



Excelling
WELCOMING CITY

City of Darebin

Accreditation Report



Welcoming Cities has awarded Darebin City Council with Excelling Welcoming City status.

An Excelling Welcoming City projects its reputation as a sector leader and is a prominent member of the Welcoming Cities network.

Introduction

Welcoming Cities supports local councils, and their communities, to work towards greater social, cultural, civic and economic success. Assessment and accreditation as a Welcoming City allows councils to benchmark progress and identify gaps in their welcoming and inclusion practice.

The **benefits of Accreditation** include:

- Increasing the impact of council initiatives for the whole community
- Providing a mechanism to plan for improvement and change
- A positive and welcoming reputation; and,
- Opportunities for shared learning.



City of Darebin profile

In the 2021 Census, the population of Darebin was 148,570. Darebin is a large city in Victoria, amongst the other 79 councils. It is a fast-growing municipality with a population increase of 1.26%.

Darebin is home to people from diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages. The First Peoples associated with the Darebin area were the Aboriginal people known as Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. In 2021, 1.0% of Darebin's population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The City of Darebin is home to a highly diverse population, with 31.4% reporting being born overseas. Darebin is home to people from more than 153 countries speaking more than 147 different languages at home.

In 2022, the City of Darebin had a 52.0 Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion, 0.23% higher than the national average. The democracy index of the City of Darebin stood at 48.4, which was 2.47% higher than the national average. Darebin has excelled in the domain of Social Inclusion and Justice, and Acceptance and Rejection on the Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion in 2023, with the indicators being significantly higher than the nation's average.¹

31.4%

residents born
overseas

153

from 153
countries

48.4

democracy
index

¹ Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, Social Cohesion Compass
scanloninstitute.org.au/social-cohesion-compass

Executive Summary

The City of Darebin is a diverse and inclusive city that prides itself on being welcoming to all. Darebin City Council has demonstrated a solid commitment to the community in all its diversity to ensure equitable access, social inclusion, economic development opportunities, and respect for human rights for all people who live and visit the city.

The Darebin City Council submitted the evidence for an Accreditation Assessment against the Welcoming Cities Standard at the Excelling Level to Welcoming Cities. The Accreditation was undertaken according to the agreed timeline.

The benefits of the Accreditation include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing the impact of council initiatives for the whole community
- Providing a mechanism to strategically plan for improvement and change
- A positive and welcoming reputation
- Opportunities for shared learning

Welcoming Cities recognises and commends the ongoing work of Darebin City Council and the genuine efforts undertaken to build an inclusive community where all residents have a sense of belonging regardless of ethnicity, cultural background, or religion.

Welcoming Cities has awarded Darebin City Council with Excelling Welcoming City status. An Excelling Welcoming City projects its reputation as a sector leader and is a prominent member of the Welcoming Cities network.

The Excelling Welcoming City status was awarded based on an average score out of 5 for the six categories of the Welcoming Cities Standard Version 2.0 (2018-2024) – Leadership, Social and Cultural Inclusion, Economic Development, Learning and Skills Development, Civic Participation and Places and Spaces. Evidence was assessed against an Assessment Rubric of Compliance ([Appendix A](#)).



Darebin City Council is highly encouraged to apply for the Mentoring level of the Welcoming Cities accreditation due to their strong performance and deep commitment to welcoming practices. This recommendation comes with the expectation that Darebin City Council will implement the outlined opportunities and recommendations to further enhance their practice, programs and initiatives.

Assessment aim

The Accreditation Assessment aims to determine whether the Darebin City Council is at the 'Excelling' stage of compliance with the Welcoming Cities Standard. Excelling Welcoming Cities project their reputation as sector leaders and are prominent members of the Welcoming Cities network.

Methodology

The assessment provides the Darebin City Council with a Welcoming Cities Accreditation that includes constructive feedback on all Welcoming Cities Standard categories by identifying strengths and opportunities.

The assessment comprised a review of evidence submitted by the Darebin City Council to Welcoming Cities. This evidence was scored against each indicator of the Welcoming Cities Standard. The Darebin City Council's evidence included documents representing policy, internal and external programming, and practices.

After submission, Welcoming Cities conducted three consultation meetings with Councillors, the Mayor, council staff and community members. The focus groups were conducted to gain a clearer insight into council-wide community engagement processes and practices.

