Where targeting is working, and where it isn't.



Senior's Centre

Senior centres are working exactly as intended. Nearly **1 in 5 people aged 55+** (19.8%) use these services, compared to only 1 in 8 overall residents (12.6%).

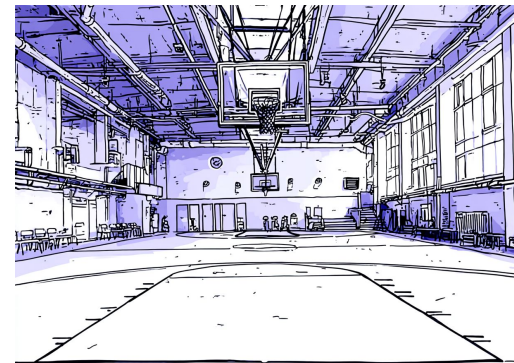
This shows senior centres successfully attract their target audience while avoiding unnecessary use by younger residents who don't need age-specific programming.



Intercultural Centre

The Darebin Intercultural Centre operates as a hub for all communities, with 21.1% of recent arrivals and 24–27% of longer-term residents using it.

While this shows broad accessibility, it highlights an opportunity to strengthen outreach to newly arrived residents who may need the most support. Reaching this group is challenging due to limited data and additional barriers such as language and geography, but remains a necessary focus.



Sports facilities

Sports facilities show an age gap in participation. Only 1 in 10 people under 35 (9.3%) reported using council sports facilities, while middle-aged residents (35–54) are the most frequent users at 24%.

4.2.3

Services & Supports

Services & Supports

Service access is prevented by a number of barriers — language, information, and cultural understanding. The 40% of respondents facing multiple barriers need systemic solutions to improve their access.

Key Findings

- Only 37% of limited English speakers feel confident accessing services versus 70% of native speakers, with 76% citing language as their primary barrier.
- "Not knowing what's available" tops all barriers at 25% of mentions. Even Australian-born residents report high rates (45.5%) of not knowing services exist.
- 50% of native English speakers born overseas face multiple service barriers—the highest rate of any group—revealing systemic complexity beyond language.

Key Opportunities

- Co-locating services with multilingual support could eliminate the navigation burden that affects 40% of residents facing multiple barriers.
- Since even fluent English speakers struggle with systems, cultural brokers who understand Australian government structures could bridge critical gaps.
- With 25% unaware of available services, comprehensive service mapping and community-based promotion could immediately improve access.

4.2.3A

People with Limited English Face Major Barriers to Council Services

Big Differences in Service Access Based on English Skills

Only 37% of people with limited English (38 people surveyed) feel confident accessing Council services.

This compares to 69-70% for native English speakers and those with strong English skills - a 33 percentage point difference.

Language Access Barriers for Those Who Need It Most

While 84% of native English speakers can access Council information, only 38% of those with limited English proficiency can access information they can understand. Not everyone needs translation in their preferred language, but the 46-point gap shows those with genuine language barriers are missing critical Council communications.

Cross-referencing languages spoken with English proficiency levels could identify which specific languages require translation investment.

Three Out of Four Limited English Speakers Face Language Barriers

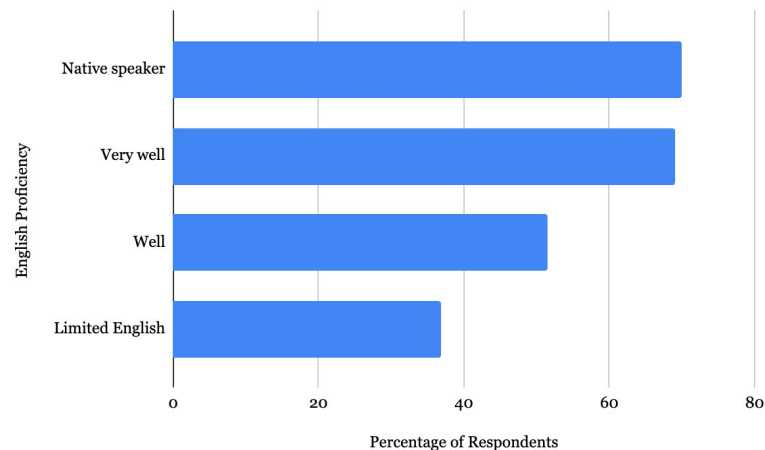
76% of people with limited English say language stops them from accessing services, compared to just 4% of native speakers.

While this result is expected, it shows how severely language skills affect service access, with the difference being highly statistically significant ($p < 0.001$, meaning the gap is very unlikely due to chance)

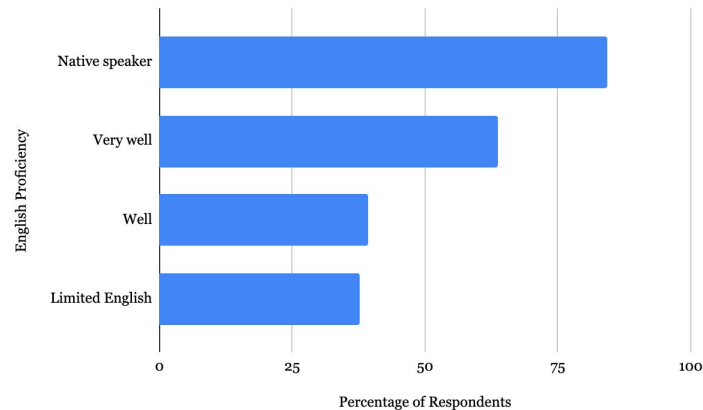
Spotlight: Language & Access to Services

English Proficiency is the key driver of difference in our data when it comes to access Council Services & Supports.

The percentage of respondents who 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that they know how to access council services.



The percentage of respondents who 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that they can easily find information from Council in my preferred language.



4.2.3B

Even People Who Speak English "Well" Face Challenges

Speaking English "Well" Isn't Always Enough

People who rate their English as "Well" (not native) still struggle - only 52% feel confident accessing services (33 people surveyed) and just 39% can get information in their preferred language.

Language Preference vs Language Need

Even those with 'Very good' English show a gap between knowing how to access services (69%) and getting information in their preferred language (64%). This doesn't necessarily indicate a barrier - many multilingual residents can understand English information even if they'd prefer their native language. The real concern is for those with limited English proficiency who need translated materials to access services, not just prefer them. Targeted translation based on actual English proficiency levels, rather than language preference alone, would better allocate Council resources.

Strong Statistical Evidence That English Skills Matter Most

The data clearly shows English proficiency is the biggest factor affecting both service knowledge and language information access (both statistically significant, $p < 0.001$).

Limited English proficiency is the main barrier to using Council services.



I haven't found help. I haven't even found a job.

- *Survey respondent, 3 years in Australia*

4.2.3C

There are barriers beyond English – most people don't know what services are available.

"Not Knowing What's Available" Tops All Barriers

25% of all barrier mentions cite "not knowing what's available" - making it the single most common barrier. Combined with "not understanding Council's role" (15% of mentions), information gaps account for 40% of all barriers reported.

This affects residents regardless of English skills, with both Australia-born (45.5%) and overseas-born (42.7%) reporting similar rates of not knowing services exist.

Two in Five Residents Face Multiple Service Barriers

40% of respondents (88 of 220 who responded to this question) face multiple barriers to accessing Council services, **with 21% experiencing high barrier burden (3+ barriers). This represents a significant portion of the community struggling with compound access challenges.**

Counter-intuitively, Native English speakers born overseas face the highest multiple barrier rates (50%, n=22), followed by "Very well" English speakers born overseas (45%, n=40). This reveals that cultural navigation challenges persist even with strong English proficiency.

Where You Were Born Also Affects Service Access

Australia-born residents show higher service access confidence (67%) versus overseas-born residents (57%, p=0.023).

Spotlight: Barriers to Access

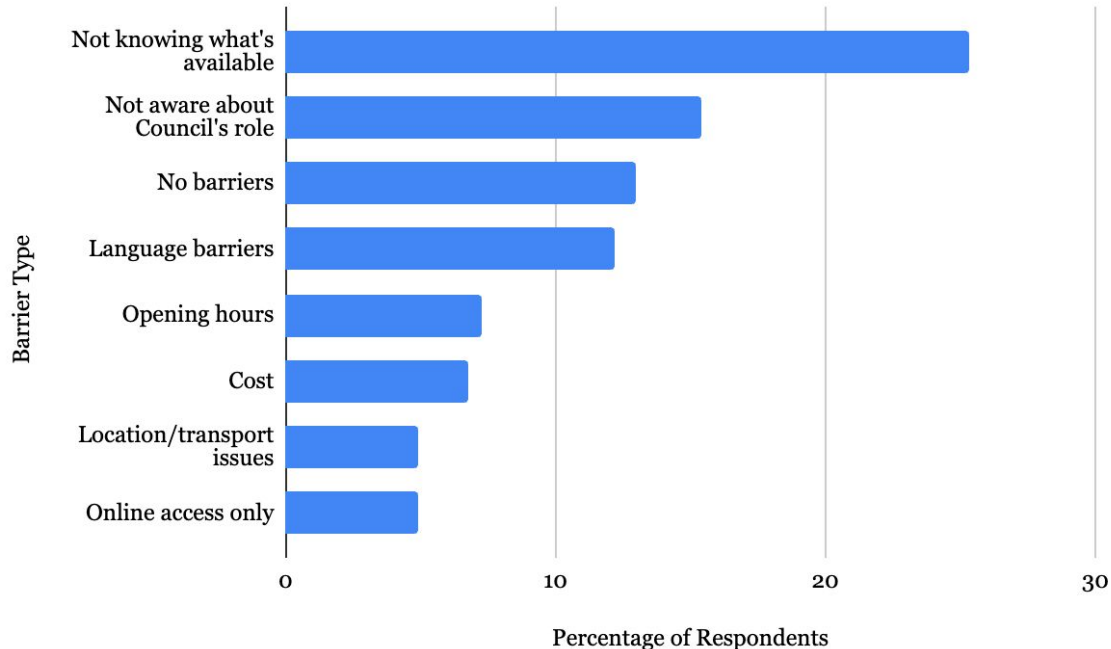
Information gaps are the biggest barrier to accessing Council services

Nearly half of residents can't access services because they don't know what's available.

With only 15% reporting no barriers, 85% of residents face obstacles accessing Council services. Language barriers (13%), opening hours (9%), cost (8%), and transport (6%) create additional challenges, particularly when combined.

The solution is clear: better communication about available services and Council's role would remove barriers for 46% of residents - far more effective than addressing transport or cost alone.

Targeted information campaigns, clearer messaging, and community-specific outreach could transform access without changing a single service.





Barriers beyond English

David's Navigation Challenge

(Composite case study – fictional character created from multiple community experiences)

David represents the 10% of residents who are native English speakers born overseas in our survey. Despite his language skills, cultural unfamiliarity with Australian government systems creates unexpected service access barriers, revealing how integration challenges extend far beyond language proficiency.

The Hidden Barrier Reality

David is among the highest-risk group for multiple service barriers (50% face two or more barriers compared to 37.8% of limited English speakers). Even with strong English, he struggles to navigate Council services, experiencing an average of 1.8 barriers per person — higher than any other demographic group. These differences are statistically significant, meaning they are unlikely to be due to chance.

The Service Access Gap

Despite being a confident English speaker, David faces the same service knowledge challenges as other overseas-born residents. Only 50% of native speakers born overseas know how to access Council services compared to 70% of Australia-born native speakers. He encounters barriers around "not knowing what's available" and "not understanding Council's role" at rates similar to Limited English speakers.

