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Darebin Intercultural Centre Needs Analysis and Service Review 2017

**For further information please contact the
Community Development Facilities Unit on 8470 8411.**

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“Throughout the report, direct quotes from the consultation will appear in speech bubbles like this one to show our stakeholders voice.”



1 Background

The Community Development Facilities Unit (CDF Unit) has conducted a review of the Darebin Intercultural Centre (IC) to establish a clearer strategic direction, vision, mission and objectives and a program that better responds to its purpose. The review gathered a significant amount of information, viewpoints, and recommendations to inform the work of the team responsible for this valued Darebin asset.

The concept of an Intercultural Centre for Darebin began with the idea of a multicultural activity centre proposed by the Northcote Ethnic Communities Council in the late 1980s, and was subsequently picked up by Darebin City Council.

The IC is located at the former Preston Courthouse on the corner of Kelvin Grove and Roseberry Street, Preston. This facility is leased from the State Government specifically for community use under a 21 year lease arrangement at peppercorn rent which commenced in 2006.

The current location was intended to reactivate this building for community use for the short term, with the view to developing a long term purpose built facility for the IC.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre (IC) was established in 2011 as a centre of excellence for intercultural relations and ongoing community development. It is a practical demonstration of Council's commitment to foster cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and connectedness between Darebin's diverse cultural groups. The IC also hosts a variety of programs and events throughout the year that provide an opportunity for groups of diverse cultural backgrounds to meet and participate in activities together in order to strengthen their understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures. Programs and events are delivered by Darebin City Council, Darebin Ethnic Communities Council and various other external community groups and organisations. The IC is also available for community groups and organisations to hire the available rooms to conduct their gatherings, forums, and support groups that similarly support intercultural connections. The IC accommodates internal Council officer and department requests for hire when available.

Co-located services within the facility include the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The IC is located in the heart of Preston, and is well serviced by public transport. It is in close proximity to High Street shops, Preston library, Preston customer service centre and civic precinct, and Preston Market.



2 Purpose and Methodology of the review

The Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021 has called for direct action to support our marginalised and vulnerable population groups by establishing a better home for our Intercultural Centre and its programs.

This findings report outlines the outcomes of the needs analysis and service review of the Darebin Intercultural Centre conducted between April and September 2017. The purpose of the analysis and review was to determine if the IC and its work remains current and relevant to community needs and expectations and that where this was not the case, provide directions for short-term improvements and long term planning.

2.1 Scope

The scope of the review was based on the requirement that all tasks were completed within the existing resources of the IC program's operational budget and staffing. The review gathered:

- Statistical data collected from Events Perfect (bookings system) to demonstrate how the IC is currently used.
- Responses to a survey conducted to determine stakeholders' most and least preferred of the services currently delivered, to identify stakeholders' recommendations for additional services or cessation of services, explore stakeholders' concept of interculturalism and what an IC could/should do and reasons behind potential stakeholders' lack of engagement in the IC.
- Internal consultation with IC team and internal stakeholders.
- External consultation with colocated services and partners.

2.2 Methodology

The approach adopted by this review was threefold:

- Consider the organisation's previously identified issues of the current IC.
- Consult with current and prospective stakeholders of the IC.
- Explore best practice examples of successful community spaces, facility operations, team dynamics to determine future direction.



2.3 Project Delivery Team

Manager, Leisure and Community Facilities

Coordinator, Community Development Facilities

IC Programs Liaison

IC Business Support Officer

IC Venue Services Officer

Research Officer, Community Engagement and Demographics

***“Interculturalism takes
a lot of work”***

Survey response



3 Executive summary

Key findings from the review include:

- The participants of the program at the IC are overwhelmingly satisfied and supportive of the opportunities, activities and events that are part of their experience at the facility and with the team responsible for its delivery.
- The Darebin community profile demonstrates a continued need of this program and any opportunities for further expansion.
- The general community and stakeholders are aware of the impact of VCAT on the success of the IC program within its current location and are supportive of a re-location of the program.
- The consultation demonstrated that the current location of the program stifles promotion and advertisement of the program due to the need to limit interest and participants due to capacity issues.
- The community, staff and stakeholders are confused about the relevancy and usefulness of the current objectives of the IC and the model of service delivery as they present contradictions, immeasurable goals for the program, and aren't targeted towards what the program could foreseeably achieve with its current resources.
- There is capacity for the staff who work at the IC and the broader Unit to enhance the capacity of the team to further develop their skills and abilities in regards to the delivery of the program.

Options for Consideration

Recommendations from the review include:

- Develop an action plan to move through the recommendations of the report that are within operational and service delivery parameters, with a view to seeking additional resources where identified.
- Develop a new set of objectives for the IC that are responsive to the Council Plan, relevant to the findings of this consultation and previous consultations, and are measureable and appropriate for the current resourcing of the program.
- Review the current 'hiring Guidelines' with a view to enhancing the IC program's ability to support groups and individuals' use of the spaces and resources outside the 'venue for hire' model in an accessible, equitable, non-discriminatory way that is closely linked to the IC objectives.
- Conduct further consultation and review of areas raised in regards to communications and marketing that would require further input, costings, and consideration.



- Develop a workforce development plan to enhance the capacity of existing staff resources to deliver the program, including supportive links to the broader Unit resources.
- Commence planning for the relocation of the Intercultural Centre to a new home, involving a full scoping of operational requirements based on future growth opportunities, investigation into and identification of possible sites, and a feasibility study of selected sites.



4 Consultation

The consultation process for this review was determined based on the need to fit the process within existing IC team resources. The decision was undertaken to value current users of the IC, the team who work at the IC, and our regular groups, partners and organisations who are aware of the IC's operation and would be likely to have an informed opinion.

The consultation process was a concurrent progression of engaging with current users, partner organisations, visitors/participants and the general community through a generic survey.¹ Consultation sessions based on the survey questions and expanded lines of inquiry into the mission, purpose, operational structures and processes

at the IC were held with Darebin Ethnic Communities Council, internal Council officers from multiple departments and the IC team.

Information from both internal and external streams of input were tested against each other, to ensure that Council officers' thoughts were in line with community needs and expectations.

"Feels like currently the IC is trying to be a lot of different things at once, resulting in some confusion" - internal stakeholder

"Cooking, exercise, dancing"

- survey response

Significant information existed within the CDF Unit from their operational awareness and knowledge of the improvement opportunities that have been suggested for the IC over its years of operation. Many received and agreed opportunities for continuous improvement have been

challenging to implement due to a lack of cohesion between the original objectives of the IC, and its current operational context. The consultation for this review sought to match the individual changes and improvements proposed with the areas of focus that require broader

¹ Please refer to Appendix 19.2 for a full list of consulted groups, organisations, committees, and teams.



philosophical decisions on the IC programs purpose. In simple terms, numerous areas of improvement for the IC have been known for many years, however the ability to enact change has been hindered by perceptions within the IC team that the IC's objectives and policies were static.

4.1 IC Staff consultation

The IC team were tasked with the development of the review process and its implementation. Whilst this decision was primarily based on the lack of alternate resourcing arrangements, the benefits to the team to self-assess, generate ideas, liaise with the community for the gathering of their feedback and formulate the findings report gives the team the opportunity to grow and develop their skills and relationship to the IC.

4.2 Survey consultation

A survey was created and distributed generally to the Darebin community through the Darebin Community News in the May/June 2017 editions. It was also distributed to all groups who hire the IC visitors to the Centre, and key stakeholders. Interviews and personal discussions were held with key stakeholders, including Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Darebin Ethnic Communities Council (DECC) and various advisory committees in Darebin were made aware of the survey and the opportunity to contribute.

A total of 137 responses were received for the survey of which 131 were completed and 6 responses were partial.

Survey key findings summary

- The venue for hire aspect of the program is well received, with good feedback on the customer service of staff, room cleanliness and set up, the availability of heating (reflective of the survey being conducted in May).
- Current and prospective users want more cooking, exercise, dance and IT awareness support/training activities and events at the IC
- The current location is considered favourable because of its 'central' location, its proximity to other key services nearby, and its connection to multiple public transport options



- The current location presents parking issues, especially in the context of older adult user groups.
- Colocation with VCAT was expressed as an inconvenience and possible disadvantage for the operation of the IC, however this is perceived to be well mitigated and handled by the IC team.
- There was some indication that some respondents may have been confused by certain questions, possibly due to English being the second language of many regular user groups.
- The results indicated that the promotion of the Intercultural Centre as a facility and program of Council, including individual advertisement of events and activities is not as effective as it could be. Most participants at the IC found out about the event/IC through word of mouth and personal introduction means.
- For those who had not visited the IC before, it would appear the majority of people of these respondents had not heard of the IC. When asked what would interest them to visit the Centre a majority of respondents called for more information.