Welcoming Cities assessed all documentary evidence against the Assessment Rubric of Compliance ([Appendix A](#)), marking each indicator with a score out of 5. The Assessment Rubric was developed in 2020 by the Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre (MMIC) in consultation with Welcoming Cities, with scores related to the level of compliance.

Desktop review

The evidence presented for review shows the council's policies being applied council-wide and community-wide. It showcases several successful council initiatives that promote Darebin as a highly diverse community and harness the power of its diversity. The evidence includes numerous stories of success and demonstrates the council's commitment to being a sector leader. Welcoming Cities acknowledges the outstanding progress made by Darebin City Council and celebrates the results achieved.

Accreditation result

Criterion	Average
1.1	4.9
1.2	5.0
1.3	4.4
1.4	5.0
2.1	5.0
2.2	4.9
2.3	4.6
2.4	4.5
2.5	4.9
3.1	4.9
3.2	4.8
3.3	4.0
3.4	4.8
4.1	4.6
4.2	4.9
5.1	4.8
5.2	3.2
5.3	4.3
5.4	4.8
6.1	4.8
6.2	5.0
6.3	4.8
Total	4.7

Leadership

Overview

Darebin City Council fosters a welcoming and inclusive community through its robust strengths and proactive pursuit of opportunities. From celebrating cultural diversity with numerous events and initiatives that promote positive messaging, to advocating for equity and human rights through comprehensive frameworks, the council demonstrates a deep commitment to social justice. Opportunities to further enhance community dialogue and establish rigorous monitoring frameworks are recognised and poised for implementation, ensuring continual improvement and responsiveness to community needs. With a strong emphasis on representative engagement and collaboration through various committees, Darebin City Council stands out for its proactive approach to creating a cohesive and supportive environment where all residents are valued and included.

Strengths

First Nations Engagement and Work Towards Reconciliation

Darebin City Council has demonstrated a profound commitment to First Nations engagement and reconciliation, as evidenced by numerous initiatives and strategic actions. Central to this commitment is the celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through various events that actively involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. Notable among these is the council's organisation of film festivals and cultural events that highlight the rich heritage and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These events serve as a platform for cultural expression and foster greater community understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

A cornerstone of Darebin's reconciliation efforts is the establishment of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee. This committee plays a critical role in shaping and monitoring the Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan. By ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are integral to council decision-making, the committee helps to align council initiatives with the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The council's collaborative approach extends to partnerships with numerous Aboriginal organisations. These collaborations enhance the council's ability to deliver culturally appropriate programs and services. By pooling resources and expertise, Darebin City Council and its partner organisations are better equipped to effectively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, ensuring their cultural, social, and economic needs are met.

Leadership within the council is also a significant driver of its reconciliation agenda. The Mayor and council members have consistently demonstrated their commitment through public speeches and ongoing encouragement of staff to engage deeply with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This leadership fosters a workplace culture that values continuous learning, active engagement, and a genuine commitment to making a difference in reconciliation.

Darebin City Council's commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is also formalised in a strong statement of commitment. This statement underpins the council's policies and actions, ensuring that its work is guided by principles of respect, inclusion, and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The council's memorandum of understanding with Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) and the provision of rate concessions for 87 AHV properties highlight its practical commitment to reconciliation. The associated action plan focuses on the wellbeing, participation, and inclusion of AHV renters in council services and programs, demonstrating a holistic approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Facilitation of Learning Opportunities

Darebin City Council excels in creating learning opportunities for migrant communities to learn about First Nations cultures. The Council organises various events that connect migrant communities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A notable example is the NAIDOC Yarning Conferences for schools, which provide students with immersive cultural experiences. These conferences help young people better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, fostering respect and appreciation.

Another important initiative is the annual Ganbu Gulin event, held on the first weekend in September. Co-designed with the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Traditional Owners, Ganbu Gulin celebrates First Nations peoples and the wider Darebin community. This event offers the Darebin community, including migrants, a chance to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through various activities and presentations. These initiatives by Darebin City Council promote knowledge sharing and cultural learning, contributing to a more inclusive and cohesive community.

Partnerships for a Welcoming Culture

Darebin City Council demonstrates a significant strength in fostering a welcoming culture through proactive partnerships with diverse stakeholders. The Darebin Welcoming Cities Community Reference Group is central to this effort, comprising community members, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage representatives, and individuals from local multicultural and multifaith organisations. This inclusive approach underscores the council's commitment to social justice and supporting culturally and linguistically diverse residents. Darebin City Council's advocacy against racism and support for refugees and asylum seekers further exemplify its dedication to creating an inclusive community.

