

Acknowledgment of Darebin's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

The Darebin Intercultural Centre acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the traditional owners of the land we now call Darebin and affirms that the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their customs and ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal¹.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and recognise their pivotal role in maintaining and transmitting culture, history and language.

Darebin is home to Aboriginal people from many of the 500+ clan groups that exist in Australia and is also home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of many skin, moiety and language groups, genders, ages, abilities, sexualities and gender identities.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre respects the human, cultural and spiritual rights of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge their right to 'enjoy their identity and culture, maintain and use their language, maintain their kinship ties and maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship to the land and waters'².

We also acknowledge the right of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Darebin to respect and equality and to live free from discrimination.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people as the first culture of the land on which the Darebin Intercultural Centre rests and recognise that this founding culture must be the starting point from which Centre and its programs grow.

¹ Extracts from the Darebin Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

² Section 19(2) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Vision

The Darebin Intercultural Centre is a place where people cultivate mutual respect for each other's cultures and identities and can equally participate in life.

Mission

The Darebin Intercultural Centre is a place where everyone is invited to explore and celebrate their own and other cultures. We value and promote the connections that happen within and between diverse communities, generations and identities. We create the space, time and opportunity for friendly and courageous exchanges, for individuals and groups to reflect on how they differ and what they share. Our programs inspire insight, encourage understanding and open up new worlds.

Preamble

Darebin City Council has a long-standing commitment to serve and respond to the diverse needs of its community. This is articulated in the Council Plan 2021-2025 which places a strong emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion throughout all aspects of Council business³.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre Programming Framework advances this commitment and provides a framework to guide the work of the Centre and its spaces, activities, partners and participants.

It guides and helps us strive for a just society by promoting intercultural understanding and providing opportunities for equal participation in life.

It puts equity, inclusion and human rights at the heart of all our work and will help us build a program where every person is welcome, valued and respected, because we are all better off when everyone is able to belong, thrive and participate.

The Centre promotes opportunities to develop intercultural understanding, enabling community members to examine their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of

³ Darebin Council Plan 2021 - 2025

others. This involves learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

Intercultural understanding is an essential part of living with others in the diverse community of Darebin. It assists people to become responsible citizens, equipped for living and working together in an interconnected world⁴.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre aims to address the barriers to inclusion experienced by Darebin community members. This means considering diversity, inclusion, equity and human rights across the Centre's culture, practice, process and decision-making and continuing to stand against discrimination, notably racism, sexism, ableism, ageism and homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, and against injustices, including poverty.

We are particularly committed to supporting the rights of people and groups who experience discrimination and disadvantage, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Children
- Older people
- Culturally and linguistically diverse people, migrants and refugees
- Women and girls
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) people
- People with a disability
- Young people
- People experiencing poverty, including intergenerational disadvantage

With this Framework, in partnership with the community, groups, and organisations, the Darebin Intercultural Centre will contribute to building inclusive and empowered Darebin communities by promoting intercultural understanding and facilitating opportunities for all people to be heard, connected, respected and supported to participate in community life.

⁴ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

Principles

The Framework is underpinned by several principles, grouped into five categories that guide and influence ongoing action:

1. People
2. Place
3. Participation
4. Partnerships
5. Evaluation and Planning

Our commitment

The Intercultural Centre interacts with and explores many complex and multidimensional concepts. We acknowledge that this language can be problematic and can in itself create barriers to participation. As such, it is a key responsibility of the program to assist participants and partners in their own understanding of the principles, their meaning and application. We acknowledge that these principles need to be enacted in order to be valued.

Definitions

While there are no universally accepted definitions, this Framework will use the following ones.

Culture

Culture may be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs⁵.

Many diverse factors influence one's experience of one's culture; one's sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, socio-economic status, faith or no faith, age, education, marital status, ethnicity, nationality, language, income, occupation and so forth, all influence one's lived experience.

⁵ The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS)

Understanding the individual through an intersectional lens is most appropriate, acknowledging while people may belong to an ethnic group for example, their experience within and connection to this group may vary widely between generations and between individuals. It is important to recognise that people have different frameworks and reference points for describing their cultural identities and lived experiences.

The nature of culture reflects multiple generations of practice and knowledge, culture continues to be refined and revised over centuries and therefore offers today's people the benefit of those years of honing the message and the purpose or intention of a cultural practice or belief.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises that people's lives and experiences are shaped and influenced by diversity – different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping disadvantage and exclusion because their identity is made up of belonging to more than one group that experiences systemic and structural discrimination; others may experience added layers of power and privilege⁶.

For example, a lesbian person with a disability may be discriminated against both on the basis of sexual orientation and of disability. They may experience exclusion within both groups, in addition to exclusion and invisibility in broader society⁷.

Intercultural understanding

Interculturalism is a way of exploring the space between people of different cultures or identities. It involves examining ourselves and others, identifying similarities and understanding differences with the intention of cultivating mutual respect.