4.3 Internal officer consultation

A group based focus session was held for all interested internal colleagues to express their ideas, concerns, and opportunities for the IC. The format of the session allowed small groups to give their feedback on 6 broad categories – purpose, people, place, process, program and potential. The consultation was open-ended and informal information gathering, which was a deliberate decision due to the project teams' knowledge that the participants had a vested interest in the IC and their organic input was what we required. Participation was healthy, and the feedback from participants reflected their appreciation for the way the consultation was conducted.



4.4 General Consultation Summary

The internal and external consultation conducted as part of the review of the Intercultural Centre identified the following directions in regard to the Centre's operational model:

- A Centre that has clear branding and rationale around fostering community connections, learning and participation.
- A Centre that provided an intersection point where residents can drop in anytime and connect with others in a friendly atmosphere. A community home.
- A Centre that fosters community development programs and that reaches out to the community.
- A Centre that focuses on an intercultural and inclusive approach to program development and that fosters community advocacy on culturally diverse issues.
- A participatory and inclusive governance model where the community is part of the co-design, development, program delivery and evaluation.
- A diverse and mixed program but with a focus on activities linking to the Centre's rationale. This includes cultural and art events, hire of meeting space, forums, workshops, seminars etc.
- The survey results provided both a source of feedback from regular hirers but also an opportunity for general stakeholder comments.

“As a Darebin resident of 30 years, I have barely been aware of its existence or used it.” – survey response



5 Policy Context of the IC

The IC is a component of Darebin's wider response to multiculturalism

This service review and needs analysis has been developed within the Federal, State and Darebin City Council's policy context framework which views an IC as an effective and important vehicle for promoting social cohesion, human rights, cultural identity and multicultural affairs

This report will not address the policy context of multiculturalism but rather it will engage in a commentary about the efficacy and outcomes of the IC's program and objectives and how these link back to relevant policy and frameworks.

"It's an activator of ideas" – internal stakeholder

The Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021 has called for direction action to support our marginalised and vulnerable population groups by establishing a better home for our Intercultural Centre and its programs.



6 Cultural profile of Darebin

It is important for both Darebin City Council and the community to understand culture not just as an expression of heritage, but as a way of defining current and changing identities for individuals.

Local Government, being the closest tier of government to the community, plays a key role in promoting and maintaining social cohesion and connectedness. Social cohesion is recognised as a key indicator in mental wellbeing of a community as a whole.² VicHealth has outlined several strategic goals to assist local governments with increasing their levels of social cohesion, including supporting community groups to provide more welcoming and inclusive environments and identifying and supporting community programs that increase participation and interaction to combat individual or community isolation.

The most recent local government area profiles completed by VicHealth indicate that Darebin is marginally below average on scores of social connectedness and trust, which are considered significant contributors to the mental wellbeing of a community as a whole.³ The state-wide survey indicated that the proportion of Darebin residents who agreed that people in their neighbourhood are willing to help each other out was 73.1%. Six in 10 (60.5%) residents felt that they live in a close-knit neighbourhood and a similar proportion of Darebin residents agreed that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted (67.2%).

The City of Darebin is one of Victoria's most diverse local government areas. Almost half of Darebin's residents were born overseas. A similar proportion do not speak English at home, with the predominant alternative languages being Italian, Greek, Mandarin, Arabic and Vietnamese. While approximately half identify as Christian, a significant proportion identify as maintaining no religion, with portions identifying as Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu. Layered through the demographic are persons who have a diverse range of backgrounds, histories, perspectives and identities, whether they are young or elderly, LGBTIQ, an international student or a refugee. It is clear that in addressing Darebin's level of social cohesion and connectedness, facts about our cultural diversity are foundational.

² VicHealth 2016, *Improving mental wellbeing: Local government action guide*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

³ VicHealth 2016, Darebin LGA Profile VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015 Results, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation



Given Darebin's growing and culturally diverse profile, the promotion and provision of resources for our community to engage in intercultural programs continues to contribute to raising the municipality's standards of social cohesion and connectedness. It is evident from recent surveys that Darebin still has work to do in this area. By continuing to support the Intercultural Centre through funding its multicultural programs and intercultural activities and services Darebin can play its role in strengthening our diverse community's mental wellbeing and social health.

***"Culture. Not just Ethnicity.
Culture of society, disability,
socioeconomics, gender,
sexuality" – internal stakeholder***



7 Service Review Elements

The general focus of the review was to move through the different elements of the IC as both a facility and a program and ask the following questions:

- What do we provide from our service?
- Why do we provide this?
- How do we provide this?
- What principles inform our decisions?



“IC is a one stop shop for interfaith, multicultural, ethnic events and activities as well as catering to diversity in our demographics, E.g. LGBTIQ” – survey response

The methodology adopted was to ensure that we honoured the original intentions and objectives of this unique, standalone program of Council that the current operating team were self-reflective, innovative and honest of their experiences and observations, and that we ensured all assertions were tested against the consultation data we had at hand and had gathered during this consultation.



7.1 Model of IC Program

- **Venue and equipment hire:** The IC has a variety of low-cost rooms and technical equipment for hire to suit event, meeting or training needs. The IC hires spaces and equipment at a subsidised rate to community groups, individuals, not-for-profit organisations and for internal use. Commercial hire is also available.
- **Community development opportunities:** The IC's programming includes community development opportunities. The IC work with groups and individuals to support improvement in their desired area. Several groups who access the IC are in receipt of a grant accessed through Council's Community Support Program. This program supports more than 200 organisations and groups to carry out a wide range of projects and activities which enable Darebin residents to participate in the social, cultural and economic life of the Municipality.
- **Program of activities/events:** The IC delivers a program of events throughout the year such as Say NO To Racism training, Sorry Day, IDAHOBIT, World Interfaith Harmony Week, World Refugee Week, Cultural Festivals, English classes and so forth: The IC program of events aims to bring people of diverse backgrounds together to share, learn, connect and appreciate one another.



- **Free public internet access, computer hub:** the computer hub is a relaxed community space where people can come to update their CV, check emails, stay in touch with family and friends, search for job opportunities and at the same time, connect with the IC and its community.
- **Free tea and coffee:** The IC has a community kitchen and lounge area where community members can stop by for a cup of tea and a chat with friends, or meet and mingle with other community members in a safe, non-judgmental and welcoming space. This offering supports Council in addressing social isolation and fostering community connection.
- **Operating Hours:** The IC does not have publicly advertised opening hours, due to an inability of the operational budget to ensure adequate staffing levels. However, the IC is generally open to the community between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. The Centre is available for hire from Sunday to Thursday 9am to 10pm and Friday to Saturday 9am to 11pm

“I am no longer working. When I was, events mostly in the day. Consider working people in your planning.” – survey response



8 Objectives

The IC at the moment is being pushed and pulled between competing priorities which each degrade the intention and mission of the program. It is physically leaned upon by VCAT's presence within the building, it is compromised by the administrative and space allocation of venue for hire, and lacks the mandate to open its doors to the community in informal, spontaneous ways.

Whilst the IC is in this situation it is unable to assert itself into its purpose and is unable to set itself apart from other community centres and community spaces in Darebin.

The service review found within all areas of analysis that this foundational lack of clarity of purpose was at the root of all issues, complaints, suggestions and ideas.

8.1 Objectives of the IC

The Darebin IC objectives were finalised in 2010, they are:

- Create an arena for intercultural dialogue and interaction between Darebin's diverse groups
- Build intercultural skills and competence through formal and informal training and learning opportunities
- Break down barriers between culturally diverse groups
- Foster respectful and constructive inter-racial, inter-cultural and inter-faith relations
- Explore the synergies of intersecting cultures
- Challenge racism and discrimination through education and knowledge-building
- Provide an alternative to gaming venues by offering a range of activities after hours, and on weekends and during the day
- Position Darebin City as a role model of an Intercultural City

“Feels like the current IC is trying to be a lot of different things at once, resulting in some confusion.” – internal stakeholder



8.2 Intercultural Assessment Criteria

Currently, hirers are to demonstrate that the purpose of their activities meets the Centre's objectives to promote intercultural community relations and provide alternatives to gambling. Booking guidelines allow for groups to utilise the IC at subsidised fees and charges of Council or through the Community Support Programs Venue Hire Subsidy.

The ability of the IC to offer groups free of charge use of the rooms is not offered by staff, due to the completely arbitrary nature of the discretionary decision. The lack of guidelines make it impossible for the team to allocate use of the IC in a fair, non-discriminatory way.

Currently, the IC has no method in place to allow community use of the spaces unless a transaction of hire is made - even when community ideas would meet most or all of the ICs objectives.