In addition to these efforts, Darebin City Council supports several committees that promote inclusivity and diversity within the community. These include the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee, the Darebin Interfaith Council, and the Darebin LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee. Each committee serves as a platform for advocacy, dialogue, and policy development to address their respective communities' specific needs and issues.

Through these committees, Darebin City Council strengthens its capacity to promote understanding, respect, and social cohesion across the community by fostering partnerships and maintaining active engagement with multicultural stakeholders. These initiatives collectively create a welcoming environment where diversity is celebrated and every resident feels valued and included.

Promotion of Positive Messaging and Community-wide Benefits of Migration

Darebin City Council excels in promoting positive messaging and highlighting the community-wide benefits of migration through a comprehensive approach that includes cultural events, community awards, and internal initiatives.

The Darebin Libraries Event Framework shows this commitment by organising at least 10 events annually targeting culturally and linguistically diverse and new arrival communities. These events include storytelling sessions, author talks, and panels on community issues, which celebrate personal stories, heritage, traditions, literature, and cuisine.

Darebin Libraries provides access to migrant stories and contributions through its extensive literature, music, art, and film collection. This initiative enriches the library's resources and promotes understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures within the community.

Internally, the council is proactive in promoting diversity awareness among its staff. The CEO's messaging, including naming Harmony Day as The Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, reflects a deep understanding of the community's diversity and the ongoing challenges of racial discrimination. Internal training programs on unconscious bias and the benefits of migration underscore the council's commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

Darebin Community Awards recognise and honour Elder and Emerging CALD community leaders who significantly contribute to cultural diversity, equality, and equity. These awards serve as a testament to Darebin City Council's dedication to promoting positive messaging and celebrating migrants' valuable contributions to the broader community.

Events and Celebrations

Darebin City Council excels in organising events that celebrate cultural diversity, promote the stories of refugees and migrants, and address community needs effectively. The Darebin Library Strategy 2020-2024 prioritises these initiatives, with annual evaluations ensuring they meet community expectations and are responsive to feedback. Library staff actively promotes and evaluates events, collecting valuable insights to improve future programming. Partnerships with stakeholders enhance event impact, including translating materials into local languages and adapting to online formats during the pandemic. The council's use of rigorous checklists ensures events uphold high standards and effectively engage diverse community groups.

Advocacy and Communications

Darebin City Council is firmly committed to advocacy and communication through its "Towards Equality - Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029." This framework guides the council in addressing barriers to inclusion faced by Darebin community members. It emphasises diversity, inclusion, equity, and human rights across all council operations, promoting a culture of respect and social justice.

The framework highlights Darebin City Council's firm stand against discrimination, including racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and injustices such as poverty. By integrating these values into its organisational practices and decision-making processes, the council actively works to create an inclusive and equitable community environment.

Darebin City Council engages stakeholders and raises awareness about these crucial issues through effective advocacy and communication strategies. This approach helps mobilise community action and supports ongoing efforts to achieve equality and human rights for all Darebin residents.

Social and Cultural Inclusion

Overview

Darebin City Council excels in social and cultural inclusion by promoting health and well-being, providing equitable recruitment and language support, and facilitating diverse cultural expressions. The council's commitment to intersectionality and fighting racism contributes to a welcoming and safe environment for all residents. By actively supporting community groups, ensuring language accessibility, and addressing health and social needs comprehensively, Darebin fosters a vibrant, inclusive, and cohesive community.

Strengths

Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Darebin City Council excels in promoting health and wellbeing through comprehensive policies and a deep understanding of community needs. The council's health and wellbeing policy is backed by thorough analysis and addresses the community's diverse needs, including mainstream and multicultural services. Their "Get Active in Darebin" initiative offers numerous activities to enhance physical fitness across all demographic groups.

The council's support extends to elderly residents, with an advisory committee providing valuable recommendations for tailored health and wellbeing services. Initiatives such as the one-year Free Reservoir Centre Membership application demonstrate their commitment to making health resources accessible to all.

Additionally, Darebin City Council encourages walking and cycling by hosting bicycle repair events and distributing bicycles to those in need. These efforts promote physical health and foster a more active and connected community.

