



DAREBIN ABORIGINAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAAC) TERMS OF REFERENCE

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land and respects and recognises Aboriginal communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and their right to self-determination

1. Background

Darebin City Council has a long-standing commitment and relationship with the Darebin Aboriginal community. The Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee (DAAC) was established following agreement between Council and the former Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council (DATSICC) to implement a new advisory structure that would further strengthen membership and community participation, capacity and level of engagement and influence on Council matters. The DAAC was established in 2011.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group

DAAC is an advisory committee to Darebin City Council with a purpose to provide strategic advice and guidance while advocating on issues and barriers affecting Aboriginal community in the Darebin region. The DAAC will receive reports and provide input into Council's policy and decision-making processes. The DAAC informs, monitors the implementation of, reviews and evaluates the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2027](#) and the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2017-2021](#). The DAAC assists in the development of future Aboriginal plans.

2.1 Policy Context

DAAC supports Council's goal to build a safe, inclusive and equitable community where all feel socially well connected, respected and valued as articulated in the [Council Plan 2017-2021](#) in particular: Goal 5.3 *We will be responsive and respectful to the current and emerging aspirations of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Darebin.*

The aims and objectives of DAAC are underpinned by Council's rights-based Towards [Equality Framework 2019-2029](#) and in particular: *Principle 1: Recognising Australia's First Nations peoples and the right to self determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a foundation for equity and fairness.*

Council's [Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People](#) articulates Council's long-standing partnership and undertaking to the Aboriginal Community. The DAAC's purpose is underpinned by this commitment formed in 1998 and reaffirmed in 2019.

Finally, DAAC directly supports and contributes to the aims of the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2017-2021](#) to; “increase Aboriginal community participation through advocacy of issues affecting Aboriginal community and to inform and improve Council decision making in relation to policy and service delivery”.

2.2 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of DAAC are grounded in a social inclusion and human rights-based framework, affirming:

- Respect and recognition of Aboriginal communities’ values, living culture and practices, including their cultural and spiritual connection to land and the rights to self-determination.
- Aboriginal people who live, work or study in Darebin have the right to equal access to services, projects and programs initiated by Darebin City Council and to participate in all aspects of community life,
- The right of all Aboriginal people in Darebin to live without fear of discrimination or any form of social disadvantage,
- The need for continued Aboriginal community participation and awareness raising in processes of advocacy and community-based action to address barriers to equality, health, education and social justice in closing the gap in Darebin.

2.3 Objectives:

The Objectives of Darebin’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee are:

- Develop and maintain strong relationships between Council and the local Aboriginal community so as to be a connection between Council and the Aboriginal people of Darebin,
- Monitor Council’s progress and provide feedback on the implementation of [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2027](#) and the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2017-2021](#),
- Provide input into the review and evaluation of these plans,
- Raise awareness and advocate for improved access to Council services by Aboriginal people and cultural relevance and appropriateness of all Council services, policies and programs,
- Facilitate Council’s access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, businesses, stakeholders and community leaders,
- Assist council to identify and remove barriers to equal participation for Aboriginal people and community,
- Advocate for Aboriginal community in Darebin, promoting recognition of Aboriginal contributions to our community and enhance understanding about barriers to social inclusion, self-determination and equality facing Aboriginal people and community in the Darebin region,
- Contribute in the monitoring and evaluation of council policies, projects and services that impact or that may potentially impact Aboriginal people, notably by receiving progress reports on the implementation of the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2027](#) and the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2017-2021](#).

3. Membership of DAAC

3.1 Membership of DAAC is made up of:

- Councillor representative(s) to chair the Committee,
- Community members consisting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and service providers,
- Representative of Wurundjeri Tribe Lands and Compensation Heritage Council Incorporated (Traditional Owners),
- One Council officer, and others as required,
- Apart from Councillor(s) and officers, the committee's membership should not exceed twelve.

3.2 Membership Diversity

The committee should reflect the full diversity of Darebin Aboriginal community in terms of;

- Age,
- Gender balance,
- Aboriginal status (Youth, Elders),
- Education and employment status,
- Role within community.

The Committee will seek to build and reflect diversity within membership and be inclusive in practice.