Centre staff have found the current objectives both vague and limiting in terms of their assessment of hire applications and event activity ideas.

“Should we only be running programs for “multicultural”? Or should mono cultural be included? – internal stakeholder

The existing facilities are not utilised to their full capacity. It is envisaged that broadening the objectives to be more inclusive would result in increased use of the IC, reaching more of Darebin's diverse community.

The IC program currently focuses on interculturalism. Culture in this context can be understood as any of the following:

- Ethnicity, race
- Cultural practice/customs
- Religion, faith or spirituality

Staff at the IC have made a number of observations in recent years about which objectives are working well and which act at times as an obstacle to the community's access. While 'interculturalism' is a solid concept for fostering social harmony and community cohesion, there also needs to be a place within the IC for multicultural and mono-cultural activities,



supporting individual cultures to be maintained and celebrated by those whom are a part of any given community.

The same thinking could be applied to interfaith vs. religious activities. Currently the Centre does not permit religious activities to be held at the Centre; rather they need to be interfaith in nature. This excludes large segments of the community from utilising the Centre for religious gatherings or festivities. With some contradiction Christmas seems to be excluded from this restriction, and is celebrated with Christmas decorations placed around the building and an end of year celebration.

One could argue opening the Centre to religious activities that are not interfaith in nature, and cultural activities that are not intercultural in nature would provide an opportunity for many faiths and cultures to be a part of the one broader IC community, practising their faith and culture side by side, developing relationships in an organic way and perhaps opening the invitation to one another for specific interfaith/intercultural celebrations. This would also leave space for the IC program itself to be the driver of intercultural and interfaith activities.



It is an absurd principle for the IC program to want to promote and encourage “interculturalism” whilst being unable to acknowledge individual cultural expressions or traditions.

The IC objectives could consider culture in a broader context opening the Centre to be utilised by groups, individuals, organisations and companies for activities that relate to any of the following factors that influence ones experience of one’s culture:

- Ethnicity, race
- Cultural practice/customs
- Religion, faith or spirituality
- Sexuality, Sex and Gender
- Education
- Health
- Socio-economic background
- Age and disability
- Arts
- Environment

“When culture only focuses on race, dance, food etc. – it can be exclusionary” – internal stakeholder

8.3 Gaming venue alternative

In regards to providing an alternative to gaming venues, while the IC program does offer a range of activities throughout the year, this objective is currently met in an indirect way. Perhaps the inclusion of this objective needs to be reconsidered or a more direct focus placed on its achievement. This objective was originally included as the opportunity arose for Darebin Council to obtain State Government funding for the creation of “a multicultural hub” defined as an “Intercultural Centre”, with the aim of providing a comparably welcoming environment to that provided by gaming venues; thereby enabling an alternative choice for ethnic groups to visit.



8.4 Measurement of program objectives

The IC program currently does not develop their program, calendar of events, grant submission priorities or workforce development based on the objectives of the IC.

This is partially because the objective are repetitive, too broad, misunderstood, and require evaluation methods well outside the operational budget of the program.

The objectives would be better placed to assist the community and program if they were reviewed, reset and re-committed to.

The objectives of the IC were originally developed before an understanding of the operational context or modality of the program was held.

The operational model was designed in a piecemeal way by resolving issues and needs of the facility and the team which gradually subverted the objectives.

Given that the DIC operates within the wider organisation's response to the needs and issues of multiculturalism in Darebin, its point of difference in this context is that it is a place, containing spaces. The provision of space and a defining place for multiculturalism to thrive in Darebin is the cornerstone of the program. This is its fundamental offering to the community, and it is this service, and this deliverable that all objectives, staffing, operational budget, rules, guidelines and goals need to be built.

As noted during the IC initial 12 month development project in 2011, there are still many new and emerging communities requiring spaces on a continued and occasional basis who are not incorporated and who have limited access to funds for a user-pays model of venue hire. The IC should be a facility that can met the needs of these many groups who need access to community facilities but have little or no capacity to commercial rental requirements to meet Council's Community Support Program criteria and application process or afford Councils' community hiring rate.

"It is a central place to connect and respond to community needs and concerns and bring positive and creative outcomes" – survey response



9 Governance

9.1 History

The Darebin Intercultural Centre Advisory Committee was established in 2013 to promote the Centre's vision, mission and objectives through providing advice and ideas on the Centre's activities and programs as well as exploring avenues to ensuring the Centre's sustainability. However, despite the Terms of Reference assertion that the Committee was to include representation from community users and community groups, the format stifled participation. The Committee members were also unable to participate within the terms of reference. The Advisory Committee was dissolved in late 2014.

9.2 Friends of the Intercultural Centre Model

In 2015, a new model of consumer and stakeholder engagement and consultation was developed through a "friends of" model, designed by the community.

The "Friends of" group model was designed to enhance the capacity of the community to participate in forming the IC, with the opportunity for all levels of participation to be embraced.

It was designed to provide a forum for all Darebin community members to:

- Attract and cater to a diverse group of people providing an accessible and accommodating environment and format for broad participation.
- Gather the community for consultations, celebrations, and to advise Council on the IC program.
- Adopt a multi-pronged approach to community engagement that ensures all members of the community have an avenue that facilitates engagement at different levels, such as:
 - Passive engagement via information dissemination distributed to the community and 'friends'.
 - Involvement according to interests and skills of "friends" (including catering, group leader activities, development of media articles, entertainment, 'buddying' i.e. support to new members).



- Four forums per year offering a format that provides informal and non-traditional methods for diverse and facilitated input by the community. These forums will not rely on paper-based consultation, but instead will explore and encourage innovative ways for community members to share ideas, for the Council to receive feedback, and for the Council and the group to come together to celebrate.
- Forums will inform future forums and themes, provide an opportunity for past activities to be reported on and future activities promoted.
- IC team will communicate findings to representative organizations and council as appropriate.

The development of this model of community based advice and guidance for the program has not been prioritised by the IC team, however it is required for the program's credibility and success in the community.



9.3 Principles of IC Governance

The consultation with the community in 2015 also demonstrated what they wanted from the IC.

The participants of the consultation on governance determined that the following principles were non-negotiable in the development and delivery of this community program.

Principles were:

- Mutual respect
- Provide opportunities
- Listen to people
- Individuals reaching out to groups and groups reaching out to individuals
- Inclusiveness
- Fairness in decision making and resource allocation
- Transparency
- Have a clear understanding of the purpose of IC
- Client focused decision making
- Avoid labels and assumptions about people
- Collaboration

“DECC remains committed to the concept of an Intercultural Centre where we will be based in office space to grow our pool of volunteers; and where we will be able to conduct a range of activities.”

-DECC consultation submission to the IC review



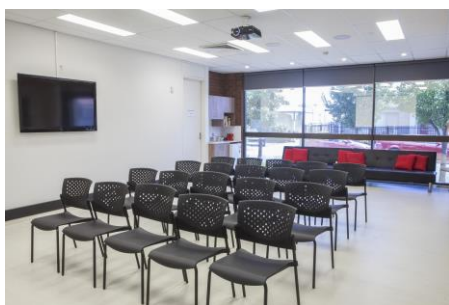
10 Location

10.1 Current Capabilities

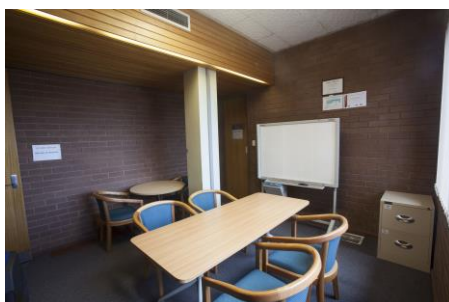
- Large first floor event space suitable for training, meetings or functions. Capacity for seating 60 people theatre style with a small stage (fixed), AV projector and screen, LCD TV, laptop, DVD, Wi-Fi internet, microphone and whiteboard.



- Large ground floor event space suitable for training, meetings or functions. 50 seat capacity theatre style, AV projector, laptop, LCD TV, Wi-Fi internet, microphone and whiteboard.



- 6 person meeting room on the first floor. Single desk office, computer, printer, telephone, Wi-Fi internet, flip board and whiteboard.



- 10 person ground floor meeting room with Wi-Fi, whiteboard and flip board.



- Community kitchen equipped with a fridge, large stove/oven combo, dishwasher, microwave and separate food preparation area. The kitchen is for heating and serving of food only.