Language Aides Remuneration

Darebin City Council stands out for its practice of verifying the language skills of its staff and providing a Language Aide allowance. This remuneration acknowledges the valuable cultural competency and language skills that bilingual workers bring to the workplace. In many organisations, bilingual employees are not compensated for these essential skills. By recognising and rewarding their contributions, Darebin City Council enhances its cultural inclusivity and supports a more effective and responsive service delivery to its diverse community.

Language Access and Use of Translators

Darebin City Council ensures language access by implementing thorough checklists and guidelines for the appropriate use of translators. This practice ensures that language services are used effectively and appropriately, enhancing communication with non-English speaking residents. Additionally, the council makes information available in many community languages, further supporting inclusivity and accessibility.

Equity and Intersectionality

Darebin City Council demonstrates a strong commitment to equity and intersectionality by applying its Equity Impact Assessment. This tool ensures that all strategies, policies, and practices are reviewed through an intersectional lens, considering the diverse and overlapping identities within the community. The council effectively addresses its residents' varied needs and challenges by systematically incorporating this approach.

Facilitation of Diverse Cultural Expression

Darebin City Council demonstrates a strong commitment to facilitating diverse cultural expression with the help of its Social Inclusion team. The council supports over 50 community groups that regularly celebrate special cultural events, enriching the calendar of activities for both migrant and receiving communities. By providing a platform for these cultural celebrations, Darebin City Council promotes understanding, appreciation, and connection among residents from different backgrounds.

Economic Development

Overview

Darebin City Council excels in economic development through its inclusive recruitment policies, proactive skill-building initiatives, and strong advocacy for inclusive employment. The council effectively fosters a diverse, skilled, and inclusive local economy by embedding equity and human rights into hiring practices, facilitating business development workshops, and working closely with diverse community groups and job seekers.

Strengths

Recruitment Policies and Practices

Darebin City Council excels in its recruitment policy by embedding equity, inclusion, accessibility, and human rights into all recruitment and selection practices. This commitment ensures a discrimination-free process, encouraging applications and employment from diverse and underrepresented groups. Hiring managers are required to complete a Diversity and Inclusion Workshop, which challenges their attitudes and beliefs to address bias and understand the impacts of power, privilege, and structural discrimination. The council utilises tools such as a gender decoder and inclusive language when developing position descriptions.

Since June 2021, Darebin City Council has established employment partnerships with community organisations, employment services, tertiary education networks, and non-profits. Additionally, positions can be advertised in multiple languages and non-English media to attract a broader and more diverse applicant pool. This comprehensive approach underscores the council's dedication to fostering an equitable and inclusive workplace.

Growing Local Knowledge and Skills

Darebin City Council is dedicated to enhancing local skills and knowledge through various initiatives to foster economic development. The council facilitates events, business

development workshops, mentoring programs, and other activities to grow local commerce and entrepreneurial skills. A particular focus is placed on empowering youth, developing their skills and knowledge, and supporting businesses from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. By prioritising these groups, Darebin City Council strengthens the local economy and promotes inclusivity and diversity within the business community.

Championing Inclusive Employment

Darebin City Council's Jobs for the Future team has actively championed inclusive employment practices for the past two years. By collaborating with local community groups, job advocates, corporate partners, businesses, and job seekers, the council has addressed vital issues connecting job seekers to appropriate opportunities. This initiative focuses on youth, people living with disabilities, culturally diverse individuals, and Darebin's Aboriginal community. The council promotes various programs and initiatives that facilitate inclusive employment, fostering sustainable, long-term employment for residents facing barriers through traditional pathways. The Jobs Advocate program, which ran until the end of 2022/2023, supported over 3,000 residents. Highlights include support provided at Preston Mosque, Muslim women's events, and the efforts of an Aboriginal-identified Jobs Advocate.

Learning and Skills Development

Overview

Darebin City Council excels in Learning and Skills Development through its targeted learning opportunities and robust youth support initiatives. The council's libraries provide numerous events, courses, and information in multiple languages, catering to diverse community needs. Programs like Decibels Youth Music and the Hearts and Minds youth co-design project engage young people in creative and supportive environments. However, there is an opportunity to expand the referral services to include advocacy, settlement, and support for marginalised groups, ensuring comprehensive support for all community members.

Strengths

Targeted Learning Opportunities

Darebin City Council's libraries excel in supporting targeted learning opportunities for the community. They organise a minimum number of events annually and provide information and courses in multiple community languages, focusing on areas such as digital literacy and elderly rights. Additionally, they offer English classes, including pronunciation workshops and other related activities. This inclusive approach ensures all community members access essential learning resources.

