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# DAREBIN'S INTERCULTURAL CENTRE

Discussion Paper, 2 October 2019

## Acknowledgement of Darebin's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Darebin acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional landowners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and affirms that Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their customs and ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. Council acknowledges that Elders past, present and emerging are central to the cohesion, intergenerational wellbeing and ongoing self-determination of Aboriginal communities. They have played and continue to play a pivotal role in maintaining and transmitting culture, history and language.

Council respects and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination. Council also recognises the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have had and continue to play a unique role in the life of the Darebin municipality. Council recognises and values this ongoing contribution and its significant value for our city and Australian society more broadly.

Acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land and recognising Darebin's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community provides the baseline for all of Council's social justice work.

It is the foundation on which Council's other commitments to all of our residents and communities can flourish and grow.

## Our commitment

Darebin's Intercultural Centre echoes this commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as it is expressed in Council's Draft Human Rights Framework. We place this acknowledgement at the beginning of our Discussion Paper as this is the foundation upon which the renewal of Darebin's Intercultural Centre must be based.

# Darebin's Intercultural Centre and Feasibility Study

The Darebin Intercultural Centre was established in 2011 as a centre of excellence for intercultural relations and ongoing community development.

It was intended to be a practical demonstration of Council's commitment to fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and connectedness between Darebin's diverse cultural groups.

Since 2015, the co-location of the Intercultural Centre with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal has confused the identity of the Centre and disrupted the focus and intention of programming.

In 2017, the Darebin Intercultural Centre Needs Analysis and Service Review recommended that the Centre be relocated. A revised vision, based on an expanded understanding of 'culture' and a more responsive approach to community needs and trends, was also proposed.

Questions about the Intercultural Centre were included in Council's annual community survey (2018-2019). Responses revealed a lack of awareness about what the Centre is and does, and a lack of connection to where it is located within the municipality.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre feasibility study commenced in February 2019 with a scoping study of alternative locations. Ten sites were assessed against criteria that had been generated from interviews with Centre staff, other Council departments,

and the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council. These interviews, plus a small number of intercept surveys at three Darebin events, also contributed an investigation into Centre programming.

This report outlines a new location and a fresh approach for Darebin's Intercultural Centre that is based on the consultations, contributions and recommendations that have been summarised above.



# A new location and a fresh approach for Darebin's Intercultural Centre

The feasibility study recommends that the Intercultural Centre is moved from its current location at 59A Roseberry Avenue to the municipal buildings on the corner of Gower and High Streets in Preston.

The result will be a refurbished public precinct that redefines civic participation and re-asserts our human rights; to be included, to be respected, and to be heard.

## **The renewed Darebin Intercultural Centre will be:**

- Programmed for, by and in partnership with Darebin's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), migrant, refugee and recently arrived communities, and the most vulnerable members of our community
- Dedicated to the elimination of racism and all other forms of discrimination
- A place where connections and fearless dialogue - between people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with different ethnicities, ancestries, identities, customs and beliefs - can occur
- A visible and central expression of our commitment to the pursuit of a more just society

We are proud of our diversity and we see this as our greatest asset. But we also know that racism and other forms of discrimination still exist in our municipality, across our region, and around the world.

Council wants Darebin to be a place where our CALD and migrant residents, our newly arrived and refugee community members, and those who are excluded and vulnerable, can feel safe and welcome, and can participate fully in civic and community life.

Council will continue to support and provide facilities to the community groups and individuals who are currently using the Intercultural Centre, and the Shire and City Halls.

# A new location for Darebin's Intercultural Centre

The feasibility study recommends the relocation of the Intercultural Centre to Darebin's civic buildings on the corner of Gower and High Streets in Preston.

The new location encompasses the Shire and City Halls, a kitchen, offices, meeting rooms, entrances and exits, and the seating, gardens, porticos and pathways around the perimeter of the building.

Relocation to this new site will put Darebin's Intercultural Centre at the heart of the municipality and embed the Centre's mission to eliminate racism and discrimination firmly in the public domain.



# The Darebin Intercultural Centre site scoping study

In 2019, Council commissioned a scoping study into a potential new location for the Darebin Intercultural Centre. Ten sites were surveyed and assessed against the following criteria:

- Site location
- Site ownership
- Current use and availability
- Walkability
- Parking and traffic flows
- Co-location potential
- Preston Incorporated Plan
- Planning restrictions/zoning
- Access to public transport
- Space capabilities
- Community connectivity and safety
- Heritage impediments
- Timing

The ten sites that were surveyed, and how they scored against the criteria, are listed below.