- Computer hub with public internet access



10.2 Space Requirements

Various Council Reports over the past 5 years have laid out the compromises to the programs development due to the restriction of the current building, which is not fit for purpose. The essential requirements for the program to be able to grow include:

- A large multipurpose space for 80-100 people
- Design of staff accommodation to include natural light, a workable balance between office space that is secure and private and an ability for staff and community to interact.
- Better design to foster informal community gatherings, meetings and interaction at the IC
- Outdoor spaces for events and programming (ie kitchen, garden, eating areas)

The vast majority of stakeholders felt strongly about wanting the Centre program to relocate to its own fit for purpose building. The vision of a Cultural Centre as a vibrant space for Darebin's diverse communities remains valid, today, more than ever. With a changing demographic and an increased diversity of ethnicities within Darebin, with many newer ethnic groups having emerged, there is a greater need for those ethnic groups to interact with the older and previously established communities, in order to share experiences and to avoid the mistakes and pitfalls of the past. Darebin's ethnic communities need a dedicated space to express their diversity and to share their experiences in order to be willing to showcase their cultures to the wider community.

Staff and community stakeholders spoke of the current location having limited visibility, no connection to the outside, with limited windows. The location is removed and not well known by locals. They wanted more open space, larger rooms so people can come together to interact and celebrate, hold cultural events, festivals, interfaith activities and dance. They also wanted smaller spaces for informal meetings. It was suggested that having outdoor seating and event space is needed.

While 26% of users come from outside of Darebin, the majority live in Preston, Reservoir, Northcote, and Thornbury. Given there is more diversity in the North, it was suggested that a new IC be located in Preston or Reservoir, close to activity and transport and with parking options. Lack of parking and timed parking were raised as an issue by all stakeholders.



There was strong feedback from the community that the Darebin Arts Centre (DAC) arts precinct was a possible future location for the IC due to its ample parking and public transport access, prominent location, space, and potential for multi-purpose use. This site would allow the IC to grow and meet the original concept.

10.3 Department of Justice lease and VCAT collocation

The Intercultural Centre is located at the old Preston Courthouse, a building that is leased by Darebin City Council from the Department of Justice. In 2011 the Department of Justice decided to exercise their right within the terms of the lease to co-locate VCAT hearings within the building. A 30% loss of space for the IC program has resulted from VCAT hearings commencing in February 2015.

A multipurpose space within the building that was previously un-utilised was refurbished through a state government grant to provide the IC program with a second usable, hireable space.

Despite no significant ongoing net loss of programmable space within the building, the impact of VCATs co-location on site detracts from the ability of the program to assert its messages, achieve its goals and adequately provide for a safe and welcoming space.

The presence of VCAT results in the following issues:

- Staff are required to engage in customer service for VCAT clients which is unavoidable due to the building's layout
- Staff and visitors share many areas of the building including foyer, passageways and toilets which results in an inability for IC staff and participants to know who is a part of the program and who is a VCAT client
- The presence of VCAT security guard, staff and VCAT clients who are engaging in a formal conflict resolution process changes the atmosphere and attitudes of the participants and spaces

“current cohabitation with VCAT arrangement means the Centre has stopped being the ‘community hub’ it had become prior to VCAT in the building” – survey response



10.4 Darebin Ethnic Communities Council

The Darebin Ethnic Communities Council (DECC) have been instrumental in working with Council and partner agencies to understand what an IC could be for Darebin and seeing that vision through to today's reality.

DECC have a funding agreement in place with Darebin City Council where the IC provides DECC with in kind office space and utilities, designated quantity of free room hire, and designated photocopying costs.

Despite occasional tensions between the IC team and DECC in relation to co-location matters, the philosophical, practical and planning benefits of DECC's accommodation within the IC works well. The ability for the IC team to negotiate and influence the funding agreement in relation to the clauses that directly affect the operation of the IC, has alleviated the majority of ongoing issues through improved communication.

DECC provided a written submission to this review of the IC as a testament to their history with the IC's creation and intentions and as a keen observer and commentator to its operation since 2011.



11 Events and Activities

The IC program has undoubtedly achieved success through the quantity and quality of the cultural events and activities it has delivered since opening.

The early programming decisions of the Intercultural Centre articulated its purpose as supporting marginalised, isolated individuals to connect with something. Through the doors came thousands of participants, attending activities and celebrations, all commenting that the catering, staff customer service and kind attitude of other guests were the best aspects of the event. This has produced a high customer satisfaction response but channelled the program into a formula of service delivery, which does not acknowledge the full breadth of possibilities of both the program and the communities it serves.

A strengths based approach to social capital, the program, and the way the officers responsible for the Centre operate is vital to allow the Centre to realise its full potential.

The IC must be operated in a way that allows the communities it serves to leverage their own talents, skills, interests and networks to achieve projects and activities and events, rather than becoming beholden and dependent upon officers or Council resources.

Officers based at the IC need to free their time and energies from processing “venue for hire” business and divert their attentions to supporting the communities, individuals and networks who link in to the IC within a community development framework.

The IC needs to value informal, unorganised, unplanned, serendipitous interactions between community members and design a facility and program that supports this important step to harmony.



11.1 Statistics of bookings and attendance

The data on the number of events and attendees at the Intercultural Centre over the past few years has been extracted from the Events Perfect venue booking software. For various reasons, including user error, extraction issues, and multi-categorisation of bookings, the data presented in this report is only an estimate of the types and number of bookings at the IC.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes	
Period	Number of Bookings
2013/2014	321
2014/2015	285
2015/2016	110
2016/2017	16

2016/2017 Events and Attendance		
Event Type	Number of Bookings	Attendance
Community	270	7667
Internal	476	4635
Internal / Community	61	1347
Commercial - Non Profit	9	236
Commercial - Profit Making	2	51
Total	818	13936



2015/2016 Events and Attendance

Event Type	Number of Bookings	Attendance
Community	321	9266
Internal	285	4115
Internal / Community	110	1126
Commercial - Non Profit	16	1159
Commercial - Profit Making	2	20
Total	734	15686

2014/2015 Events and Attendance

Event Type	Number of Bookings	Attendance
Community	404	9632
Internal	147	2202
Internal / Community	167	3119
Commercial - Non Profit	104	2390
Commercial - Profit Making	20	227
Total	842	17570

2013/2014 Events and Attendance

Event Type	Number of Bookings	Attendance
Community	502	14790
Internal	240	4327
Internal / Community	253	4675
Commercial - Non Profit	171	1873
Commercial - Profit Making	1	50
Total	1167	25805



11.2 Customer Feedback Surveys

Customer feedback surveys are provided to participants after each IC organised event. Some interesting observations from the results of the previous 12 months include:

Results

99.5% of participants rated 'Yes' when asked if they had learnt something new at this event.

When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with this event on a scale 1 to 5 with 1 representing 'very poor' and 5 representing 'very good'. 94.6% of participants rated 4 or 5.

When asked the thing they liked most about this event, the most common response across events include:

- Speakers/informative / learning / stories
- Approachability / casual atmosphere / genuine / friendly
- Food
- Diversity / acceptance
- Opportunity to make connections / meeting new people / meeting people of different cultures / sharing stories / sense of connection

When asked the thing they liked least about this event, the most common response across events include:

- Too hot / too cold / stuffy
- Parking problem
- No response recorded

Demographics averaged over previous 12 months:

5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

47% speak a language other than English at home

52% were born outside of Australia

63% are aged 55 years and over



Early data collection for the purposes of evaluating the Centre have focused on number of visitors to the Centre, and whether they had an enjoyable time whilst there. This method of assessing the Centre is shallow and invariably solicits polite responses about the hospitality of the Centre towards its guests. Measurement of the program's objectives has never been done comprehensively with customers. The need to design and establish a long running evaluation of the outcomes of the IC is required. The design could incorporate methods to assess the participants' reaction, behaviours and changes based on their experiences at the IC.

The IC has also been distracted with an analysis of the number of hours of booking/room hire and the number of people who come through the door, rather than an analysis of whether objectives have been met.



12 Venue for Hire

12.1 Booking Policy and Guidelines

The booking policy and guidelines have evolved over the course of the facility's operation to include the following conditions of hire specific to the IC

“No religious or political activities should be conducted at the Centre.

No religious or political material should be displayed at the Centre.

No flags except the Australian flag and Aboriginal flag should be displayed at the Centre

No offensive material should be displayed at the Centre.”

Challenges to the IC's hiring guidelines has resulted in a set of contradictory 'rules' being established to moderate the hirer, community's and team's understanding of what is appropriate expressions of culture. Attempts at designing out inappropriate use of the IC has resulted in stifling, banning and discouraging aspects of our culture and cultural expression.

12.2 Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is proposed as a better way of supporting the IC's determination of acceptable use and behaviour of users.

Human rights are basic entitlements that belong to every one of us, regardless of our background, where we live, what we look like, what we think or what we believe.