Youth Support Initiatives

Darebin City Council places a strong emphasis on supporting youth through various initiatives. Decibels Youth Music provides a creative space for individuals aged 13 to 25 to engage in music-making, recording, and skill development. The Hearts and Minds youth co-design project collaborates with young people from culturally and linguistically diverse

communities to enhance youth mental health support in libraries. Additionally, the council donates books to local schools, offers bilingual storytimes, and provides access to a wide range of books in over 50 languages through the LOTE Online for Kids program. The council also supports ad-hoc volunteering opportunities for young people in collaboration with local schools, further fostering youth engagement and development.

Civic Participation

Overview

Darebin City Council demonstrates a strong commitment to civic engagement through comprehensive standards that consider the diverse intersections of its community. The council's protocols ensure inclusivity, particularly for marginalised groups, and actively engage youth, older people, and volunteers. With robust support structures and recognition programs, Darebin fosters active participation and a sense of belonging among its residents. While there are opportunities to enhance communication about local government roles, promote citizenship pathways, and expand volunteering practices, the council's efforts in civic engagement are commendable and form a solid foundation for community involvement.

Strengths

Comprehensive Engagement Standards

Darebin City Council excels in establishing minimum standards for engagement that thoughtfully consider the diverse intersections of its population. These standards ensure that marginalised communities receive extra attention, promoting inclusivity and equity across all council initiatives.

Youth Engagement Strategy

The council's youth engagement strategies are designed to address the social and cultural diversity of the Darebin community. They promote inclusiveness across multicultural, educational, religious, disability, youth, aged, sexual and gender communities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These strategies include provisions for supporting committee members' participation, including considerations for sitting fees.

Elderly Support and Engagement

Darebin City Council's Social Inclusion team and Community Engagement Officer work closely with the Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Committee (AHAAC) to support elderly residents. The committee provides valuable advice and feedback to the council on issues, policies, and factors affecting ageing residents in Darebin.

Volunteering Practices and Celebrations

Darebin City Council places a high value on its volunteers by encouraging regular recognition from volunteer supervisors and organising events to celebrate their contributions. The council also runs an Internal Volunteer Leaders Network, which increases the visibility and acknowledgment of staff who lead volunteers across various council-led programs.

Places and Spaces

Overview

Darebin City Council excels in creating inclusive and welcoming places and spaces through comprehensive community consultations and engagement strategies. They ensure gender-sensitive design, accessibility, and cultural inclusivity, fostering intergenerational and intercultural exchanges. Their commitment to equitable participation is evident in leisure strategies and library initiatives that cater to diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, the council's updated Place and Road Naming Policy reflects the rich cultural heritage of Darebin, making everyone feel included and represented. However, there is an opportunity to improve by regularly evaluating and renewing outdated policies, particularly in housing, to meet the community's evolving needs.

Strengths

Community Consultations and Engagement

Darebin City Council ensures community engagement reflects the diverse demographics of its residents. The Council's design principles focus on gender sensitivity, accessibility, and inclusivity, ensuring spaces are welcoming to all community members. This commitment is also evident in the Darebin Community Engagement Strategy and the Darebin Housing Strategy, which prioritise equitable decision-making and diverse housing options.

Empowering Equitable Participation

Darebin City Council's leisure strategies aim to achieve higher participation from CALD individuals and women in sports. The Council's libraries welcome people from diverse backgrounds and provide valuable resources, including accessible collections in multiple community languages. Programs such as Conversation Café and Hearts and Minds Youth Co-Design project further support youth mental health and community engagement. The Council's Senior Citizens Centres and Intercultural Centre also play a crucial role in supporting diverse community groups, promoting social interaction, and encouraging physical activity.

Inclusive Naming Policies

Darebin City Council has updated its Place and Road Naming Policy to reflect the rich cultural heritage of its diverse community. This policy includes naming public roads, buildings, and other infrastructure to honour the Wurundjeri language, First Nations heritage, and the contributions of multicultural and multifaith communities. The policy, developed through extensive community consultation, aims to ensure that the names of facilities and infrastructure represent Darebin's history and cultural diversity, making everyone feel included and represented.