Developing intercultural understanding enables one to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. One comes to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. Intercultural

⁶ Victorian Government: Understanding intersectionality

⁷ Towards Equality - Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029

understanding involves learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

Intercultural understanding combines personal, interpersonal and social knowledge and skills. It involves learning to value and view critically one's own cultural perspectives and practices and those of others through their interactions with people, texts and contexts.

Intercultural understanding encourages people to make connections between their own worlds and the worlds of others, to build on shared interests and commonalities, and to negotiate or mediate difference. It develops one's abilities to communicate and empathise with others and to analyse intercultural experiences critically. It offers opportunities for one to consider one's own beliefs and attitudes in a new light, and so gain insight into oneself and others⁸.

Intercultural understanding stimulates interest in the lives of others. It cultivates values and dispositions such as curiosity, care, empathy, reciprocity, respect and responsibility, open-mindedness and critical awareness, and supports new and positive intercultural behaviours⁹.

Program

The Darebin Intercultural Centre was co-designed with Sibling Architecture, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (Wurundjeri) and a Community Reference Group (CRG) made up of diverse community members with a strong connection to interculturalism.

The design incorporates flexible spaces with curtaining elements and retractable walls, seating areas, breakout spaces, co-design work areas, a reflection room as well as formal and informal gathering options.

⁸ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

⁹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

The intention of the flexible design is to enable opportunities for people to meet and gather for both programmed activities as well as informal catch ups. The Centre is a space where people can feel welcome and comfortable to sit and be. It is hoped through these flexible opportunities; serendipitous moments of collaboration and connection will occur organically with and between our diverse community members.

The external spaces have been designed in partnership with Wurundjeri, the CRG and Indigenous landscape architect, Garawana Creative. The design intent is a push and pull of interculturalism, drawing people from the footpath into the Centre while providing opportunities for the Centre's program to flow out into the community. The landscaping will help soften the Colonial exterior of the building, creating a welcoming, inclusive and culturally-safe space for all community members.

The Centre will actively seek partnerships with like-minded organisations, groups and individuals whose goals and values align with the Centre's objectives. Partners will be invited to use our co-working spaces and event spaces to support direct engagement with staff, collaborators and participants.

The Centre will offer venue-for-hire opportunities as well as a mix of Council-led, community-led and co-designed activities that advance the Centre's vision and mission and produce maximum benefit for the Darebin community.

Social justice

Social justice means that every person in the community is treated fairly, equally and with dignity. Their rights are recognised and protected. Systemic and structural inequalities (the barriers people face because of poverty and discrimination) are addressed so people can have equal access to services, opportunities and capacity to influence¹⁰.

Equity

Equity is about fairness and rights: making sure people have access to the same opportunities and rights, notably by increasing access to power and resources for groups or

¹⁰ Towards Equality - Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029

people without them, to achieve more equal outcomes. Equity implies redistribution and adaptation. Applying an equity approach is core to advancing social justice outcomes. It recognises that people are different and that Australian society as it operates today is not a level playing field¹¹.

Equality

Equality refers to the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, responsibilities and opportunity. Equality is what Council strives for: a community where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and where everyone has equal access to power, resources, decision-making and opportunities in order to live their lives well.

To create equality, targeted and customised responses are required where there is evidence of a community's or group's experience of poverty, discrimination, marginalisation or under participation.

We direct the resources of the Intercultural Centre towards groups and people experiencing inequality or structural and systemic barriers such as poverty, racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, classism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, acknowledging that some people experience more than one barrier ¹².

Social inclusion

Social inclusion is a universal human aspiration. It means being included in the life of the community around you, with full access to the opportunities and resources available, having a sense of belonging and feeling respected and valued for who you are. It has positive flow-on effects on individual and community health and wellbeing. Human rights are fundamental to overcoming discrimination and promoting inclusion¹³.

Social cohesion

Inclusion is the outcome when barriers are addressed. It is an aspiration driving all of Council's equity work. An important process for creating an inclusive community involves

¹¹ Towards Equality - Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029

¹² Towards Equality - Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029

¹³ Towards Equality - Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029

building social cohesion so people feel they belong, are able to participate in community life, share common values and respect difference and diversity of views ¹⁴.

Principles

People

The Darebin Intercultural Centre acknowledges and pays respect to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land upon which it is placed.

We achieve this in a variety of ways through consultation and engagement with Traditional Owners, we include language, art and cultural practice, values and perspectives within the spaces and provide educational opportunities for community.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre enables connections between people through valuing their different lived experiences, cultural needs and aspirations, that reaches across generations and identities.

Our programs reflect the diverse and dynamic community of Darebin.

Our programs celebrate the richness of cultures, faiths and identities through providing a platform that promotes cultural practices for the learning, enjoyment and engagement of all.

We explore discrimination and acknowledge when and where we hold privilege and bias and how that affects our choices. We maintain our courage and positivity with each other by staying open to learning and growth opportunities that come from being together. We focus on our mutual goal of creating a culturally safe place where all people feel proud and welcome to be who they are.