Based on the values of freedom, equality, respect and dignity, human rights acknowledge the fundamental worth of each person. The law places responsibilities on government and other public authorities to consider people's rights when developing laws, policies and delivering services.

Human rights are the cornerstone of strong, healthy communities where everyone can participate and be included.

In 2006, Victoria became the first Australian state to enact a Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities following extensive public consultation.



The Victorian Charter requires public authorities, such as Victorian State and local governments, and people delivering services on behalf of government, to act consistently with the human rights in the Charter.

The rights which tend to be most relevant to Council are:

1. Right to recognition and equality before the law (which means: the right to equality)
2. Right to freedom of movement
3. Right to privacy and reputation
4. Right to protection from torture & cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment
5. Right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
6. Right to freedom of expression (– which is limited & does not include the right to say things which vilify or incite hatred towards others)
7. Cultural rights – specifically for Aboriginal people
8. Right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association
9. Right to take part in public life
10. Right to a fair hearing

In short - people must take on responsibilities in exchange for the rights they have and enjoy. It is proposed that by promoting and abiding by the Charter, the currently contradictory and discriminatory 'rules' of hire can be redeveloped.

12.3 Booking Intake and Procedures

The IC could be fully subsidised by Council to enable community groups to engage in intercultural collaboration. This will assist Darebin Intercultural Centre with developing an effective, consistent and active community development based program in partnership with the community. In this sense the IC will have a community development focus to bring communities to share and to learn from each other and to work with Council and with each other to advocate for issues affecting the community. This model will also ensure that the community development program aligns with Council's strategic directions and commitments.



The community development program will be based on the principle of enabling a participatory community model in program development. This means the intercultural team will ensure regular planning meetings with community participation ensuring those meeting are represented by a cross section of Council's culturally, linguistic and religiously diverse community.

This model will enable the Centre to be flexible and responsive to emerging issues.

12.4 IC Bookings Procedures

The IC has been operating within the Community Development Facilities (CDF) Unit as both a hub for intercultural activities within Darebin – as operated, programmed or supported by such groups as DECC, the Equity & Diversity Unit and the Centre itself – and as a venue for hire for other community groups or organisations meeting the Centre's eligibility criteria. It is also available for hire by other internal Council departments for meetings, training etc.

As the IC pre-dates some other venues operated by CDF, the booking procedures and policies have remained somewhat different to those at the newer centres. They have remained different, due to the scope and mission of the centre, which necessitated more specific eligibility criteria for groups and bookings.

Eligibility for hire has been based on the objectives of the IC as well as a number of recommended activities that have previously been linked to these objectives.

Internal Council bookings while not subject to the IC specific criteria have still been considered chargeable and have been charged (via Internal Journal) at the Community Rate.

DECC booking applications have been submitted via an application form sent through to the Intercultural Program Liaison Officer. DECC events are booked at no charge - as per the MOU between DECC and Council – but an accounting of hours and bookings are kept by the IC and Equity & Diversity Unit.



12.5 Commencement of new software for venue hire

With the purchase of USI booking administration software, the CDF Unit as a whole has sought to consolidate its processes and policies in order to bring greater cohesion and simplicity across the board, for staff and customer alike. The arrival of USI facilitated this review both through the inherent changes and updates that a new piece of software brings along with it, as well as through the driving role that the CDF Unit took in the roll-out of the software at Council.

For the IC, then, this has meant a (well-timed) thorough review of all booking processes and procedures, with a view to streamlining so as to prove flexible for any future direction the Centre may take.

As part of the roll-out of USI, extensive training was required across the CDF Unit to bring the permanent and casual staff up to speed with the new system. As part of this, IC staff members were introduced to the new Unit-wide booking and system procedures that would see the Centre become more closely aligned with other centres in the Unit.

Until July 2017, bookings and booking system administration at the IC were only ever performed by the IC Liaison Officer and the IC Business Support Officer. While this provided the centre with total control and attention to detail over the whole process, it was thought that greater flexibility over who could take bookings and provide customer support would further open up the Centre while at the same time make the CDF Unit itself more readily adaptable.

Further opportunities exist to explore ways in which booking intake can be streamlined and IC staff further supported by the CDF Unit workforce for these tasks.



13 Finance

The IC budget has essentially been spent delivering the same operational model since its opening in 2011.

IC Financial Resources 2017-18

Financial Resources 2017/2018	
Room Hire, community grants and internal	(30,000)
Room hire, commercial and casual	(8,833)
Recoup 30% utilities from VCAT	(10,000)
Salaries and on costs, permanent staff	243,108
Salaries and on costs, casual staff	27,552
Utilities and building expenses	62,578
IC Program – scheduled events	30,130
IC Program – passive expenditure	14,948
Total	329,483

A significant amount of the operational budget for the IC is fixed costs. The remaining 'program' budget is stretched across the year to ensure a full program can occur during the year, with a variety of events and activities to suit most interested participants.

In 2013-2014, when the program was delivering a higher number of events and activities, the operational dollars contributed towards the program from Council budgets was approximately \$150,000 greater than the current operational budget. Staff working within the IC were also unable to maintain healthy and appropriate work hours due to the demand to host and facilitate the number of events and activities that were programmed. This situation was unsustainable within the actual operational budget of the program.

The partners and community who are closely linked to the IC perceived this change as being a reduction in investment from Council to the program, however, in actual terms, it was the abundance to operational budget and human resource capacities that pulled the program back within its means.



This change has however demonstrated that the Centre's spaces and vision could incorporate a great number more events, activities, conversations, drop ins, etc with the additional resourcing required to support this expansion.

Greater programming means greater operational budget for both staff, and expenditure on facilitators, catering, equipment, promotion and other costs.

13.1 Income and Revenue

The IC cannot expect increasing revenue/income to not detract from the IC program and concept. In a chasing a dollar, the space for the community to gather is reduced, it holds up staff time on admin, and sets a poor understanding in the community and with our partners that there is no point approaching the IC with an idea or a goal, that is not of financial merit to the IC.

Currently the operation of the program asserts that the IC is a venue for hire, where Darebin Council chooses to place its paying multicultural or intercultural groups/activities/programs that aren't organically/naturally occurring throughout its other facilities.

13.2 Grants

The necessity of community groups to access Council's Community Support Program in order to be able to afford the hire of the spaces at DIC, precludes newly emerging groups, disparate communities, and disorganised communities from utilising the IC. The IC discriminates against spontaneous needs of the community, restricts community development opportunities and insists on groups being organised and literate.

Each year, the IC is in receipt of ad-hoc grants obtained through the state government which add value to the existing program.

Currently the IC is in receipt of a grant from the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC): \$30,000 2016-17; and \$30,000 2017-18 for the delivery of Say NO To Racism training sessions to young people from key identified schools throughout 2017 calendar year. The IC has been offered as a training venue.

Over the 2014-15 and 2015-16 financial years, the IC was in receipt of \$30,000 from OMAC to fund the refurbishment of the ground floor Jade Room which made up for the 30% floor space lost when VCAT moved into the building.



In 2015-16 the IC was in receipt of a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services which resulted in a published booklet, *My Journey, My Lucky Country*, a collection of stories that traces the lives of a number of older people with a migrant experience who reside in Darebin. This booklet was the result of a storytelling project that involved a group of socially isolated senior Darebin residents getting together in a comfortable, welcoming space at the IC to tell their stories of migration to Australia and settlement in Darebin.

The IC is also home to a large number of Council's Community Support Program Venue Hire grant recipients. The majority of these groups are mono-cultural groups who successfully apply to the program based on purported adherence to the IC's objectives.

The current IC is reliant upon external grants to deliver significant projects to the community. The operational budget only supports \$2000 per month for general events and activities.

For the IC to achieve all of its current objectives in any meaningful way, increase to operational budget and remodelling of staff roles and duties would be required.

Community Grants						
Period	Number of Bookings	Hours Utilised	Total Amount Requested	Total Amount Granted	After Grant Changes	Notes
2016/2017	220	578	\$20,286.30	17,000.00		8 groups applied and all were partially successful
2017/2018	279	709.25	21,472.30	18,000.00	\$17,010.00 (1 group declined after being partially successful.)	11 groups applied. 2 received full grants, others partially successful. 1 group was later declined

*Stats gathered through USI booking database



14 Marketing and Communications

The majority of events and activities organised by the IC program are filling with the available participant places. The team are able to assess what type of activity/event is going to be responded well too, and applying appropriate, controlled marketing options to ensure that not too many participants are turned away due to room capacity issues.