Opportunities and Recommendations

Leadership

Facilitating Community Dialogue between Migrant and Receiving Communities

Darebin City Council has an opportunity to enhance community engagement by facilitating dialogue between representatives from migrant communities and receiving communities to discuss broader community issues. While the council's Minimum Standards of Engagement emphasise reaching all segments of the diverse community and providing safe feedback opportunities, there is a specific commitment to giving voice to disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including CALD communities.

Currently, the focus is on organising CALD-specific events without explicitly facilitating opportunities for dialogue between migrant and receiving communities on broader community issues. To capitalise on this opportunity, the council could create more open platforms that welcome migrant and receiving communities to discuss shared challenges and opportunities that affect the entire community.

By broadening the scope of community dialogue initiatives, Darebin City Council can foster greater understanding, collaboration, and mutual support between diverse community groups. This approach would strengthen social cohesion and ensure community engagement efforts are inclusive and representative of all residents' perspectives and needs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Darebin City Council can improve its governance by implementing clear policy evaluation and monitoring frameworks. While the council already emphasises inclusivity and community engagement, including specific events for CALD communities, formalising these frameworks will ensure policies effectively address community needs and promote equity. Clear indicators and benchmarks for success should be established to track progress and identify areas for improvement. This approach will enhance transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making, ultimately leading to more efficient allocation of resources and better outcomes for residents. Regular evaluation will also support ongoing development and responsiveness to community expectations.

Social and Cultural Inclusion

Expand Data Resources

Darebin City Council has a strong foundation in using internal tools for demographic assessment, such as Profile.id and ABS Table Builder Basic & Pro. However, they can further enhance their data resources by requesting the Department of Home Affairs migration data. Accessing the most up-to-date information on incoming migrants will enable the council to better understand and respond to the needs of new community members, ensuring that services and programs are effectively tailored to support social and cultural inclusion. By expanding their data resources, Darebin City Council can improve planning and decision-making processes, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and responsive community environment.

Intersectional Data Analysis to Inform Practice

Darebin City Council has the opportunity to enhance its community support by implementing intersectional data analysis. For example, the council calculates English language proficiency (ELP) for the top 12 communities, which can overlook smaller refugee communities with high levels of low ELP. The council can provide more effective support by assessing the percentage of community members reporting low ELP and targeting interventions accordingly.

Additionally, analysing ELP differences between men and women, as well as among people with disabilities or long-term health conditions in a language community, will allow for more nuanced and targeted interventions. This approach will ensure that all community members, especially those with limited social networks or language skills, receive the support they need to integrate and thrive. This is particularly important for practices such as emergency management and emergency response.

Addressing the Housing Crisis and Improving Community Engagement

Darebin City Council has an opportunity to address the housing crisis more effectively by improving communication strategies and ensuring the right people are involved in discussions. Community consultations on the proposed lease of council land for affordable housing revealed a need to reach marginalised communities more effectively. This includes raising awareness about council activities and consultations, particularly among migrant communities who may not be aware of these opportunities.

Enhancing Safety and Police Engagement

Darebin City Council has an opportunity to strengthen safety initiatives by expanding the involvement of multicultural community organisations in its Community Safety Reference Group. Including organisations representing multicultural communities is crucial as they can provide insights into diverse perspectives and relationships with the police. Given that people born overseas and other marginalised communities may have distinct perceptions and experiences, their voices are essential in fostering mutual understanding and preventing potential misunderstandings in the future.

Fight Against Racism

Darebin City Council is committed to fighting racism and all forms of discrimination. This dedication highlights the council's welcoming nature and efforts to create a safe and inclusive environment for all residents. The council provides tools and resources to support those who experience discrimination, ensuring they feel safe and heard. Despite this dedication, anecdotal evidence from consultations reveals ongoing instances of racism. There are opportunities to implement programs and projects to improve social cohesion further. This continued effort will ensure that all residents feel safe, supported, and included in the community.

Strengthening Senior Management's Commitment to Cultural Diversity

To enhance the effectiveness of the initiatives and programs, senior management should continue to prioritise cultural diversity and inclusion. By working more closely with various departments, they can foster better collaboration and achieve improved outcomes in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment for all residents.

Economic Development

Policy Review and Evaluation

Darebin City Council has an opportunity to improve its governance by addressing the issue of outdated policies. Several policies provided for accreditation were past their review dates, resulting in points deductions. The council can ensure that all policies remain current and effective by implementing a systematic and timely policy review and evaluation process. This will enhance governance practices and ensure that the council's operations and frameworks consistently align with best practice and community needs.