Site	Site Assessment	Site Assessment
Preston Shire Hall	92.9%	Excellent
Former Police Station	91.1%	Excellent
Former RSL Site	82.1%	Excellent
Preston Library Site	82.1%	Excellent
City Hall Car Park	78.6%	Good
Preston Library Car Park	71.4%	Good
Darebin Arts Centre Car Park #1	71.4%	Good
Reservoir Library Car Park	60.7%	Good
Darebin Arts Centre Car Park #2	55.4%	Reasonable
Darebin North East Community Hub	55.4%	Reasonable



# Our renewed vision, mission and approach

## Vision

Darebin's Intercultural Centre is a centre for support, learning and celebration in pursuit of a more just society.

## Mission

We tackle racism and discrimination by strengthening connections between people and communities.

Council will provide:

## Programs

Our programs will be co-designed with the local CALD community, with our migrant, refugee and recently arrived communities, and with others who are vulnerable, under-represented, or who are experiencing racism and discrimination because of their cultural background, their identity or their beliefs.

Community members, cultural leaders, young people, leading thinkers, activists, artists and others will design and deliver activities and events, such as workshops, talks, forums, performances, presentations and conferences, that will give their communities a voice.

CALD community members will create programs that will shape the agenda of our municipality, build the foundations of their own self-determination, and facilitate intercultural relationships and cultural exchange.

These programs will offer skills development, training and learning opportunities, provide a forum for

ideas and advocacy, and encourage rigorous debate.

## Connections

Darebin's Intercultural Centre will enable connections between people from all cultural backgrounds and from all walks of life. We will plan for meaningful interactions between people with shared characteristics, such as their homeland, language, traditions, ethnicity, ancestry or faith.

The Darebin Intercultural Centre will be a welcoming, accessible and adaptable place where intercultural connections will happen accidentally and by design.

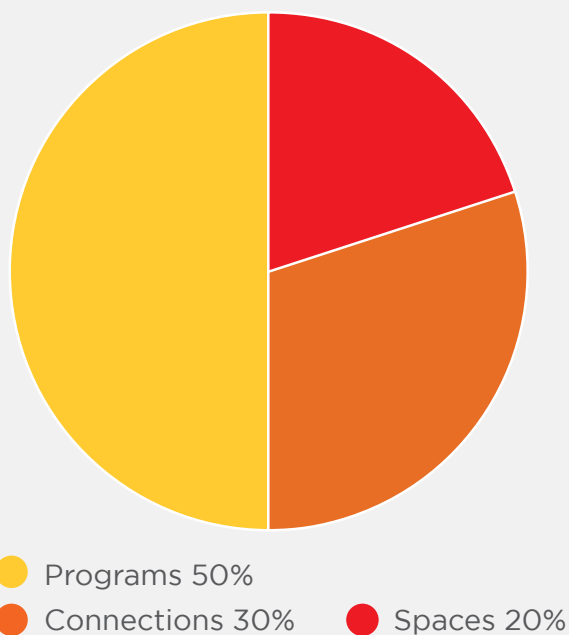
We will provide translation and interpreting services and invest in technologies of inclusion.

We will examine our own bias and investigate how power and privilege can exclude individuals and groups in our local community. We will use this knowledge to break down barriers to participation in civic and community life.

## Spaces

We will support our CALD community, local cultural groups, key agencies and service providers, advocates and activists, by providing culturally-fit-for-purpose spaces. Our spaces will be used for conversations, celebrations, gatherings, workshops, meetings, co-working, hot desking, counselling, meditation, prayer, cooking, training and debate.

### Indicative mix of **programs, connections and spaces**



### **Who is the Intercultural Centre for?**

We will work with people from all different kinds of cultural backgrounds, who have many different identities, histories, customs and beliefs. We will work with people who are at all ages and stages of their lives and are from across the whole municipality.

To combat racism and discrimination at the local level we will prioritise:

- migrant and receiving communities
- refugee and recently arrived communities
- members of our community, individuals or groups, who experience discrimination as a result of their identity, their ethnicity and/or their beliefs
- the most vulnerable members of our community

### **How the community are involved**

There are many ways to become involved in Darebin's Intercultural Centre.

#### **By invitation**

Members of the local CALD community, our recently arrived, refugee and migrant communities, and special guests from further afield, will be invited to the Centre, to design and participate in programs, to make use of spaces, and to determine what will happen next.

#### **By application**

Other opportunities will be offered upon application so that we can continually update our connections and relationships. This will include design and participation in programs, curation of special events, campaigns or investigations, and the use of our spaces for meetings, gatherings, workshops, celebrations and reasons that are as yet unknown.

### **Partnerships**

The Intercultural Centre will form partnerships with local CALD organisations, service providers and cultural groups. We will establish relationships with peak bodies and institutions, national and international agencies, who are working to combat racism and discrimination at the cutting edge.



## Community-led and co-designed

Members of the CALD community will lead and co-design programs and projects. Avenues for ideas that are generated by the community will be facilitated and kept open. Research and outreach will be a key to our approach, with a focus on issues and needs that are identified by the local CALD community.