The Cultural Navigation Challenge

David still feels positive about Darebin's inclusivity (similar belonging scores to other residents), but systemic barriers prevent her from accessing the full range of services. Strong community connections in his immediate area can't compensate for unfamiliarity with Australian local government structures, creating a gap between his desire to participate and his ability to navigate available resources effectively.

4.2.4

Economic Opportunity

Economic Opportunity

Economic exclusion stems from systemic barriers—discrimination, information gaps, and unrecognised qualifications—rather than capability. Communities seek pathways to contribution, not charity.

Key Findings

- Overseas-born residents find work twice as difficult as Australian-born (38% vs 18%), with birthplace creating 20.6% additional difficulty even controlling for language and time.
- 74% of vulnerable residents don't know where to get business help, 72% can't navigate qualification recognition, undermining human capital utilisation.
- Of our survey respondents, 57% prioritised training programmes and 55% prioritised workplace English, showing a strong desire for economic contribution.

Key Opportunities

- A community suggested 'Business Walk programme' model where Council and partners visit local businesses to connect directly with employers and students could scale across industries to address the 47.3% workplace discrimination rate.
- With 72% unable to navigate recognition processes, a dedicated qualification assessment service could activate significant dormant human capital.

4.2.4A

Cultural and linguistic background significantly affect employment experiences, creating a clear divide in work opportunities.

Overseas-Born Residents Face Double the Challenge

Finding work is difficult for 38% of overseas-born residents compared to just 18% of Australian-born residents.

This 20 percentage point gap is statistically significant ($p=0.013$), meaning it's a genuine pattern, not random variation. It's strong evidence that overseas-born residents genuinely face greater barriers to employment

Multiple Barriers Compound the Problem

Residents with multiple challenges - such as language barriers, recent arrival or overseas birth - see work difficulty jump to 40%.

Each additional barrier doesn't just add to the problem, it multiplies it.

But Success Stories Exist

Two-thirds of our survey respondents don't experience significant employment barriers.

This shows Darebin's job market can work for diverse communities - the challenge is extending this success to everyone.

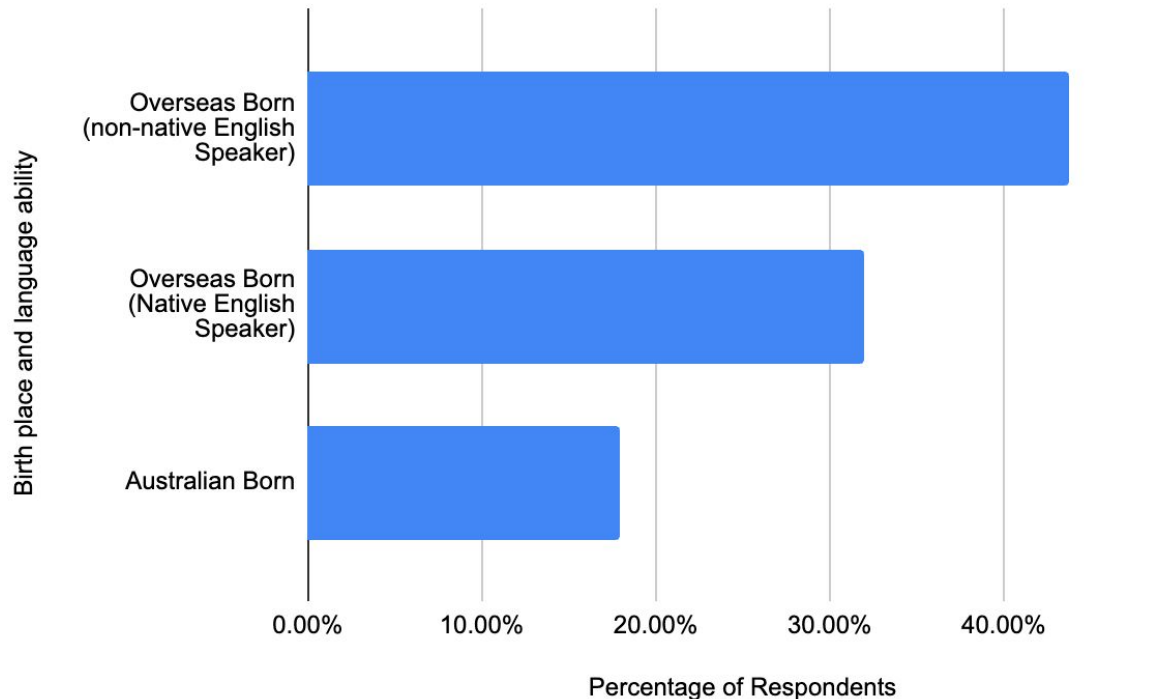
Spotlight: Birth place and economic opportunity

Even native English speakers born overseas have a harder time than Australian-born residents.

18% of Australian-born Darebin residents agreed that finding business or work opportunities is difficult for them.

This number increasing to 32% of Overseas-born native English Speakers, indicating that language is only part of the barrier.

The number increases to 43.8% for overseas born residents who speak a language other than English.



Spotlight: The Factors that drive employment and business barriers

Being born overseas – whether you speak English well or not – is the biggest barrier to employment opportunity. Time in Darebin never fully compensates for this either. This indicates that local knowledge and connections are hard to replicate for people not born here.

Factor	How much more difficult is job searching?	Interpretation
Birthplace (Australia or Overseas)	+20.6%	Cultural/systemic barriers exist even when controlling for time and language
Language (Limited vs Native Speakers)	+7.6%	Language barriers add difficulty even for established residents
Other Barriers combined	+17.0%	Multiple barriers have cumulative effect
Time (Recent vs Established)	-3.6%	Time helps: Established residents fare better than recent arrivals

4.2.4B

Information gaps create the biggest barriers to economic participation.

Business Support Knowledge is Severely Limited

74% of highly vulnerable residents don't know where to get help starting a business, compared to 52% of low-vulnerability residents.

Even among those with fewer barriers, business support pathways remain unclear for the majority.

Job-Seeking Guidance Shows the Same Pattern

55% of highly vulnerable residents lack confidence about where to get job-seeking help, compared to 23% of low-vulnerability residents.

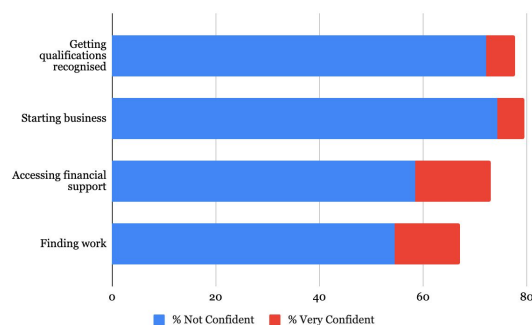
The people who need employment support most struggle to access information about it.

Overseas Qualifications Recognition Confuses Most

Professional skills and experience go unused when 72% of highly vulnerable residents don't know how to get overseas qualifications recognized.

This represents significant untapped human capital in Darebin.

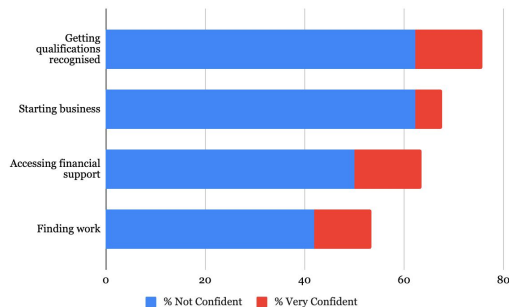
Differences in economic opportunity for vulnerable groups



High Vulnerability Populations

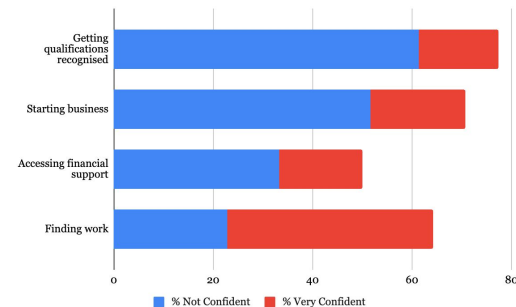
High vulnerability populations (born overseas, not native speakers, and recently arrived) lack confidence across the spectrum of economic opportunities.

These people don't know what employment or business services exist and don't know where to go for help.



Moderate Vulnerability Populations

Those with one of the vulnerability factors (one of overseas born, low english ability or recent arrivals) are more confident that highly vulnerable populations, but still suffer from higher rates of confusion and uncertainty than low vulnerability populations.



Low Vulnerability Populations

Native-born English speaking Australians have the best confidence ratings for economic opportunity.

4.2.4C

Community priorities are clear and achievable, focusing on practical skills rather than complex interventions.

Skills Training Leads Community Priorities

Training and skills development programs are rated as very important by 57% of residents.

This isn't about welfare - people want practical tools to build their own success and economic independence.

Workplace English Addresses Specific Needs

55% prioritize English language support specifically for workplace communication.

Residents understand the difference between general English and professional communication skills required for employment success.

Diverse Business Support Creates Multiplier Effects

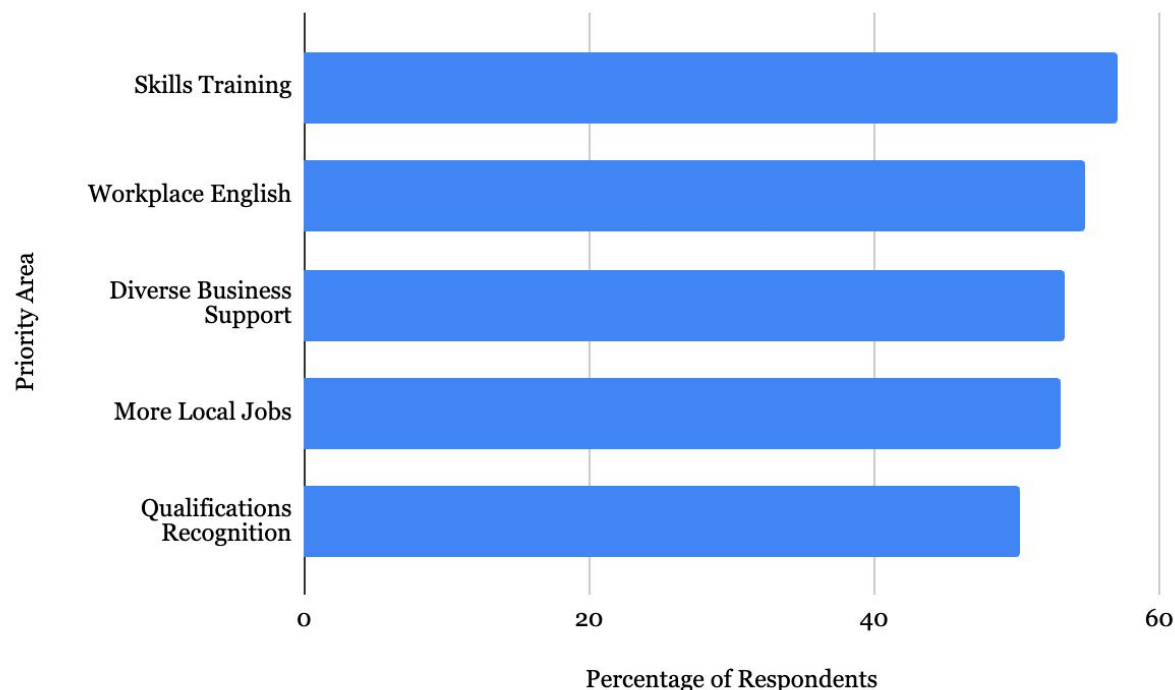
53% support helping small businesses owned by people from diverse backgrounds.

