

Towards Equality resource sheet Council's commitment to multiculturalism

Over the past two decades, Council has worked concertedly, particularly **with and for multicultural and multifaith communities**, to address poverty and discrimination and to remove barriers that entrench inequality. This has included¹:

- **Diversity Policy 2003** – Council's first and foundational policy valuing diversity (particularly cultural diversity) and promoting equity to address discrimination and social and economic exclusion.
- **Racism Inquiry 2012** – a local inquiry into racism in Darebin to investigate and hear from the community about their experiences. The Inquiry highlighted how racism is still pervasive, particularly for Aboriginal people and newly arrived communities², and how race-based discrimination affects health. The Inquiry and its findings underpinned Council's decision to take a strong anti-racism stand.
- **Equity and Inclusion Policy 2012-17**³ – a more targeted approach to address barriers to inclusion in an integrated manner (including various associated strategies: **Anti-racism strategy**, *Women's equity strategy* and action plans: *Aboriginal AP*, *Multicultural AP*, *Sexuality, sex and gender diversity AP*, *Human rights AP*, *Responding to housing stress AP*...) and to achieve greater consistency of outcomes. Under this policy, the Equity and Inclusion Planning Audit Tool (EIPAT)⁴ was developed as a resource for all levels of Council to incorporate equity and inclusion into their work.
- **Towards Equality: equity, inclusion and human rights Framework 2019-29** - bringing together all of Council's pre-existing (and officially endorsed) social justice commitments and continuing to work towards the three goals of:
 - Council as an **organisation**
 - Council **services, programs, places and spaces**
 - the Darebin **community** (in partnership)
being accessible, equitable, inclusive and responsive to the diversity (cultural and broader) of the Darebin community

Towards Equality builds on connected and overlapping social justice commitments to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
- **Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people and communities**

¹ This is a non-exhaustive list.

² In Australia, research shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, newly arrived communities, notably from Africa, and Muslim communities are among the most affected by race-based discrimination.

³ *Towards Equality* builds on and expands the principles and objectives of the *Equity and Inclusion Policy*.

⁴ The EIPAT has now evolved to become the Equity impact Assessment (EIA) – that is a mandatory requirement for all Council projects, policies, service reviews... It integrates considerations of equity, inclusion and diversity, health and wellbeing and human rights.

Towards Equality Resource sheet - Social justice commitments **MULTICULTURALISM**

- Children and young people
- Gender equity and prevention of gender-based violence
- Senior citizens and an Age-friendly city
- Disability access and inclusion
- LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- Anti-poverty and support for households and people on low incomes or experiencing hardship (including homelessness) or intergenerational disadvantage

Council's commitment **to multiculturalism and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) residents** is multi-pronged and includes being a **Refugee-welcome zone** and a **Welcoming City** standing up to **racism**.

- This builds on a long-standing Council commitment to **cultural diversity, multiculturalism, intercultural exchange and work in support of interfaith dialogue**, recognising that these strengthen community and social cohesion.
- This also builds on a strong and clear **anti-racism** stand. Darebin is an official supporter of the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) *Racism. It Stops With Me* campaign, which invites all Australians to reflect on what they can do to counter racism wherever it happens. Council is also a signatory to UNESCO's *Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific*.
- Since 17 June 2002, Council has been a signatory of the Refugee Council of Australia's **Refugee Welcome Zone** Declaration, recognising the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to our municipality. We advocate for, engage with, and uphold the human rights of, asylum seekers and refugees, helping ensure they can live in safety, become self-reliant and contribute and participate in the local community. Council is also part of the **Back your Neighbour** campaign and of the **Mayoral Taskforce supporting People seeking Asylum**.
- In 2017 (Council resolution of 7 August 2017), Council became a member of the **Welcoming Cities** network, a national initiative supporting local governments to become more welcoming and inclusive of "people of any migrant status born overseas" (which effectively includes asylum seekers, refugees, any person born overseas and now settled permanently in Australia, and international students) and foster communities where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life. Council was awarded **accreditation at the "Excelling" Welcoming City level** in August 2024.

These commitments are premised on fundamental commitments to **redistribution** (including of Council funding, resources, services and programs), **adaptation** (tailoring services and programs, places and spaces to meet diverse needs) and genuine **community engagement**.