## Community hub

Various local CALD community groups, organisations and key service providers will use the Centre as a base for their operations, for meetings and administration, and to support and engage with individuals and groups. Representatives of relevant local, national and international agencies,

and special guests, will also spend time working, presenting and being in our spaces.

## A renewed civic precinct

This renewal of Council's civic buildings will provide a front-facing facility that embodies equity and inclusion in both the built design and the approach to programs, connections and spaces. Members of the local CALD community, our recently arrived, refugee and migrant communities, our most vulnerable, and all of our community, are welcome to gather, mingle and be here.



# What spaces are required?

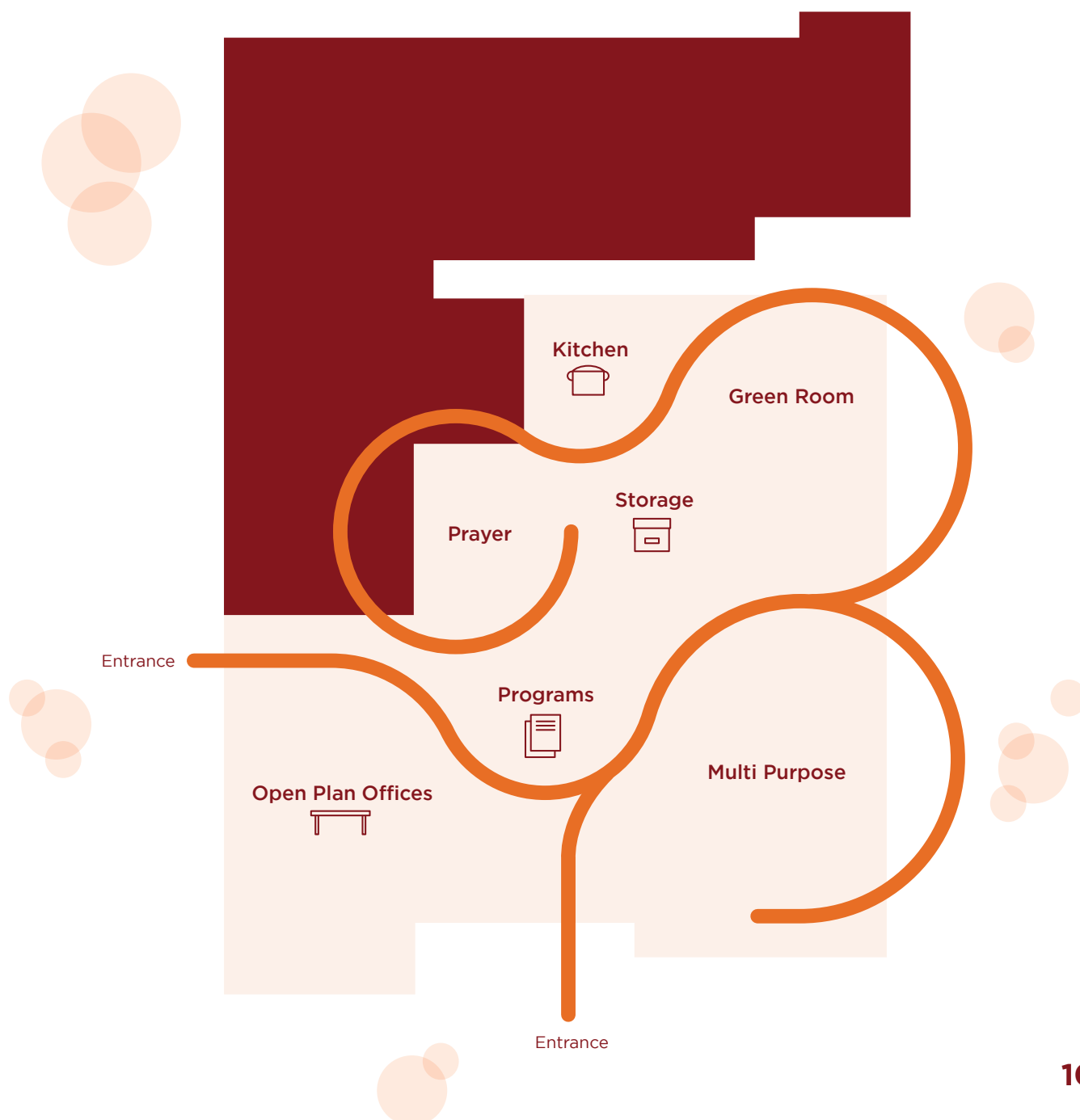
This diagram shows an outline of the spaces that could be suitable for a renewed and relocated Intercultural Centre, and how they relate to each other. These kinds of spaces will be designed into the existing footprint, which will also be modified to become fit-for-purpose.