Successful diverse entrepreneurs create employment opportunities for their communities, amplifying the impact of initial support investments.

Spotlight: Community consensus on economic priorities

Skills Training & Workplace English support emerge as consensus priorities.

Skills Training (58%) and Workplace English (56%) emerged as top community priorities, with all five economic priorities clustering within just 6 percentage points. This remarkable consensus—spanning immediate employment support through to business development—provides Council with a clear mandate for comprehensive economic inclusion strategies that address multiple needs simultaneously.



4.2.5 Participation & Voice

Participation & Voice

Most people don't know how to have their say in Council decisions, and it's even harder for those from other countries who aren't familiar with how Australian local government works. Two-thirds of residents don't know how to get involved.

Key Findings

- 67.7% don't know how to engage with Council decisions, with multilingual residents facing a 14-point gap compared to English-only speakers (60% vs 74%).
- Those understanding Council processes show 62.5% participation versus 27.2% for those without knowledge—but knowledge alone isn't sufficient.
- **Current methods fail multilingual residents (74% lack civic knowledge) and those unfamiliar with Australian government structures.**

Key Opportunities

- Comprehensive community education about Council processes—delivered through trusted intermediaries—could double participation rates across diverse communities.
- Following the "reaching rather than welcoming" principle, Council presence in familiar community spaces such as neighbourhood houses, trusted service providers, and local hubs could bypass navigation barriers and ensure access across the municipality.
- Working through community organisations and cultural leaders could translate between Council structures and community needs.

4.2.5A

Two-thirds of survey respondents lack basic civic knowledge, creating a fundamental barrier to democratic participation.

The Civic Engagement Crisis

67.7% of residents don't know how to have their say on Council decisions - a critical gap that undermines community voice.

Knowledge Directly Drives Participation

Those who know the process are twice as likely to participate in Council activities compared to those who don't understand the system.

But Participation Remains Limited Even Among the Informed

Even residents who understand the process show moderate engagement levels, suggesting additional barriers beyond basic knowledge.

Civic education is a fundamental prerequisite - but not sufficient alone - for meaningful community engagement.

Spotlight: Civic knowledge and Engagement

Knowing civic processes doubles the likelihood of engagement in civic activities.

Only one third of Darebin residents feel they know how to have their say in council decisions.

62.5% of these knowledgeable survey respondents engage in civic activities, versus only 27.2% on uninformed residents.

Civic Knowledge	No Participation	Has Participation
Knows How	27 (37.5%)	45 (62.5%)
Doesn't Know How	110 (72.8%)	86 (38.6%)

4.2.5B

Language diversity creates significant barriers to civic participation.

Multilingual Residents Face Double Disadvantage

Only 26% of residents who speak multiple languages know how to engage with Council, compared to 40.4% of English-only speakers.

Information Access Creates Exclusion

Residents navigating multiple languages encounter additional complexity when trying to understand Council processes and participation pathways.

Darebin's strength as a multicultural community becomes a civic participation challenge without targeted, language- and culturally-accessible engagement strategies. Here, language also acts as a marker of cultural difference, highlighting the need for approaches that address both.

Success Stories Point to Solutions

Over one-third of residents successfully engage (mostly through surveys and community engagement programs) when they understand the system - proving Darebin's civic infrastructure can work for diverse communities.



Barriers beyond language

Fatima's Navigation Challenge

(Composite case study – fictional character created from multiple community experiences)

Fatima represents the 55% of multilingual residents in our survey who feel disconnected from Council decision-making despite strong English proficiency and community engagement. Speaking Arabic and English fluently, her language skills aren't the barrier - it's navigating unfamiliar Australian civic participation structures that creates unexpected democratic engagement challenges.

The Hidden Participation Reality

She is among the highest-risk group for civic disengagement (74% of multilingual residents don't know how to have their say compared to 60% of English-only speakers). Despite being professionally qualified and deeply committed to her local community, she struggles to understand Council processes, experiencing barriers around "not knowing what's available" and "not understanding Council's role" - challenges that affect multilingual residents at significantly higher rates.

The Democratic Participation Gap

Despite wanting to advocate for her family and neighbors, Fatima faces the same civic knowledge challenges as other multilingual residents. Only 29% of multilingual residents feel confident about having their say on Council decisions compared to 40% of English-only speakers. She encounters barriers around unfamiliar Australian local government structures and culturally different expectations of citizen-government interaction that create gaps between their desire to participate and their ability to navigate available democratic pathways effectively.

Statistics

74.2% of multilingual residents lack civic knowledge vs 59.6% of English-only speakers

71% of multilingual residents had no Council engagement vs 49.5% of English-only speakers

4.2.6

Community Priorities

Community Priorities

Community priorities reveal sophisticated understanding of inclusion needs that shift across settlement journeys. The consensus on anti-racism, combined with desire for cultural celebration and practical support, provides clear direction for action that addresses both immediate needs and long-term belonging.

Key Findings

- Anti-racism tops community priorities at 16.5% overall, rising to 24.5% among Arabic speakers who face highest discrimination. Women prioritise anti-racism more than men (17.6% vs 13.8%), with cross-generational consensus from youth to seniors.
- Recent arrivals prioritise employment (21.9% vs 14.5% Australian-born) and language support (17.8% vs 10.4% native speakers). Safety concerns emerge later—17.5% for residents who arrived in the past 5–10 years versus 5.5% for this who have arrived less than 3 years ago.

Key Opportunities

- Year-round neighbourhood festivals could address multiple priorities simultaneously—reducing isolation, building cross-cultural connections, and supporting local diverse businesses.
- Visible Council leadership against discrimination could build trust while addressing the community's top priority
- Create pathways that evolve with residents' needs—employment support for new arrivals transitioning to civic participation programmes for established residents, maximising relevance at each integration phase.

4.2.6A

Migration Journey Fundamentally Shapes Inclusion Priorities

Employment is Critical for New Arrivals

Recent immigrants who have lived in Australia for 5 years or less prioritize employment opportunities at 21.9%, compared to just 14.5% for Australian-born residents, a 7.4 percentage point gap that reflects immediate economic pressures.

This employment focus is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and shows how new arrivals face practical barriers to economic participation that established residents have already overcome.

Language Barriers Create Service Gaps

Limited English speakers prioritize language support at 17.8%, nearly double the rate of native English speakers at 10.4% - creating a 7.4 percentage point service equity gap.

The statistical analysis reveals this language barrier significantly impacts service access, with 76% of limited English speakers reporting language stops them from accessing services compared to just 4% of native speakers ($p < 0.001$).

Safety Concerns Emerge Over Time

Established residents show dramatically higher safety concerns, with medium-term residents (5-10 years) prioritizing public safety at 17.5% versus only 5.5% for recent arrivals.

This 12 percentage point difference suggests safety concerns develop as immigrants become more integrated into community life and develop higher expectations for public space safety and harassment protection.

4.2.6B

Anti-Racism Emerges as Universal Priority Across All Demographics

Women Lead Anti-Racism Advocacy

Women prioritise anti-racism at 17.6% compared to 13.8% for men - a 3.8 percentage point gender gap that reflects women's heightened experience of intersectional discrimination.

This pattern holds across age groups, with women consistently showing 3-5 percentage points higher support for anti-discrimination initiatives, suggesting gender amplifies experiences of cultural discrimination.

Arabic Speakers Face Highest Discrimination

Arabic speakers prioritize anti-racism at 24.5%, the highest rate among all language groups and 8.4 percentage points above English speakers at 16.1%.

This statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) indicates Arabic-speaking residents face more frequent discrimination, making anti-racism their top priority despite also having high language support needs at 16.0%.

Cross-Generational Consensus on Priority

Anti-racism ranks as the #1 priority across age groups, from 14.3% among young adults (18-24) to 18.6% among seniors (65+).

Even the youngest respondents (Under 18) prioritize anti-racism at 24.3%, showing discrimination affects all generations. This cross-generational consensus demonstrates **that racism remains a persistent, universal challenge requiring sustained Council action.**

4.2.6C

Community requests Cultural Connection Through Events and Celebrations

Cultural Events Dominate Community Wishes

Cultural events and celebrations appear in 34.3% of open-ended suggestions, making it the top community request ahead of all other themes including employment (11.9%) and language support (9.7%).

Residents specifically request "family-oriented multicultural events," "Greek festivals," and "multicultural education" programs, showing desire for celebration rather than just service provision goes beyond basic needs to community building.

Service Gaps Create Pleas for Help

Service and support themes appear in 23.1% of responses, with powerful testimonials like: "I suffered domestic violence... I struggle to survive... I haven't found help. I haven't even found a job."

These urgent pleas reveal service gaps particularly affect recent immigrants and vulnerable communities, with statistical analysis showing recent arrivals prioritize employment at nearly double the rate of established residents (21.9% vs 14.5%).

Representation Matters Across All Groups

Representation and voice themes emerge in 17.9% of suggestions, with consistent patterns across demographic groups regardless of English language ability or birthplace.

This suggests all residents - whether English or non-English speakers - want greater involvement in Council decisions. The universal nature of this theme indicates representation issues affect community cohesion across cultural boundaries.

5. Cross-cutting themes

The themes presented in this section primarily emerge from the community workshop, where participants collaboratively developed initiatives and identified patterns across their lived experiences. These insights are complemented by findings from surveys, interviews, and advisory committee consultations documented throughout this report.

1. Communities Want Active Outreach, Not Passive Welcome

The shift from "welcoming" to "reaching" represents a **fundamental reimagining** of Council's role. Communities don't want to be invited in - **they want Council to come to them**. This appears across multiple initiatives: bringing opportunities to students, co-locating services, and holding festivals in neighbourhoods rather than central locations.

Going Where Communities Are

The Business Walk initiative literally takes opportunities to young people, with "local schools walk along the high street" and businesses opening doors to students.

Similarly, the One Stop Shop co-locates services to "remove barriers" rather than expecting people to navigate multiple systems. This represents a complete inversion of traditional service delivery.

Meeting People in Their Spaces

Workshop participants emphasised the need for Council to be present in existing community spaces - from Preston Mosque to Northland Shopping Centre to neighbourhood streets.

The Festival Transformation initiative specifically calls for "multiple neighbourhood locations" rather than centralised events, recognising that true inclusion happens where people already gather.

“

Reaching rather than welcoming... going to **where communities already gather**, rather than trying to get them to come to us.

- Workshop Participant

2. Isolation is the Core Challenge Across All Demographics

Nearly every initiative addresses isolation in some form - revealing it as perhaps the most pervasive barrier to inclusion. This cuts across age, culture, and circumstance, suggesting successful inclusion strategies must prioritise connection-building over service delivery.

Isolation Across Life Stages

The workshop identified isolation affecting every age group: "international students" described as "very isolated", elderly CALD residents who are "isolated and struggling to navigate health services", and young people "nervous" about their first encounters with work.

Each initiative responds by creating connection points rather than just services.

Breaking Down Parallel Lives

Multiple initiatives address communities living side-by-side but separately. The Festival Transformation speaks of "neighbours who might never interact" while the Social Harmony programme monitors where communities aren't connecting.

The One Stop Shop explicitly aims to break down "cultural silos" where different groups access separate services.

“

An elderly person from a CALD background who has been **isolated** will receive health information in their language, **participate** in culturally familiar activities, and **share** their knowledge with younger generations.

- Workshop Participant

3. Young People are Seen as Critical Bridges

The workshop positioned young people as key agents of change - cultural bridges between their families and Australian systems, between communities and economic opportunity, and as future leaders who can reshape Darebin. This represents significant hope and responsibility placed on the next generation.