¹⁴ Towards Equality - Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029

At the Darebin Intercultural Centre, everyone has the right to observe their own cultural practices and beliefs, without fear of discrimination or any form of disadvantage, and has the responsibility to respect, to listen to, and learn from others.

We approach programming with others being generous and open-minded about the input of our co-designers. We do not assume to know the answers, rather we exchange knowledge as equals motivated by a sense of discovery and mutually-defined outcomes.

Friendships within the community enable us to continually update our connections, meet new partners and audiences, and share knowledge and resources to advance the achievement of our mutual goals.

Place

We honour the deep relationship between Aboriginal people and the land, waters and skies, described as 'connection to Country'. We respect that Aboriginal peoples see and experience the land around them as deeply and intrinsically connected to all aspects of daily life; culture, spirituality, values, education, language, lore, family and identity ¹⁵.

We acknowledge all cultures and identities have unique cultural practices relating to their connection to and care for the natural world. The Intercultural Centre cares for the land and environment around the Centre by promoting educative sessions for community and implementing measures that directly address climate emergency and promote climate action.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre is set in prominence, in the heart of Preston as a central and visible expression of Council's commitment to the pursuit of a more just society. The Centre and its programs draw passers-by into its spaces and provide opportunities for the learnings of the program to extend from the Centre into the broader spaces and places of Darebin.

¹⁵ Darebin Aboriginal Cultural Protocols Guide

The flexible, welcoming, adaptable and accessible design of the Darebin Intercultural Centre spaces is intended to facilitate and support unplanned and spontaneous intercultural connections and interactions between individuals, groups and organisations.

Participation

The Darebin Intercultural Centre is committed to ensuring our programs and their participants remain relevant and reflective of Darebin's diverse and ever evolving community.

When designing the operations of the Centre, we provide free and low-cost activities wherever possible, we generate opportunities for the community to maximise their time and use of the Centre, we ensure that the community can be alongside each other whenever possible.

The Darebin Aboriginal Cultural Protocols Guide is a key reference for the Darebin Intercultural Centre to guide acknowledgement, respect and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre program includes a range of different ways in which activities are developed. We will provide options for ideas, interests and needs to be generated and realised by the community, Council, organisations and individuals.

We value and listen to the stories of the Darebin community, we use demographic data and other kinds of evidence to find gaps in participation, expand our networks and identify what the community has to offer and what it needs.

We will proactively engage partners, facilitators and volunteers who reflect the diversity of the Darebin community.

Partnerships

The strength of the Darebin Intercultural Centre program is its ability to form relationships and develop partnerships with organisations, groups and individuals to provide opportunities for cultural learning, exchange and connection.

Partnerships will take many different forms in response to the unique set of characteristics that each opportunity presents for the program. Each opportunity will be met with a responsive, adaptable approach from the Darebin Intercultural Centre to ensure we remove unnecessary barriers for our potential partners.

We acknowledge the value of cultural knowledge and experience that lives within the Darebin community and approach our customers and partnerships knowing their creative, authentic and generous nature and worth. We design our engagement with our partners to reflect this balanced, collaborative exchange between communities.

We promote the opportunity for partnerships through targeted outreach to organisations, groups and individuals that have objectives and values that align with the Centre. We do this in acknowledgement of the value of appropriate engagement strategies that are set within cultural practice of groups in our community, and to achieve representative participation in the program.

We acknowledge and celebrate the invaluable contribution of volunteers as partners of the Centre's success. We find ways to support our volunteers in achieving their objectives.

Evaluation and planning

All principles of the programming framework will be reviewed as part of the annual planning and evaluation cycle creating opportunities to improve and progress the vision of the Darebin Intercultural Centre.

We see value in listening to the stories of participants and partners who have created our program and to future participants and partners. We will receive and record feedback and opportunities from community in the format and at the time, they choose to give it.

For program planning and evaluation processes to be accessible, inclusive, fair and representative of the Darebin community, we will ensure all members of the Darebin community are welcomed through open invitation to participate, reflect on and plan for our outputs, achievements and learnings. We will not lock the opportunity away to a select group through a select process. We will not create culturally unsafe structures and processes of power, that prevent many community members from participating.

To ensure we capture a diverse range of voices, we will offer multiple opportunities during the year for participants and partners to both reflect on what we have achieved together, what ideas they hold for programming, and where they see the Darebin Intercultural Centre achieving its objectives in the future.

Community will have the opportunity to self-determine their approach to feedback. We will offer multiple mechanisms such as workshops, practical activities, surveys, presentations, interviews, art expressions, digital or paper-based submissions, or other chosen formats that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, safe and respectful for the Darebin community.

Quick Reference

1. Darebin Aboriginal Cultural Protocols Guide for Community, in development
2. Darebin [Council Plan](#) 2021 - 2025
3. [Darebin Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#)
4. Intercultural Understanding V8.4, [Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority](#)
5. [Section 19\(2\) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities](#), Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
6. [Towards Equality](#) – Darebin City Council’s Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019 - 2029
7. The [2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics](#) (FCS)
8. [Victorian Government: Understanding Intersectionality](#)