Enhancing Workforce Diversity Alignment with Community Demographics

Darebin City Council has an opportunity to assess council staff representation against recent migration patterns to ensure they fully represent the area's demographic profile. This evaluation can help identify gaps and opportunities for recruiting staff that better reflect and understand the diverse communities they serve, enhancing service delivery and community engagement.

Learning and Skills Development

Expanding Referral Services

Darebin City Council's CALD Outreach initiative effectively addresses barriers families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face in accessing early childhood education. While the council offers substantial referral services for youth, children, and digital literacy and provides significant support for homelessness, there is an opportunity to broaden the referral network. Currently, there is limited information on referrals to advocacy, settlement, and other essential services such as LGBTIQ+ support, domestic and family violence support, and settlement services. Expanding the referral pool and providing comprehensive information and sessions on these services is crucial to improving the self-efficacy and settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees. By enhancing these referral services, the council can ensure all community members can access the necessary support systems.

Civic Participation

Expanding Local Government Role Communication

Darebin City Council has an opportunity to expand its communication of the role of local government in simple English and translate this information into various community languages. Providing brochures in council-operated centres could further enhance residents' understanding of the council's functions and services.

Promoting Citizenship Pathways

Although citizenship pathways are not the direct responsibility of the local council, Darebin can still play a significant role in promoting learning about these pathways. While the council already links to the Department of Home Affairs website, it could also include lists of migration agents or relevant settlement bodies that can assist residents in understanding the steps to citizenship, thus reinforcing its commitment to being a welcoming city.

Beyond Volunteering

The council can improve its community assistance by comparing the volunteer profile to publicly available information on volunteering demographics, ensuring it is representative of Darebin's diverse population in terms of age, gender, country of birth, and English language proficiency. Volunteering offers valuable work experience, particularly for migrants and refugees who struggle to secure their first jobs. By enhancing practices to provide more opportunities for marginalised communities and individuals with low English proficiency, the council could achieve more inclusive and beneficial outcomes for the entire community.

Places and Spaces

Policy Evaluation and Renewal

Darebin City Council should prioritise reviewing and updating its policies. Evaluating and renewing these policies will ensure they remain relevant and effective in addressing the community's current needs and challenges. This opportunity for improvement can enhance governance and responsiveness, ensuring that Darebin continues to provide inclusive and supportive spaces for all residents.

Appendix A

Evidence category	1. No compliance	2. Low compliance	3. Partial compliance	4. High compliance	5. Full compliance
Council policy/plan/framework evidence	No evidence of the existence of a relevant policy/plan/strategic framework.	A relevant policy/plan/strategic framework is in the planning or development phase.	There is a relevant and current policy/plan/strategic framework, however, no plans for review exist; there is no clear party responsible and/or desired outcomes detailed.	The relevant policy/plan/strategic framework is current and regularly reviewed, spanning (at least) the three-year Accreditation period. Key responsibilities and/or intended stakeholders are defined, along with desired outcomes/measures.	The policy/plan/strategic framework are embedded in various functions in the council. Policies are active across a range of functions/departments in the council. As well as responsibilities being defined, there is advocacy from senior leaders within the council (e.g., endorsement by the mayor or senior councillors). Evaluation practices exist to continuously improve policy.
Internal implementation evidence	No evidence of internal implementation of relevant policy.	Internal implementation is in the planning or development phase.	Some internal activities exist, however, these may be irregular, isolated or have only partially defined target groups.	There are a range of established internal activities, with clearly defined target audiences and outcomes. Internal activities are tailored to meet the needs of intended stakeholders. Reference groups or project leads have responsibility for delivery, and evaluation measures may be present.	Practices are normalised as part of daily operations and have been proven successful. There may be a history of implementation, with demonstrated actions and outcomes.
External implementation evidence	No evidence of external implementation of relevant policy.	External implementation is in the planning or development phase.	There has been some external implementation. Improvements could be made to better meet the needs of target audiences.	There is evidence of a range of external activities, with clearly defined target audiences and outcomes. Content is fully accessible to intended stakeholders using appropriate formats.	Implementation is widespread through a range of activities targeting different stakeholders, and have proven successful in meeting the needs of external stakeholders. An evaluation process exists to improve desired outcomes. There is evidence that any content is accessed and used by target audience.