Navigating Between Worlds

Multiple initiatives recognise young people's unique position. The Young Leadership Workshops specifically target "children of immigrants (belonging to society)" who navigate between cultures.

The Business Walk creates pathways for "young people from refugee backgrounds" to enter the workforce, while the School Transition Hub supports families where children often translate and navigate systems for their parents.

From Vulnerable to Valuable

The initiatives reframe young people from problems to be solved to assets to be developed. Rather than seeing "young people facing discrimination" as victims, the Young Leadership programme builds their capacity to "make a difference" and become "youth advocates".

The Business Walk transforms "nervous" young people into confident workers with "first job" experiences.

“

Ali initially struggles with identity and belonging. Through the leadership workshops, they learn about their rights, develop confidence, and discover they can make a difference... Their friends and siblings follow, creating a ripple effect of engaged young citizens.

- Workshop Participant

4. Physical Infrastructure Matters for Belonging

Five initiatives directly address physical spaces – from prayer rooms to service hubs to festival locations. Communities understand that true inclusion requires tangible, visible changes to the built environment. You can't feel welcome in spaces that don't accommodate your basic needs.

Sacred and Everyday Needs

The Civic Spaces initiative explicitly calls for "prayer rooms" and "washrooms" (for ritual washing), recognising that religious practice requires specific infrastructure.

But it goes beyond religious needs – the One Stop Shop creates physical spaces where "all communities can engage", while festivals transform streets into "places where diversity is natural and celebrated".

Visibility as Validation

Physical changes send powerful messages. When Council installs prayer rooms, it says "Muslims belong here". When streets regularly host cultural festivals, diversity becomes normalised in public space.

The School Transition Hub creates a physical or virtual space that says "navigating education in a new culture is valid and supported".

“

Public/Council facilities have interfaith spaces appropriate for people to fulfil daily religious obligations... Access to prayer rooms on Council facilities

– Workshop Participant

5. Economic Inclusion Must Move Beyond 'Support' to 'Opportunity'

Rather than asking for more services or support, communities envisioned pathways to economic participation - jobs, businesses, contribution. The framing consistently emphasised empowerment over assistance, suggesting communities want to contribute economically, not just receive help.

Pathways Not Handouts

The Business Walk creates direct employment pathways where "Tuji visits businesses on Brunswick Walk" leading to "work experience" and eventually "their first job".

The Workforce Diversity initiative ensures Council itself becomes an employer of diverse communities.

Festival Transformation generates "economic benefits for local cultural businesses". None of these are welfare programmes - they're economic development strategies.

Challenging Deficit Thinking

The One Stop Shop explicitly challenges the "assumption that diverse communities are disempowered", instead focusing on "empowerment".

The shift from seeing CALD communities as needing support to seeing them as economic contributors represents a fundamental reframing of diversity from burden to asset.

“

Distribution of resources... the government's utility is that we take from who can afford to pay up and redistribute it to who [is] less capable of affording resources... if this action plan can contribute to that happening, then good

- Workshop Participant

Thank you

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A. Appendix: Advisory Committee

Engagement Summary

The engagement process included consultations with Council Advisory Committees during the 8-week engagement phase, conducted between April and June 2025. These structured conversations explored current inclusion challenges, successful initiatives, and future priorities for cultural diversity and inclusion.

Engagement Approach

- 45-60 minute structured conversations were conducted during regular committee meetings
- Participatory methods were used to identify gaps, opportunities, and priority actions
- Pre-reading materials were provided to maximise discussion time
- Documentation was shared early to allow for asynchronous input where needed

Key Thematic Findings

- The need to move beyond treating committees as proxies for genuine community engagement
- Recognition that conventional approaches like surveys and formal workshops were insufficient for meaningful engagement
- Importance of addressing structural, historical and current inequities experienced by communities of colour

- Committees emphasised the critical importance of First Nations perspectives in guiding the overall consultation approach
- Members highlighted the disconnect between Council services and the most disadvantaged areas, particularly in East Reservoir and East Preston
- Strong consensus emerged around the need for multi-departmental approaches to address various community needs simultaneously

Implications for the CDIP

The advisory committee consultations revealed that success would be measured by:

- Equitable distribution of resources to communities with the greatest need
- Building genuine relationships rather than transactional engagements

B. Appendix: Stakeholder Interview Findings

Stakeholder Interviews Summary

The engagement process included in-depth interviews with Council staff, community leaders, and representatives from key organisations serving culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. This also included engagement with community elders, including members of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) Elders group. These 45-60 minute structured conversations were conducted between April and June 2025, exploring inclusion challenges, successful initiatives, and future priorities.

Engagement Approach

- One-on-one structured conversations with 10 key stakeholders
- Focused on building upon existing relationships to enrich understanding
- Representation ensured across the organisation, different cultural communities and sectors
- Flexible scheduling to accommodate stakeholder availability
- Engagement with community elders, including consultation with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) Elders, to ensure First Nations perspectives informed the consultation approach

Key Thematic Findings

- Stark socioeconomic divide between north and south Darebin, with northern areas experiencing an "85+ percentile discrepancy" in disadvantage
- Communities in East Reservoir and East Preston had been historically "overlooked" by Council services
- Two-thirds of residents were unsure how to engage with Council processes, creating a significant civic knowledge gap

Successful Engagement Approaches

- "Go to where they already gather, rather than trying to get them to come to us... earn their trust and then offer something worthwhile"
- Multi-departmental approaches proved most effective (e.g., Community Safety Forums addressing multiple needs simultaneously)
- Working through trusted intermediaries and community organisations proved essential for reaching marginalised groups

Implications for the CDIP

- Focused on the need to actively bring Council services to underserved communities
- Targeting systematic racism and workplace discrimination, particularly affecting refugees, limited English speakers, and visible minorities

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage Aboriginal corporation (WWCHAC)

On 25 September 2025, Darebin Council officers consulted with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) Policy Subcommittee regarding the development of Council's Cultural Diversity & Inclusion Plan.

The subcommittee comprised Elders Auntie Irene Morris, Auntie Georgina Nicholson, Auntie Alice Kolasa, Uncle Tony Garvey, and Uncle Jason Tweedie, alongside community representatives Emma Mildenhall, Lily Moran, Wade Garvey, and Anthony Huber.

Engagement Approach

- The consultation prioritised Elders' perspectives on cultural inclusion, ensuring First Nations viewpoints would fundamentally inform the plan's development.
- The session explored how Traditional Owner sovereignty must underpin all diversity initiatives, with flexible discussion accommodating cultural protocols and Elder availability.

Key Thematic Findings

- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture must be the bedrock of all diversity initiatives
- Traditional Owners must lead cultural inclusion. It's impossible without their leadership
- Anglo-Australians are migrants/colonial settlers, not the default culture

Critical Requirements

- Council cannot welcome people to Wurundjeri Country. Must collaborate with WWCHAC for proper welcomes before any Council outreach.
- Citizenship ceremonies need restructuring for cultural safety and knowledge-sharing

- Community/staff education essential for genuine inclusion
- Move beyond information-sharing to truth-telling
- Foundational anti-Aboriginal racism affects all non-Anglo communities. Rising far-right extremism intensifies urgency.

Implications for the CDIP

- **Exceed Minimum Standards:** Elders explicitly stated Welcoming Cities framework represents "bare minimum standards"—Council must achieve much higher standards respecting Traditional Owner culture.
- **Centre Traditional Owner Leadership:** All cultural inclusion initiatives must have Traditional Owners leading design and implementation, not merely consulted.
- **Transform Civic Processes:** Restructure ceremonies and welcomes to embed cultural education and proper protocols.
- **Embed Truth-telling:** Integrate throughout all programs, especially citizenship ceremonies and education initiatives.

C. Appendix: Community Workshop & Initiatives

Community Led Initiatives

In our targeted engagement workshop, invited participants in six groups developed eleven initiatives, and most of the suggested initiatives **span multiple Welcoming Cities categories**.

- 1 Reaching Rather Than Welcoming**
Council shifts from passive to proactive outreach.

- 2 Business Walk Programme**
Staff visit local businesses to build trust.

- 3 Modelling Diversity in the Workforce**
Promote inclusive hiring and leadership.

- 4 Inclusive School Transition Hub**
Help families navigate schooling.

- 5 One Stop Shop for Community Services**
Centralised, accessible Council support.

- 6 Social Harmony & Prosperity Programme**
Activities to build intercultural connections.

- 7 Young Leadership Workshops**
Equip youth as leaders and cultural bridges.

- 8 Standing Up Against Racism Programme**
Anti-racism education and awareness.

- 9 Civic Spaces for All**
Ensure facilities reflect diverse needs.

- 10 Multicultural Festival Transformation**
Broaden festivals into ongoing celebrations.

- 11 Support Services for Older CALD Adults**
Services to reduce isolation and barriers.

Aligning to the Welcoming Cities Categories

Even though initiatives were developed within a focus category, each one cuts across multiple categories.

Category	1. Community Leadership	2. Social and Cultural Inclusion	3. Economic Development
Primary Initiatives	<div>3 Modelling Diversity in the Workforce</div> <div>8 Standing Up Against Racism Programme</div>	<div>1 Reaching Rather Than Welcoming</div> <div>6 Social Harmony & Prosperity Programme</div> <div>10 Multicultural Festival Transformation</div>	<div>2 Business Walk Programme</div> <div>3 Modelling Diversity in the Workforce</div>
Also Contributing	<div>1 Reaching Rather Than Welcoming</div>	<div>5 One Stop Shop for Community Services</div> <div>11 Support Services for Older CALD Adults</div>	<div>7 Young Leadership Workshops</div> <div>10 Multicultural Festival Transformation</div>

Aligning to the Welcoming Cities Categories

The initiatives developed cut across multiple categories.

Category	4. Learning and Skills Development	5. Civic Participation	6. Places and Spaces
Primary Initiatives	<div>4 Inclusive School Transition Hub (Kinder to School)</div> <div>7 Young Leadership Workshops</div>	<div>1 Reaching Rather Than Welcoming</div> <div>7 Young Leadership Workshops</div>	<div>5 One Stop Shop for Community Services</div> <div>9 Civic Spaces for All</div>
Also Contributing	<div>2 Business Walk Programme</div> <div>6 Social Harmony & Prosperity Programme</div>	<div>8 Standing Up Against Racism Programme</div> <div>5 One Stop Shop for Community Services</div>	<div>4 Inclusive School Transition Hub (Kinder to School)</div> <div>10 Multicultural Festival Transformation</div> <div>11 Support Services for Older CALD Adults</div>

Initiative 1: Reaching Rather Than Welcoming

Moving beyond "welcoming" to actively reaching out to communities, creating genuine participation and inclusion where all residents are co-creators of Darebin's future.

What's different in 2030?

- More participatory and inclusive approaches
- Circular information flow to community groups and leaders
- Engagement with women's groups, small business organisations
- University students and young children/family groups involved
- Grounded leaders

Who needs this the most?

- Migrant communities needing help with language barriers and cultural differences

Expected Impact

- More information and clarification in residents' own language
- Stronger community connections
- Reduced isolation
- Creation of community groups and registers

Implementation Requirements

- Community group registers
- Partnership with community leaders
- Systematic engagement processes

Story of change

The initiative transforms daily life by building new connections between communities, creating collaborative spaces, and establishing new approaches to service delivery that puts community members at the centre of decision-making.

Community
Leadership

Social & Cultural
inclusion

Economic
Development

Learning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 2: Business Walk Programme

A structured programme where local businesses open their doors to students, creating pathways for economic inclusion and career exploration.