14.1 Types of Promotion

Event Promotion		
Type	Method of delivery	Effectiveness
Newsletter	Emailed via mailchimp	Generally considered effective only if done close to event date.
Flyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributed to Customer Service Centres, Libraries and Community Centres• Posted via mailing list	Generally effective. It was observed that people would come into Customer Service front desk with a copy of the flyer to ask further questions.
Reminders	Emailed via mailchimp	Generally considered effective only if done close to event date.
Newspapers	CALD, Preston Leader (through Communications Department)	Events that utilised newspaper promotion are typically very large already, difficult to determine impact in isolation.
Social Media	Mediated through Communications Department	Highly effective, events where social media is used typically have many participants.



Venue Promotion		
Type	Method of delivery	Effectiveness
Brochures (hard and soft)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed to Customer Service Centres, Libraries and Community Centres • Facebook • Darebin website 	Very effective typically around the time of first publication on Facebook.
Hall for Hire website	online	Effective, however many requests are not suitable re IC objectives.
Darebin website	online	Effective, people call to enquire further after visiting the website.
Face to face	Word of mouth from previous hirers	Very effective, often the objectives of the IC are mutually shared with previous hirer.

14.2 What's in a name?

Many respondents expressed that they did not understand the meaning of interculturalism. Interculturalism is understood to be an action approach to addressing multiculturalism amongst modern society. Many users and visitors to the IC are from non-English speaking backgrounds and the definition of an “intercultural” centre may be too complex for them to grasp. The results of the review have strongly indicated the need to consider changing the name of the centre to one that is clearer to the community it serves, and one that better aligns and reflects the Centre’s position in the policy and broader context.

“The term ‘intercultural is at least meaningless and at best confusing” – internal stakeholder

The value of interculturalism is the direction that it sets the IC’s purpose, goals and programming, Interculturalism is what sets this centre apart from other community centres and buildings, but it is in the ‘doing’ not the ‘naming’ of a program.

Name ideas from respondents included:
multicultural centre, inclusion centre, cultural centre.



Interculturalism also sets a precise definition of what the IC is for, clearly stating that the IC is present in the community for interculturalism.

“Inter means within and between. It respects cultural difference and acts, at every opportunity, to bring people of different cultural, language and faith backgrounds together with each other and the Indigenous and dominant cultures, to create relationships which, in turn, increase social cohesion.” Lynda Ford, Intercultural Cities

Currently, the ic purports to foster intercultural activities and programs however, in reality it has only ever skimmed the surface of this way of working, and has instead seen the groups and activities at the centre as isolated hirers, with minimal gesturing towards bringing groups and ideas together.

Many internal stakeholders discussed that culture did not only encompass ethnicity, but was also influenced by faith, disability, socio-economic status, gender and sexuality. Culture is more than that, it is how and why we do things but also how we experience things. Therefore any reference to ‘multicultural’ or ‘intercultural’ policy represents an outdated understanding of culture and social cohesion.

“Multiculturalism can be done elsewhere. Interculturalism is what makes this place different” – internal stakeholder

The results of the review have strongly indicated the need to consider changing the name of the centre to one that is clearer to community and one that better aligns and reflects the IC’s future directions.

14.3 Suggestions for Improvements

Various ideas were put forward, especially through the internal officer consultation of ways for the IC to improve its current program in terms of communication and marketing. These ideas related to signage, customer service interface, the way messaging is displayed at the facility and other key points. These are all found in Section 17 Recommendations Table.



15 Workforce Development

15.1 Human Resources

Currently the IC is supported by the following members of the Community Development Facilities Unit.

- Coordinator, Community Development Facilities – 0.6 EFT, Band 8
- Intercultural Programs Liaison – 1.0 EFT, Band 6
- Business Support Officer – 1.0 EFT, Band 4
- Venue Services Officer – 1.0 EFT, Band 3
- Venue Services Officer – casual support where required.
- In addition to staff, the IC currently supports 8 volunteers working with the community teaching English language classes and tutorials.

The charts below demonstrate the nature and proportion of the tasks that the IC team are performing.