The design will be multi-purpose and flexible; offices and meeting rooms will be open plan.

The ability to interact and connect is fundamental to how these spaces have been imagined.

The design brief will be developed to accommodate the specific needs of different cultural groups and to be adaptable as these needs change.

Equity, inclusion and access are integral to the design and will be embedded in the built form.



# Summary

A recent survey conducted by the Scanlon Foundation found that 1 in 5 Australians in 2018 had experienced racism in the past 12 months.

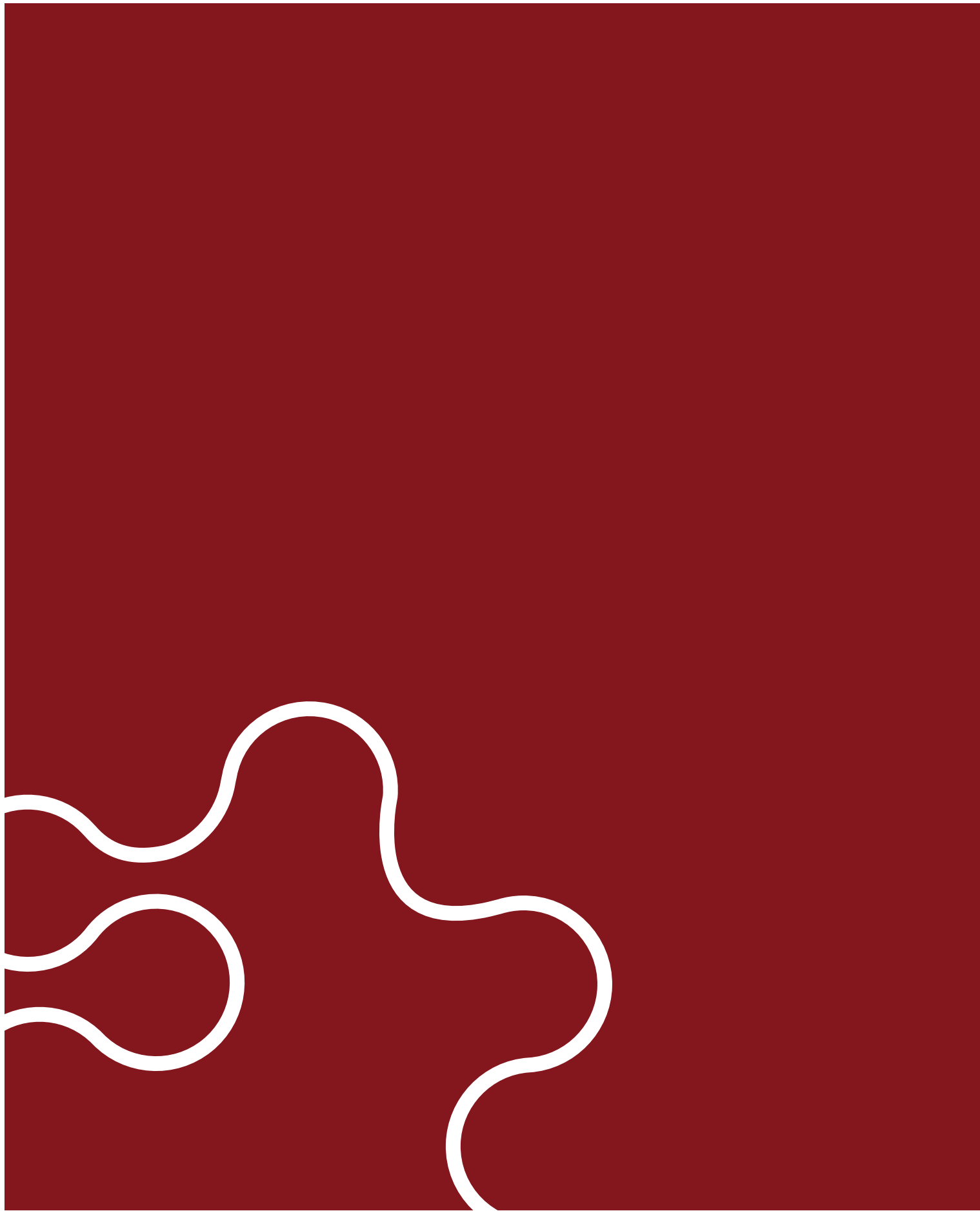
Darebin Council places a high priority on human rights and on services, facilities and programs that benefit all, including our most vulnerable.

We have signed on to The Welcoming Cities Standard, demonstrating our commitment to being a 'welcoming place'.

Diversity is our strength and our future. We want to be a modern and inclusive city, that is trusted by our CALD community and open to all. We want to be a place that is free from racism and discrimination.

Renewing our Intercultural Centre by moving to a new, more visible location, and by updating our approach, may be one way in which we can make a contribution towards a more tolerant local and global society.





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