What's different in 2030?

- Regular morning/afternoon sessions where local businesses are open to touring students from schools
- Businesses share information directly with young people about career opportunities
- Local schools walk along the high street visiting shops and workplaces
- Students hear about business operations and meet business owners firsthand

Who needs this the most?

- Young people facing discrimination
- Students from immigrant families
- Employees challenged to find work ready young people

Expected Impact

- Friendlier streets and engaged connections between local young people and small businesses
- Job opportunities and young people gaining first work experience
- Students developing career aspirations and understanding of local economy

Implementation Requirements

- Council to organise (LLEN can help)
- Business partnerships
- School coordination
- Inner Northern Local Learning & Employment Network involvement

Story of change

Tuji experiences their first work opportunity through the Business Walk programme. Initially nervous, they visit local businesses on Brunswick Walk and learn about different careers. This exposure leads to work experience opportunities and eventually their first job, transforming their confidence and connection to the community.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 3: Modelling Diversity in the Workforce

Council actively reflects the diversity of its community through deliberate recruitment and support of staff from diverse backgrounds.

What's different in 2030?

- Council is reflecting the diversity of its community in its own workforce
- Active recruitment from diverse backgrounds
- Support systems for staff from CALD backgrounds
- Visible representation at all levels of the organisation

Who needs this the most?

- People from diverse cultural backgrounds seeking employment
- Community members who need to see themselves reflected in Council services
- New migrants and refugees seeking professional opportunities

Expected Impact

- Community members see themselves reflected in Council staff
- Improved cultural competence in service delivery
- Role modelling for young people from diverse backgrounds
- Better understanding of community needs through lived experience of staff

Implementation Requirements

- Targeted recruitment strategies
- Cultural safety training
- Mentorship and support programmes
- Review of recruitment barriers

Story of change

The presence of diverse staff transforms service delivery as community members can communicate in their own languages, see their cultures represented, and receive culturally appropriate support. This creates a ripple effect of trust and engagement throughout the community.

Community
Leadership

Social & Cultural
inclusion

Economic
Development

Learning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 4: Inclusive School Transition Hub (Kinder to School)

A centralised hub providing culturally appropriate information and support for multicultural families navigating school transitions.

What's different in 2030?

- Centralised hub for information sharing via Kinder
- Culturally appropriate resources and support
- Multiple language resources available
- Connection points between families, kindergartens and schools
- Cultural ambassadors supporting transitions

Who needs this the most?

- Families with language barriers
- Parents unfamiliar with Australian education system
- Children from CALD backgrounds transitioning to school

Expected Impact

- Smoother transitions for children entering school
- Parents feel confident and informed about the education system
- Better school readiness for CALD children
- Stronger connections between families and schools

Implementation Requirements

- Physical or virtual hub infrastructure
- Multilingual resources and materials
- Cultural ambassadors or liaison officers
- Partnerships with kindergartens and schools

Story of change

Families from CALD backgrounds receive timely information in their own language about school enrollment, preparation, and expectations. Cultural ambassadors help them navigate the system, leading to confident parents and children who are ready for school. The barrier of not knowing "how things work" is removed, creating equal opportunities for all children.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 5: One Stop Shop for Community Services

A centralised, culturally and linguistically accessible service hub that removes barriers to accessing support and builds community connections.

What's different in 2030?

- One central location for all culturally and linguistically diverse community services
- Services available in multiple languages
- Co-located services reducing need to navigate multiple systems
- Focus on building connections between people, not just service delivery
- Community empowerment approach

Who needs this the most?

- Newly arrived refugees and migrants
- People from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Anyone facing language barriers

Expected Impact

- Easy, safe, and inclusive access to information and services
- Reduced service navigation challenges
- Community empowerment and skill development
- Stronger social connections between diverse communities
- Breaking down of cultural silos

Implementation Requirements

- Physical space or reimagined Council facilities
- Bilingual/bicultural staff and services
- Community co-location strategies

Story of change

All communities can engage and access services in one welcoming space. The centre becomes a place where people from diverse backgrounds not only receive services but also build relationships, share skills, and contribute to community life. The space normalises diversity and creates organic connections between different cultural groups.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 6: Social Harmony & Prosperity Programme

A comprehensive monitoring and action programme that documents social impacts and actively builds intercultural harmony through targeted interventions.

What's different in 2030?

- Active monitoring and documentation of social impacts
- Data-driven assessment of community social health
- Lessons learned are systematically captured and applied
- Proactive intervention when social cohesion is threatened
- Sound planning based on evidence

Who needs this the most?

- CALD communities experiencing marginalisation
- Communities where social tensions exist
- Areas with rapid demographic change

Expected Impact

- Better interaction among communities
- Better understanding of cultural values
- Cultural sensitivity embedded in all services
- Reduced social tensions
- Evidence-based programmes targeting real needs
- Shared value of CALD communities recognised

Implementation Requirements

- Data collection and monitoring systems
- Social cohesion metrics and indicators
- Regular community pulse surveys

Story of change

Through systematic monitoring and response, communities that previously experienced tension now celebrate together. The programme identifies early warning signs of division and implements targeted interventions – from cross-cultural events to dialogue programmes – that build understanding and connection before problems escalate.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 7: Young Leadership Workshops

Empowering young people from diverse backgrounds through leadership development that combines rights education with practical civic engagement skills.

What's different in 2030?

- Schools collaborate with Council to teach young people about their rights and responsibilities
- Young people from immigrant backgrounds gain confidence and trust in the system
- Better communication between Council and young communities
- Youth voice integrated into Council decision-making

Who needs this the most?

- Young students aged 12-18
- Children of immigrants (particularly those navigating between cultures)
- Young people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds

Expected Impact

- Increased civic participation from young diverse communities
- Young leaders emerging from CALD communities
- Better informed young citizens who know their rights
- Bridge-building between generations and cultures

Implementation Requirements

- Partnership with schools
- Community leaders as mentors
- Curriculum development on rights and civic participation
- Safe spaces for youth engagement
- Ongoing mentorship programmes

Story of change

Ali, a young person from a refugee background, initially struggles with identity and belonging. Through the leadership workshops, they learn about their rights, develop confidence, and discover they can make a difference. They become a bridge between their community and Council, eventually becoming a youth advocate.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 8: Standing Up Against Racism Programme

Council takes visible leadership in preventing racism through proactive interventions and systemic reform.

What's different in 2030?

- Council actively speaks out against racism (not just policies)
- Prevention-focused rather than incident-response only
- Systems reformed to eliminate unconscious bias
- Staff trained in cultural awareness and anti-racism

Who needs this the most?

- People of colour and CALD communities experiencing racism
- Anyone facing discrimination in public spaces

Expected Impact

- Community feels Council actively supports them
- Racist incidents decrease through prevention
- Bystanders become upstanders
- Darebin known as actively anti-racist

Implementation Requirements

- Genuine commitment (not tick-box exercise)
- Comprehensive training programmes
- Rapid response protocols
- Public awareness campaigns

Story of change

When incidents occur, there's immediate Council response. The community culture shifts - racism is actively challenged, and all backgrounds feel safe in public spaces.

Community
Leadership

Social & Cultural
inclusion

Economic
Development

Learning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 9: Civic Spaces for All

Transforming public and Council facilities to be truly inclusive spaces that accommodate diverse religious and cultural needs.

What's different in 2030?

- Inclusive spaces with prayer rooms
- Appropriate washroom facilities for religious practices
- Public facilities designed with cultural needs in mind
- Spaces that allow religious communities to practice their faith
- Reimagined Council spaces that welcome all

Who needs this the most?

- Religious communities (particularly Muslims requiring prayer spaces)
- People needing ritual washing facilities
- Faith communities currently without appropriate spaces

Expected Impact

- All communities feel welcome in Council facilities
- Increased usage of public spaces by diverse communities
- Religious and cultural practices normalised in public life
- Greater social cohesion through shared spaces

Implementation Requirements

- Retrofit existing Council facilities
- Include prayer/quiet rooms in new developments
- Install appropriate washing facilities
- Consult with faith communities on design

Story of change

A Muslim family that previously had to leave public events to find prayer spaces can now fully participate in community life. Council facilities become gathering places where different faith communities interact naturally. The presence of these facilities sends a powerful message that all cultures and faiths are valued in Darebin.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 10: Multicultural Festival Transformation

Year-round street festivals celebrating Darebin as an integrated community, not just "multicultural events."

What's different in 2030?

- Regular festivals throughout the year, not one-off events
- Celebrations of community, not just multiculturalism
- Food, music, dance bringing organic connections
- Cultural celebration part of everyday life

Who needs this the most?

- All communities seeking connection
- New arrivals sharing culture
- Long-term residents understanding neighbourhood change
- Young people exploring cultural identity

Expected Impact

- Natural community mixing through food/music/dance
- Cross-cultural connections become normal
- Economic benefits for cultural businesses
- Reduced isolation

Implementation Requirements

- Council leadership and year-round funding
- Community-led programming
- Multiple neighbourhood locations
- Cultural organisation partnerships
- Support for performers and food vendors

Story of change

Regular street festivals where neighbours naturally connect. Greek families share dance with Vietnamese neighbours; African drummers teach local kids; everyone enjoys Middle Eastern food. Not "multicultural events" but Darebin celebrations where diversity is natural and celebrated.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

Initiative 11: Support Services for Older CALD Adults

Comprehensive support system enabling older people from diverse backgrounds to maintain independence, health, and social connection.

What's different in 2030?

- Culturally-specific aged care services
- Health professionals understanding cultural needs
- Social programmes preventing isolation
- Intergenerational knowledge sharing

Who needs this the most?

- Elderly from diverse backgrounds with limited English
- Isolated older CALD residents
- Families caring for elderly relatives

Expected Impact

- Reduced isolation, improved health outcomes
- Elders maintain independence longer
- Families supported in caring roles
- Elder wisdom valued and shared

Implementation Requirements

- Multilingual health services
- Cultural training for aged care providers
- Community centres with elderly programmes
- Transport assistance
- Partnership with ethnic organisations

Story of change

Previously isolated CALD elders now attend social gatherings, receive health information in their language, participate in cultural activities, and share wisdom with younger generations. They thrive with independence and support, while families know they're connected and cared for.