Venue Services Officer

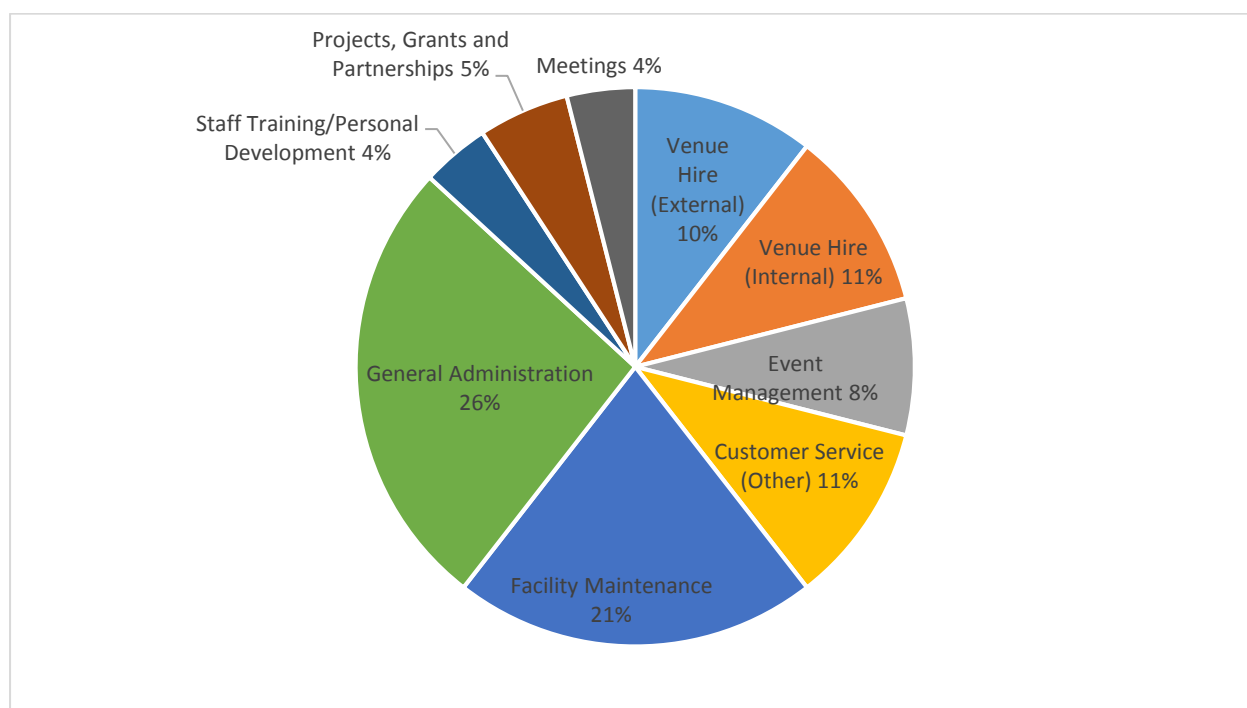


Fig 1.1 Percentage of time over a normal working week spent on given task



Business Support Officer

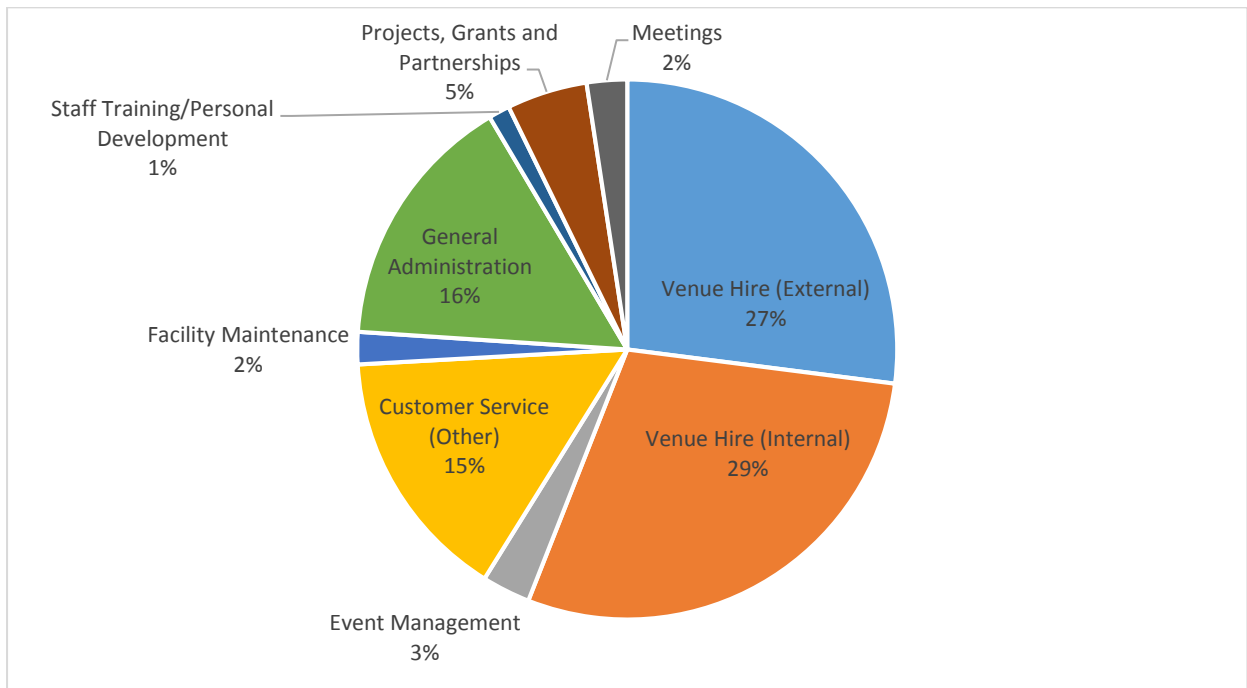


Fig 2.1 Percentage of time over a normal working week spent on given task

Intercultural Programs Liaison

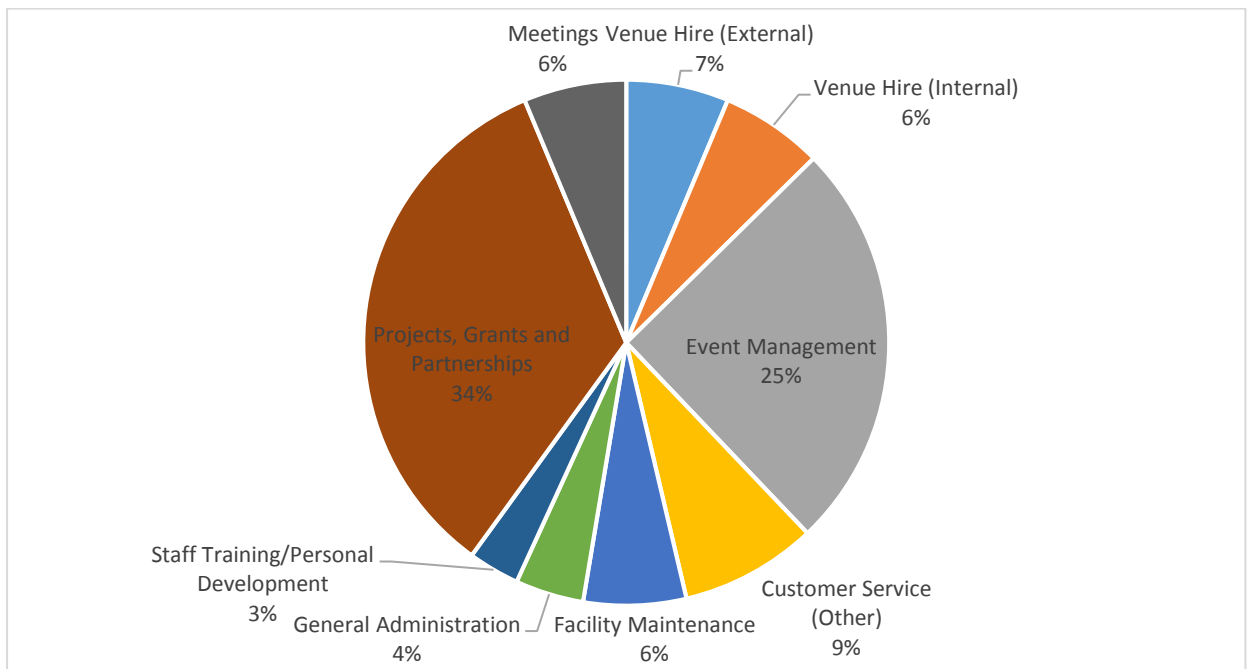


Fig 3.1 Percentage of time over a normal working week spent on given task



To understand the current operational model and nature of the IC, it needs to be viewed as both a facility and a program within the Community Development directorate. Whilst the Intercultural Programs Liaison currently is able to contribute the majority of this positions' time to the program, the Venue Service Officer and Business Support Officer both expend a large proportion of their time to the operation and administration of the facility, from a 'venue for hire' perspective. This vital component of community development within their roles has been eroded by the emphasis on booking procedures and processes, the administrative demands from the Community Support Program Venue Hire subsidy processes, and the customer service requirements from the IC's colocated organisations - DECC and VCAT, in addition to general facility management responsibilities. Determining how the broader CDF Unit can assist the IC team in booking and facility management would support the intentions of the program.

A significant proportion of both the Venue Service Officer and Administrative Officer time is spent on customer service tasks which do not relate to the objectives of the IC. An unintended consequence of this situation, is that it undermines the ability of these officers to provide support to the Intercultural Programs Liaison role, often leaving this role handling the development of partnerships and events alone, working in isolation rather than from a team base to achieving the objectives of the IC.

Banding issues are experienced by the team, where a number of skills needed for the IC or allocation of duties is not possible for the Band 3 and Band 4 team members.

Staff capacity and availability is crucial to the IC being malleable, flexible and agile enough to respond to community ideas and interests, spontaneous and opportunistic community development work.

Performance measures for staff at the IC need to be aligned to the objectives of the program, and incorporate community development principles and methodologies.



16 Relocation Options

During consultation, the inadequate, compromised current location of the program within the former Preston courthouse was raised. Early years of operation for the IC at this location was filled with hope that Council and the Department of Justice could work together to improve the spaces to make the IC viable and vibrant within these walls. However, the recent imposition of VCAT hearings within the building has further highlighted that the room layout of the building is unfit for the purpose of the IC, and the limitation of space within the building for events and activities above 40 people compromises the reach and promotion of the program.

During the consultation period the Darebin Arts Centre site was proposed as an ideal site for a purpose built annex to form a new era for this valued Darebin program.

16.1 Darebin Arts Centre

Incorporating the IC into the Darebin Arts Centre will build upon the opportunities to increase and diversify audiences and support innovation in arts programming as articulated in the Council Plan 2017-2021.

Possible integration with the DAC future options scoping study (Action Plan 2017/2018) could explore collaborative opportunities for locating the IC at this site.

The benefits of this arrangement are significant, with the DAC providing the technical requirements for touring or temporary regional or national exhibitions, performances or installations.

There is an opportunity to annex the IC at the back of the building at the entrance to Ray Bramham gardens with a two story building that is a dedicated cultural space. There would be staff working spaces for both Arts Centre staff as well as Cultural Centre staff and co-located services such as Darebin Ethnic Communities Council. There would be small and medium sized meeting rooms as well as large events spaces which the Intercultural Centre does not currently have.

The two services complement each other beautifully; the Cultural Centre would enhance this arts precinct. The Arts Centre in front bringing Darebin's artists into the spotlight with co-working spaces, professional development opportunities, theatre performances and



workshops; and the Cultural Centre based behind where the intercultural program holds its activities and community groups from all cultures come to meet, participate, advocate and share in their difficulties, achievements, celebrations and to discuss community issues.

If the Cultural Centre moves to a community development model in line with the future Arts Centre, rather than a venue for hire as it currently is, it is envisaged that the venue would be solidly booked for a range of events and activities throughout the whole year – from forums, presentations, information sessions, community lunches, dinners, musical performances and a range of other cultural activities. The possibilities are endless and Darebin's ethnic communities deserve to make use of this arts and cultural precinct and turn it into a vibrant multicultural and arts community hub.



16.2 Preston Civic Central Precinct

Previous report to Council have presented the opportunities surrounding the current location, namely the former Preston Police Station site, former Preston RSL site and Council car park for development. These options exist for further feasibility and scoping of opportunities to expand on the work done to date.

16.3 Relocation Planning

The next steps would include the preparation of business cases for selected site analysis and final site selection, program management considerations (especially the link to community driven options), and the development of Council and community based advocacy campaigns to gain the financial support required to see the vision for a purpose built IC realised.

The focus needs to be on purpose designed space, not purpose built. The design whilst requiring flexible, large open spaces for celebrations and gatherings, also needs to be homely, having small, intimate, safe spaces for conversation, learning, reflection. Ideally, the space would support both internal spaces and external spaces, to reflect the majority of cultural and community meeting places seen within all cultural urban planning. The design should allow for groups to enter and use space without the support of staff to allow for a maximum number of hours of use, with a minimum cost for human resourcing. This also fosters the resolve that the Centre is for the people of Darebin, not a workplace.

The IC could provide access to information technology in the form of office spaces, and internet access for community networks.

A full schedule of spaces required for the IC to embrace its potential and adequately respond to the needs of the community users would be drawn up upon commencement of work into site selection. Each site would offer its own unique set of parameters, opportunities, collaborations and sympathies.