Community
LeadershipSocial & Cultural
inclusionEconomic
DevelopmentLearning & skills
development

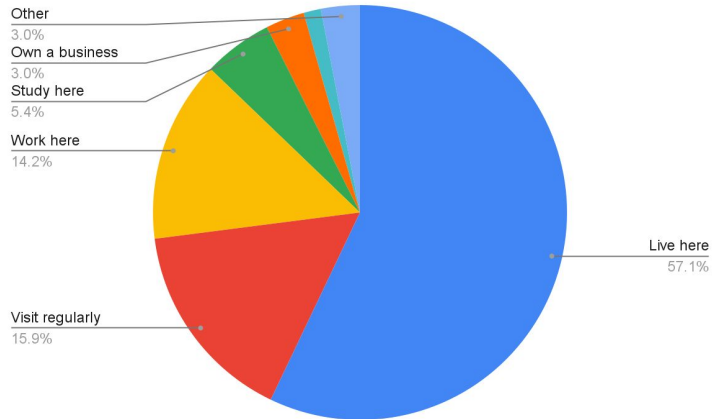
Civic Participation

Places & Spaces

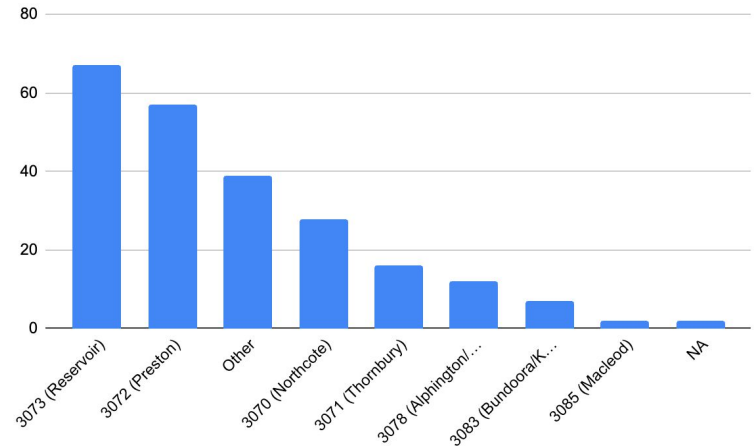
D. Appendix: Full Survey Data

Section 1: About You

Question 1: Relationship to Darebin City

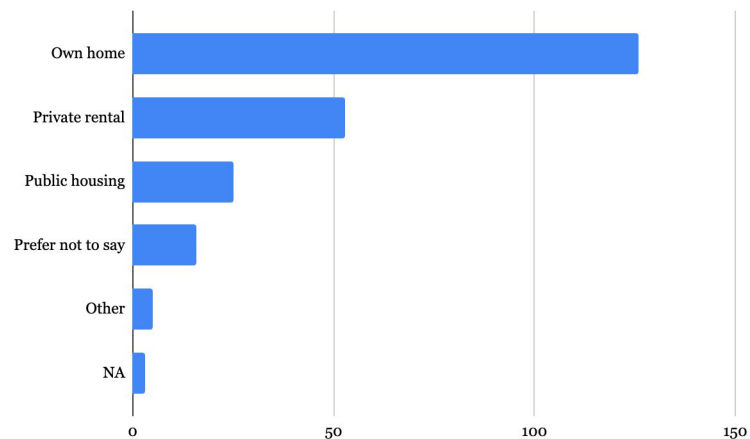


Question 2: Postcode Distribution

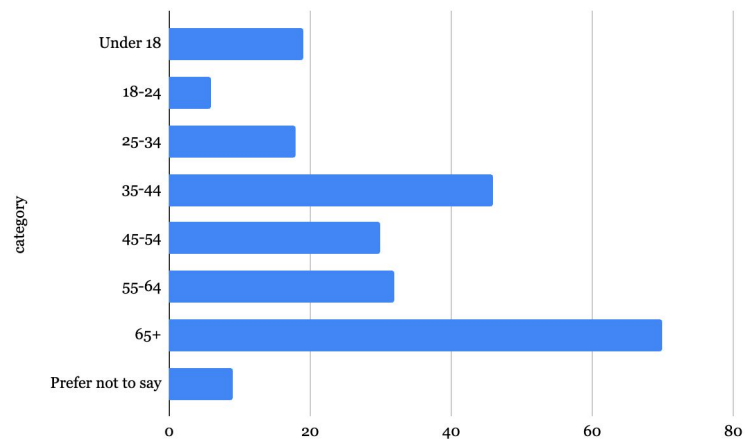


Section 1: About You

Question 3: Housing Circumstance

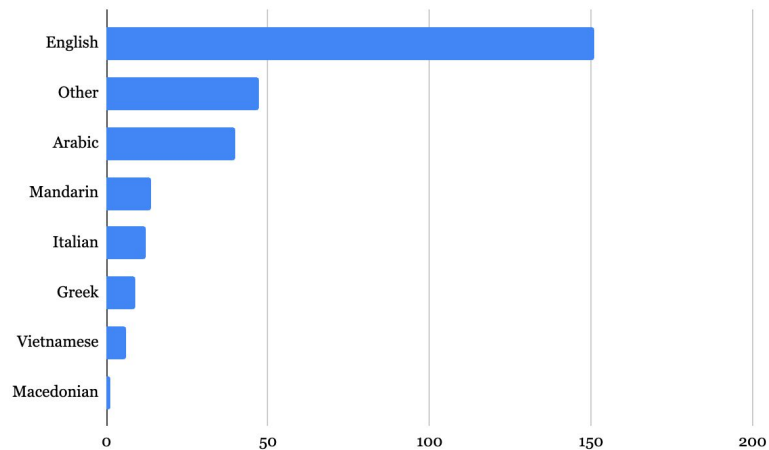


Question 4: Age Band Distribution

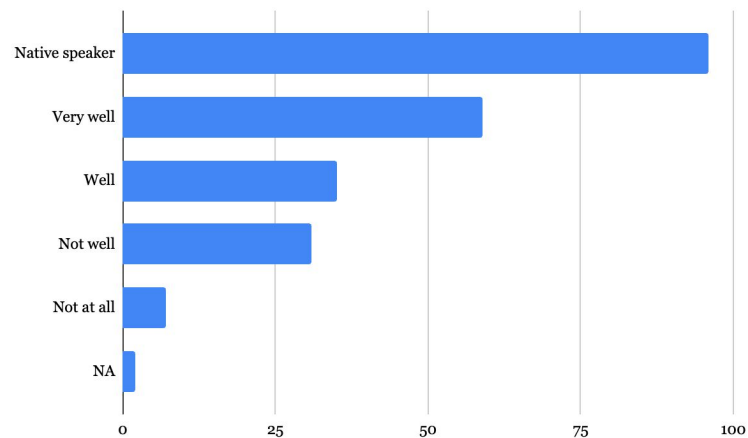


Section 1: About You

Question 5: Languages Spoken at Home

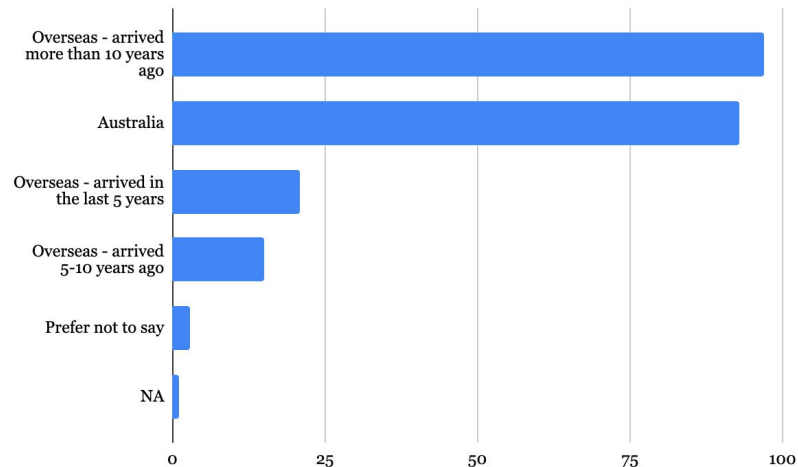


Question 6: How well do you speak English?

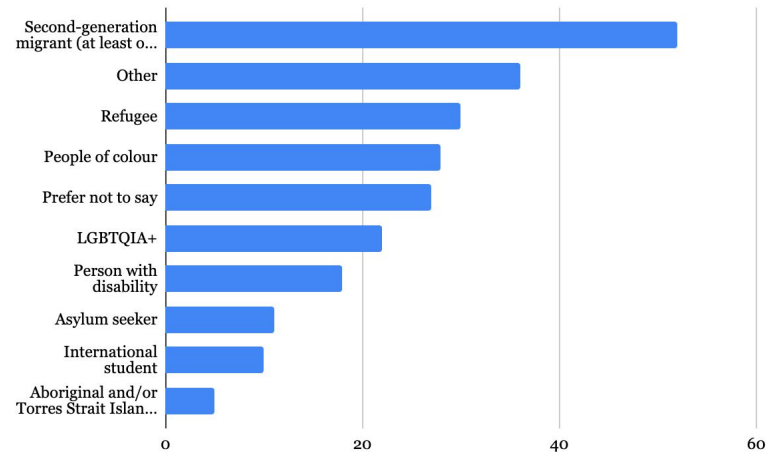


Section 1: About You

Question 7: Where were you born?

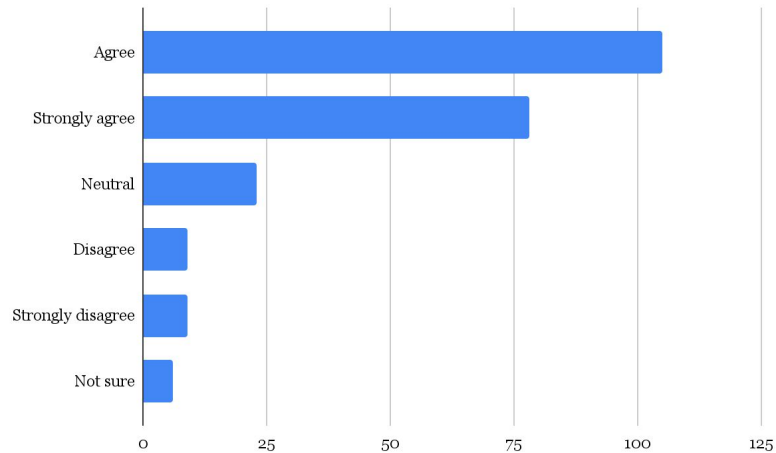


Question 8: Do you identify with any of these communities?

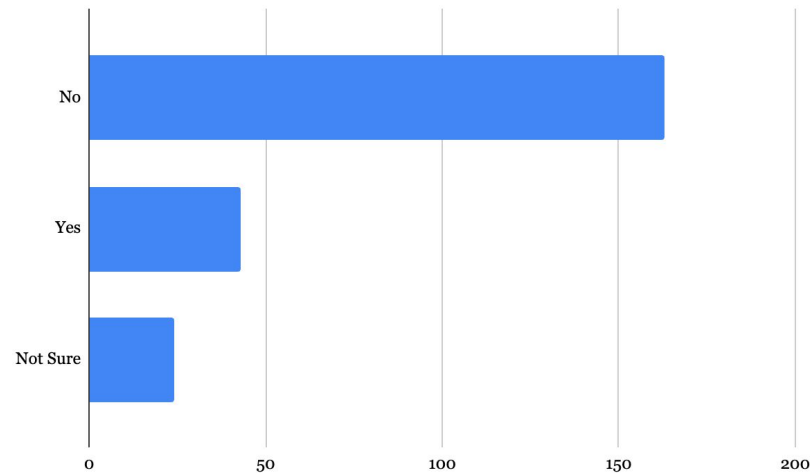


Section 2: Belonging & Inclusion

Question 9: I feel accepted and respected in the Darebin Community

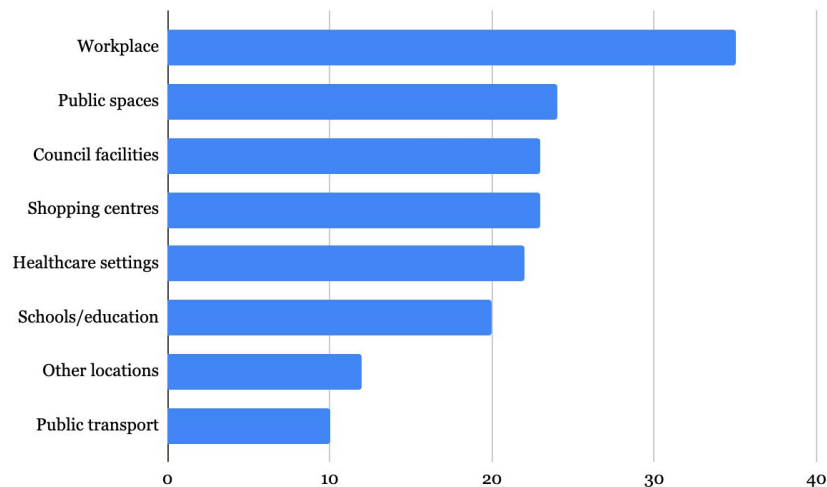


Question 10: Have you experienced discrimination in Darebin in the last 12 months?



Section 2: Belonging & Inclusion

Question 11: If yes, where did this occur?

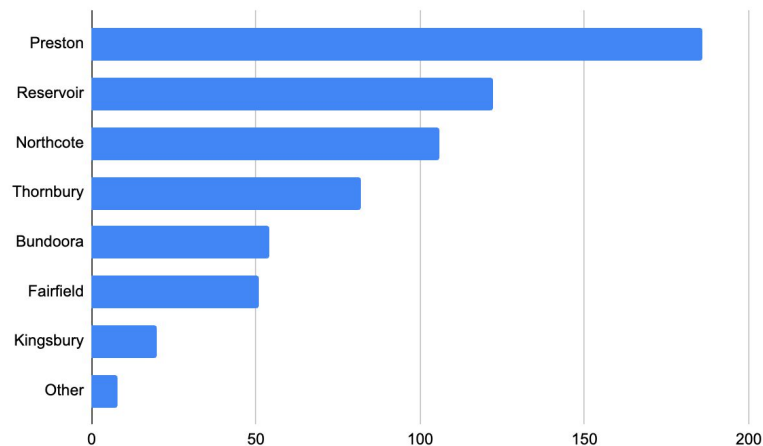


Question 12: Tell us about a recent moment when you felt welcome or unwelcome in Darebin.

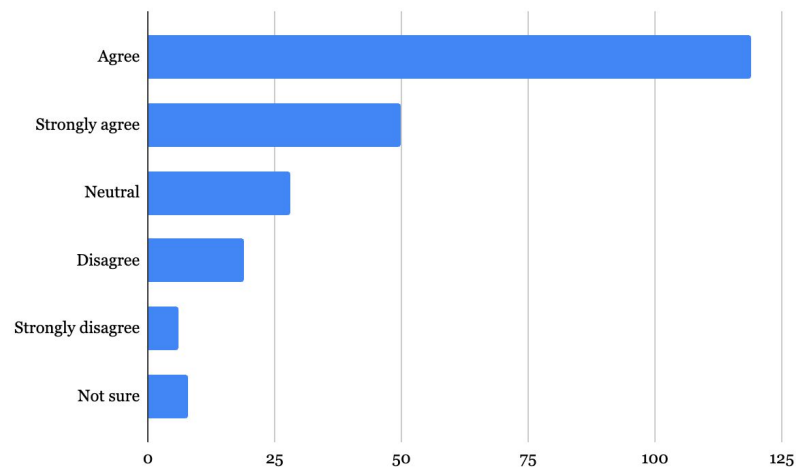
(This was a qualitative open text field and its results have been used to inform the findings, but are not possible to graph.)

Section 3: Places & Spaces

Question 13: Which Darebin areas do you visit most often?

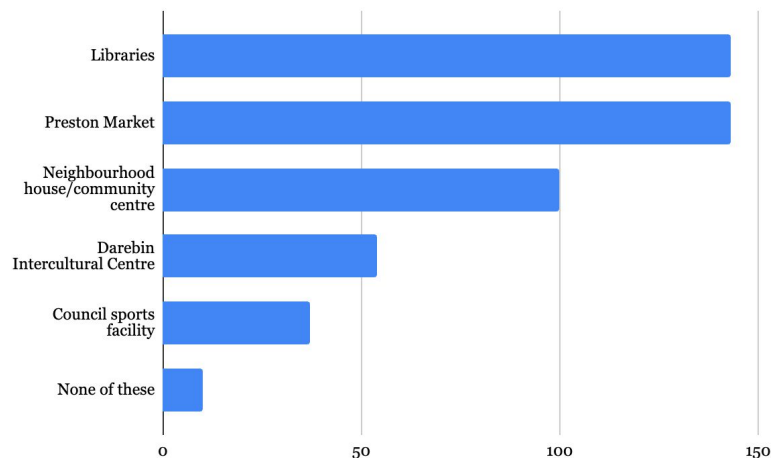


Question 14: Public Spaces feel safe and welcoming for me and my community.



Section 3: Places & Spaces

Question 15: Have you visited any of these places in the last 12 months?

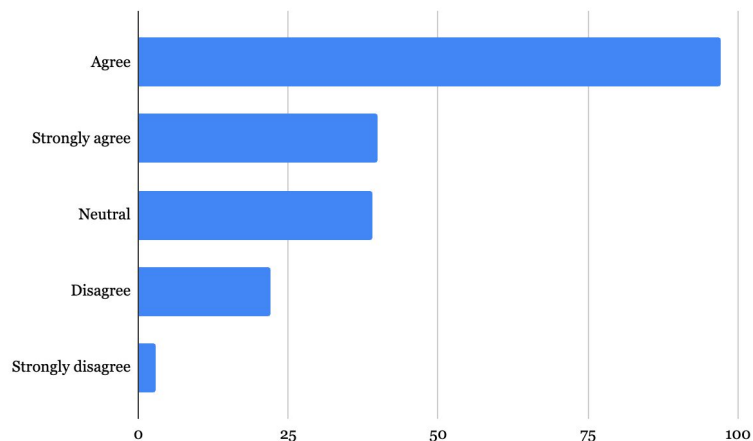


Question 16: What would make these places more welcoming?

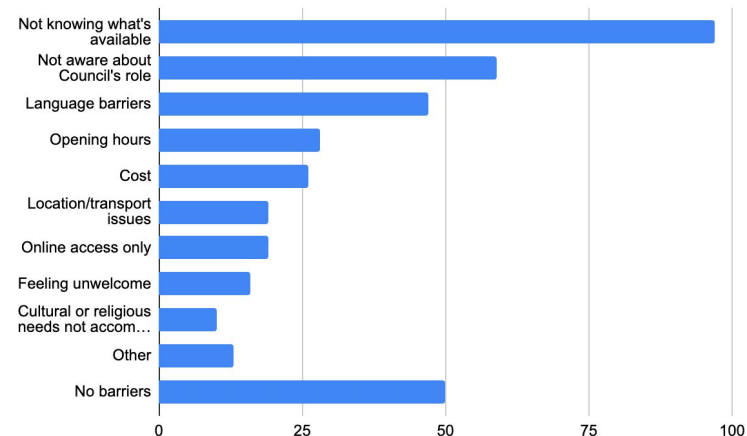
(This was a qualitative open text field and its results have been used to inform the findings, but are not possible to graph.)

Section 4: Services & Support

Question 17: I know how to access Council services when I need them

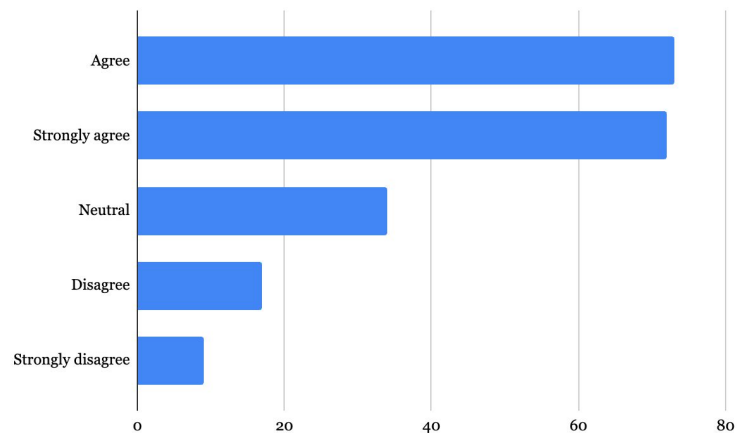


Question 18: What barriers make it difficult to access Council services?



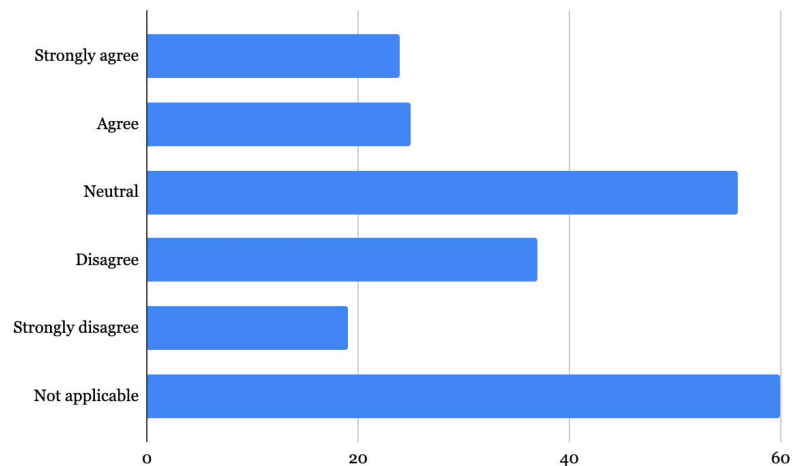
Section 4: Services & Support

Question 19: I can easily find information from Council in my preferred language

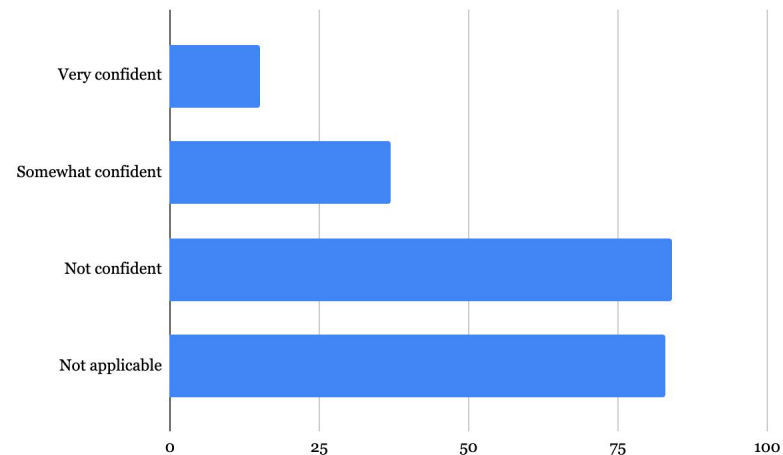


Section 5: Economic Opportunity

Question 20: Finding work or business opportunities in Darebin is difficult for people from my cultural background.