17 Recommendations List

Service element	Recommendations
Comms & Marketing Plan	Signage review – create a consistent brand
	Increased wayfinding signage throughout the building
	Increased location finding in Preston Central and within building
	Advertise & promote more widely with target audience in mind
	Rename rooms to reflect the purpose of facility
	Conduct an audit of the displays, posters, message boards, signs & art to align with the program purpose
	Exploit opportunities for giving messages to visitors.
	Declutter spaces
	Set guidelines for what is displayed
	“Where difference is acknowledged, explored, understood and embraced” – spin it into a positive point of view, a strengths based approach to social capital, remove the reference to difference.
Workforce Development	Position Description Reviews – to analyse tasks required to deliver services and find areas where links to CDF can be exploited
	Teamwork across IC team
	Enhance CD capacity in terms of skill & time through Community Development, Customer Service and Facilitator Training for staff
Hiring Guidelines	Review hiring guidelines with a view to creating “Access Guidelines” that ensure the users of the IC align with the objectives, and that all access and equity considerations are supported in the hiring criteria.
	Process review of booking for both internal and external hirers.
	Incorporate vulnerable groups into the objectives, focus LGBTI community, gender equity, people with a disability – refer to Councils Equity and Inclusion Policy
Purpose & Objectives	Conduct a formal review of the IC programs’ objectives by developing a mission statement, objectives and matching operational model
Hiring Guidelines	Review written materials to ensure that they are consistent with new program.
	Room hire classification for statistics; multicultural, mono-cultural, intercultural



Service element	Recommendations
Program Design	Scope options to make our service more culturally sensitive, environmentally friendly, inclusive for all abilities, etc.
	Drop in opportunities clearly advertised, supported by staff, encouraged by program
	Connections for planning, delivery & partnerships with the groups that use the IC
	Develop ways for the program to respond to and incorporate the feedback for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cooking • More dancing • More exercise • More IT awareness and training
	Host a focus group session with key roles across Council to determine the best approach to include and involve Council departments/units in the decision, design, delivery of the IC program
	Provide more drop in opportunities for conversation, connections and engagement
	More genuine consumer participation mechanisms
Facility & Location Review	Await Council direction to commence planning for relocation options



18 Next steps

This report gathers the thoughts, ideas and issues surrounding the operation of the IC in its current format and location.

This work has been valuable to test the knowledge of the organisation with the community it serves to develop and formulate a way forward.

The next steps from this findings report are varied.

The first step, is for the operational program and management to develop an action plan from the recommendations list. This action plan should incorporate the learning from the various consultations and knowledge of the operation of the IC program to date. The actions will be changes that can be incorporated into the general day to day business and operation of the facility for the community through the work plans of employees, service plans for the IC program, and continuous improvement practices. Most of these actions will be funded through the current operational budget of the program, and where not, identified in the development of the plan and further resources sought.

This action plan can then be implemented during the next three years while the IC program continues within its current location. This work is anticipated to demonstrate the capacity of the program to expand into grander surroundings, by showing cause that with an appropriate vision, mission and objectives in place, where the operational model is based on the achievement of these goals, the IC program warrants expansion.

Another step, concurrent to the operational immersion of this report's findings into the IC, is to take this report to Council. This would provide direction and motivation to allocate resources to the necessary scoping work to determine the feasibility of the IC being relocated.

Further stakeholder engagement across Council and externally would bring about a full list of possible sites and partnerships that could mutually benefit from the IC's need for a new location.



19 Resource List

Various consultation responses, survey reports, information, prior Council Reports, submissions received in relation to this review, data analysis reports, in addition to the appendix of the report, are stored in Objective folder Intercultural Centre review 2017, reference FA769817



20 Timeline

2003

- December
 - Feasibility study for the establishment of the Darebin Intercultural Centre (A1074831)

2006

- November
 - Council leases part of the Preston Court House from the State of Victoria through the Department of Justice
- October
 - Preston Civic Master Plan (draft)

2008

- 17 March
 - Councillor Briefing Paper - Proposal for new Intercultural Facility (A481864)
- 1 May
 - EMT Briefing Paper – proposal to confirm Intercultural Centre concept within the Preston Civic Precinct project (A494238)
- 13 May
 - EMT Briefing Paper – follow up to EMT Briefing Paper dated 1 May 2008, to finalise scale and scope of Darebin Intercultural Centre (A495701)
- 21 July
 - Council Report – Preston Civic Precinct (A955264)
- 29 August
 - Gregory Burgess Pty Ltd provides Draft Report for Intercultural Centre (A783675)
- November
 - Briefing Paper for VCSG application – Darebin Intercultural Centre and Community Hub (A827669)

2010

- 7 December
 - EMT Briefing Paper – Darebin Intercultural Centre Project update (A992260)

2011

- Darebin City Council establishes Intercultural Centre as a centre of excellence for intercultural relations and ongoing community development.
- 8 February
 - EMT Briefing paper – Darebin Intercultural Centre Project update – follow up from EMT Briefing Paper dated 7 December 2010 (A1014849)



2012

- Intercultural Centre Review (A1449655)
- September
 - Darebin Anti-Racism Strategy 2012-2015 (A3879444)

2013

- Council Plan 2013-17: Healthy and Connected Community, Thriving and Creative Culture

2014

- Department of Justice exercises rights under lease agreement to reclaim 30% of the floor space for the purpose of housing VCAT
- 27 October
 - Councillor Briefing – Impact of VCAT on Darebin Intercultural Centre (A2447628)

2015

- January
 - VCAT commences hearings at the Intercultural Centre
- 2 March
 - Council requests report on the designation of the old Preston Police Station as the new Darebin Intercultural Centre (A3614832)
- 16 March
 - Council requests detailed analysis report of programs delivered from the Intercultural Centre
- 4 May
 - Council Report – Programs delivered from the Intercultural Centre (A2593542)
- 17 May
 - Memorandum of Understanding for the shared use of the Preston Court House between Darebin City Council and VCAT, with attached Schedule of Operations (A2634254)
- 24 August
 - Councillor Briefing – redevelopment at former Preston Police Station, overview of options (A2706504)
- September
 - Refurbishment of downstairs space to provide a secondary 'multipurpose room' for the Intercultural Centre to offset the impact of VCAT commencing at the site



- Funded by a grant from the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Community Infrastructure and Darebin's Capital Works budget.
- 7 September
 - Council Report - providing initial costings of the redevelopment of the former Preston Police station site for the Intercultural Centre (A2705543)

2017

- 1-26 May
 - First phase of community consultation concerning the Intercultural Centre review
- June
 - Report from the community consultation survey
- June
 - Council report – Needs analysis including results from first phase community consultation?



21 Appendix

21.1 Internal and external Partnerships

Internal

- Equity and Diversity
- Community Development Directorate
- Creative Cultures
- Health and Wellbeing
- Communications and Marketing
- Economic Development
- People and Development

There are synergies also with other internal Departments particularly around advocacy campaigns, implementing partnerships to advance strategic directions and Council commitments, i.e Environment, key corporate diversity events, community diversity training, implementation of community partnership projects.

External

Darebin Intercultural Centre benefits from the partnerships Council has established with communities, local, state and federal government. Many of the groups who make up these partnerships regularly use the Centre. This includes key community representatives such as:

- Council Advisory Committees, i.e. Darebin Interfaith Council
- Darebin Ethnic Communities Council
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia
- Islamic Society of Victoria
- Islamic Council of Victoria
- Victorian Board of Imams
- Women's Heath in the North



- Darebin Emergency Relief Support Network
- North East Region Settlement Information Network (NERSIN)
- Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network (VLGMIN)
- Multicultural Arts Victoria
- Northern Interfaith Intercultural Network
- Municipal Association of Victoria Multicultural Committee
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Department of Premier and Cabinet Community Resilience Unit
- Department of Premier and Cabinet Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
- Victoria Police
- Amongst others

21.2 Consultation List

Darebin Intercultural Centre Survey 2017 respondents

Individuals who visited the IC during the consultation period

Vietnamese Elderly Citizens Club

Parikia, Greek Choir

Australian Macedonian Disability Pensioners Group, VARDAR

Damayan VIC Inc

Nepalese Association VIC

Friends of Baucau

Multicultural Women's Association Melbourne Victoria

Darebin Connections – Photography – Click Photography Club

IC Mailing list

Committees and Reference Groups including:



DECC Steering Committee

Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Darebin Interfaith Council

Prospective Stakeholders

Darebin Arts Ambassadors Reference Group

Darebin Child Friendly Advisory Committee

Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee

Darebin Women's Advisory Committee

Darebin Education Committee

Darebin Community News readership



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