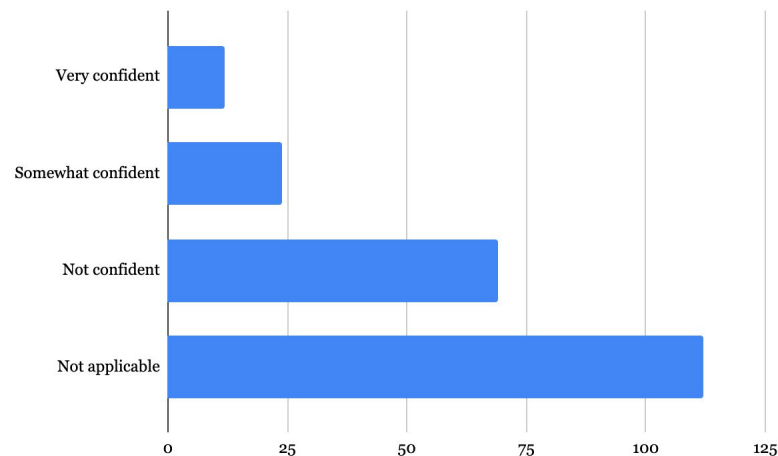


Question 21: I am confident about knowing where to get help to Find Work

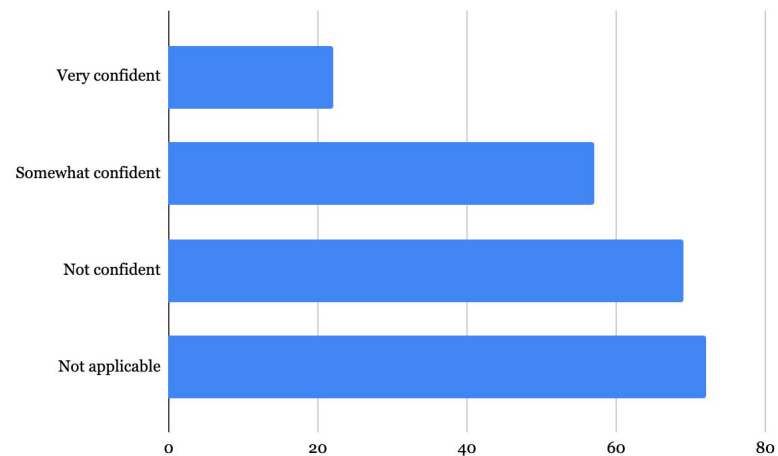


Section 5: Economic Opportunity

Question 22: I am confident about knowing where to get help to Start a Business

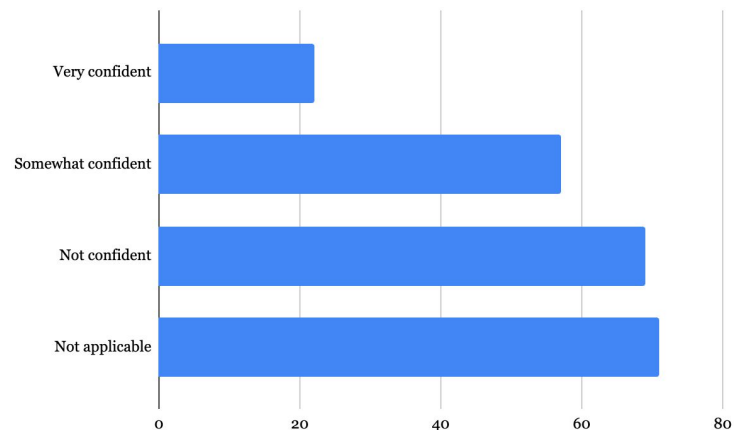


Question 23: I am confident about knowing where to get help to Get Overseas Qualifications Recognised

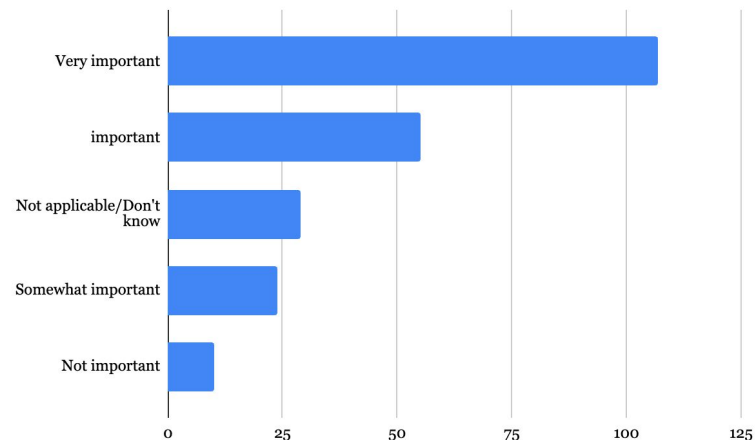


Section 5: Economic Opportunity

Question 24: I am confident about knowing where to get help to Access Financial Support Services

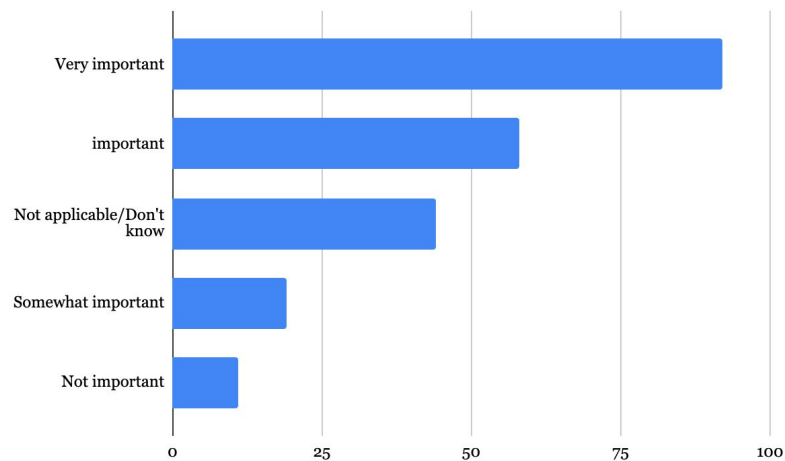


Question 25: How important are more local job and employment programs?

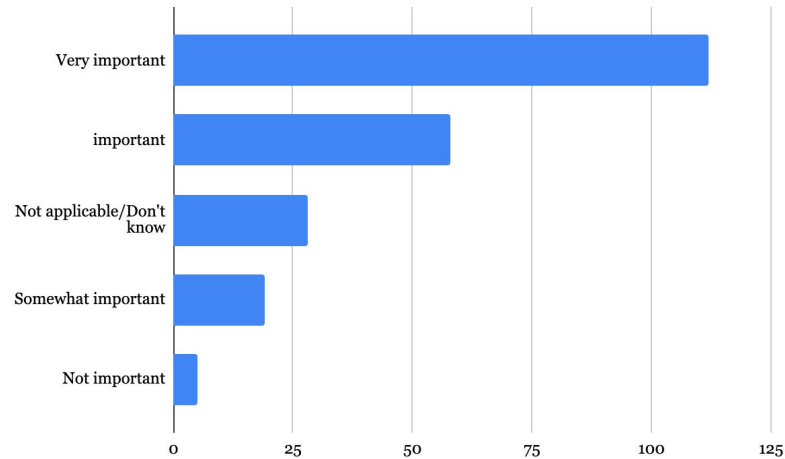


Section 5: Economic Opportunity

Question 26: How important is Support for small businesses owned by people from diverse backgrounds?

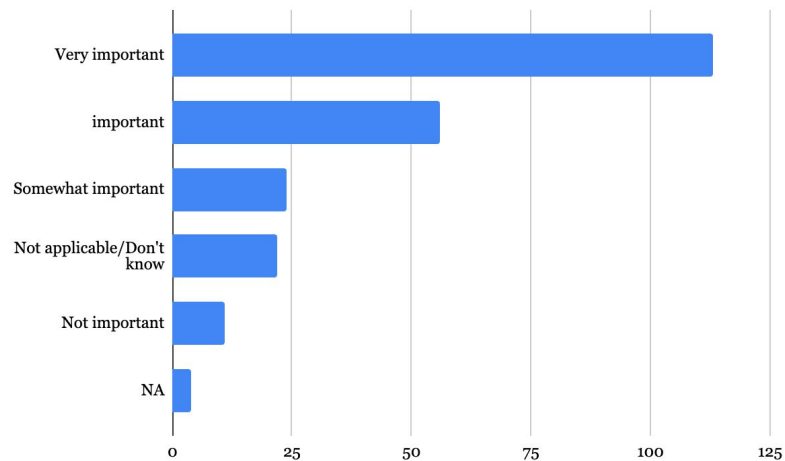


Question 27: How important is Recognition of overseas qualifications and experience to improving economic opportunities for your community in Darebin?

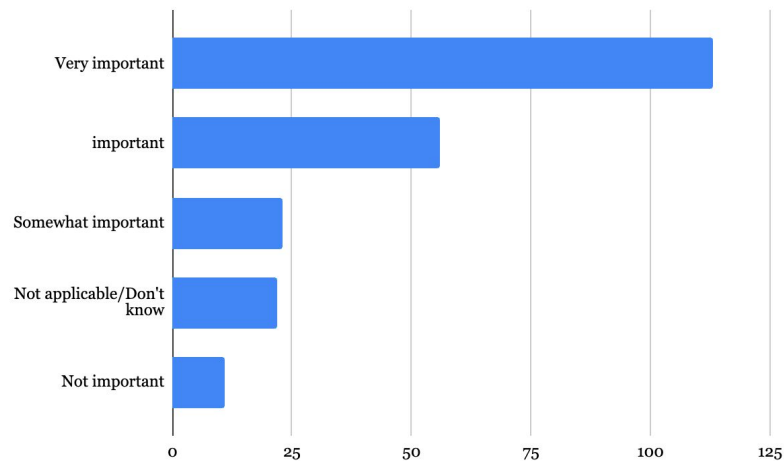


Section 5: Economic Opportunity

Question 28: How important is Training & Skills Programs to improving economic opportunities for your community in Darebin?

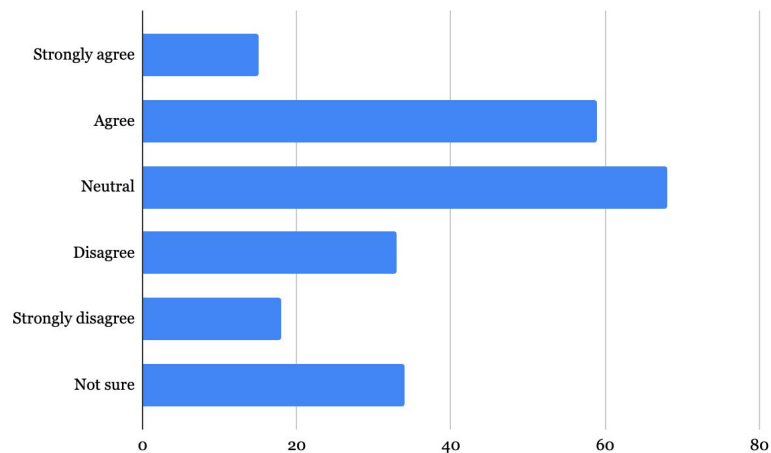


Question 29: How important is English Language support for workplace communication?

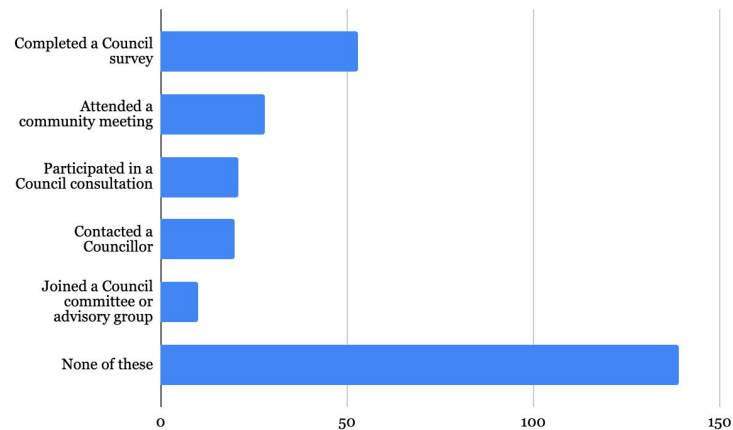


Section 6: Participation & Voice

Question 30: I know how to have my say on Council decisions?



Question 31: In the last 12 months, I have:



Section 7: Community Priorities

Question 32: What areas should council focus on to make Darebin more inclusive?