3.3 Sitting Fee for Aboriginal Membership

To allow diversity in participation and taking into account the multiple responsibilities Aboriginal people have to their cultural obligations both in their work roles and wider community responsibilities and to acknowledge and value Aboriginal member's cultural knowledge, advice and guidance, the council will provide Aboriginal members with a sitting fee of \$60.00

3.4 Role of Members

DAAC members will fulfil their role by:

- Attending meetings and making a commitment to actively contribute to the activities of the Committee,
- Advocate on behalf of the Aboriginal community and to build a collaborative relationship with Council,
- Providing input, views and advice on the implementation into the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2027](#) and the [Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2017-2021](#),
- Provide advice to Council on the development of new policies and strategies using a cultural lens to highlight potential barriers to access for Aboriginal community,
- Assist in shaping and promoting but not limited to, a range of projects, notably Councils' celebrations of NAIDOC, Reconciliation and other significant Aboriginal events,
- Facilitate Council's engagement with the Aboriginal community and assisting Council to connect with Aboriginal organisations, people and its networks taking into account the different perspective, diversity and cultural complexities of Aboriginal community.

4. Terms and Method of Nomination of Members

4.1 Method of Nomination

Nomination for the appointment of members of DAAC will be called through an expression of interest process and reviewed by an internal Council selection panel. The process will be advertised widely through appropriate promotion in local newspapers, promotion on Council's website and by communication to Aboriginal community organisations and Aboriginal community public email listings where deemed appropriate. The selection panel provides a recommendation to Council on the successful candidates.

4.2 Terms of Appointments

Appointments to the committee will be for a period of two years. Three months prior to the end of the term, the Aboriginal Contact officer will review appointments and a subsequent expression of interest invited (as per the process is 4.1 above). Members will have the option to reapply for a further two years (once only).

- All appointments will be determined by Council,
- If a member does not attend at least two (2) meetings (half of the minimum number of meetings to be held) meetings per year without prior notification being given, their position may be considered vacant,
- Councillor representation is decided at a Council's Special Meeting in November each year,
- Community members are two-year appointments, with all members eligible to reapply for membership at the end of the two-year term,
- Members can serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms,
- If a vacancy occurs, it will be filled at the discretion of Council and made effective through a letter signed by Council's Chief Executive. Members nominated to fill a vacancy are appointed for the remainder of the term of current members only.

4.3 Replacement of Members

- If a councillor resigns at any time, a replacement will be appointed by council at the next practicable Council meeting,
- If a community member resigns within six month of appointment the selection panel will reconvene and select a replacement from the unsuccessful candidate at the most recent expression of interest process. The candidate will be recommended to Council for appointment,
- If a community member resigns within six months of the end of their term, they will not be replaced,
- If a community member resigns at any other time, DAAC shall determine an appropriate mechanism for selecting a replacement, with any appointments to be made to Council.
- Members may be replaced at any time by resolution of Council.

5. Meetings and Procedures

5.1 Meetings

- The Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee will meet at Council's offices a minimum of four (4) times a year, with the possibility to organise additional meetings as required,
- Dates and times of the meetings will be determined by Council, taking into consideration members' constraints and the need to allow participation from a wide range of Aboriginal people across the municipality,
- Assistance with attendance is offered in the way of sitting fees (see 3.2. above) to allow engagement in participants,
- Meeting will be held in the Council conference room (unless otherwise notified) and will be from 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm (unless otherwise notified),
- Should a change in meeting room or time be required membership will be notified by the Darebin Council staff,
- Members unable to attend a scheduled meeting are required to notify the meeting organiser prior to the meeting taking place.

Light food and coffee/tea/juice are supplied by Council.

5.2 Chairperson

A nominated Councillor will act as Chair of the Committee. Where two Councillors are appointed to the committee, they will share the role of Chair.

In the absence of Councillors at a meeting, the Committee members will determine to appoint a Chair for the purposes of conducting the meeting.

The responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available,
- Facilitating productive discussions, with care not to enter into operational matters and ensuring members understand these are outside of the scope of the committee,
- Assisting members to abide by the Code of conduct (see 5.4. below), including by taking action in case of breaches,
- Reviewing and approving minutes before distribution as needed,
- Where appropriate, updating Council on the progress and discussions of DAAC, e.g. through Councillors' reports at Council meetings.

5.3 Officer support

Darebin City Council's Aboriginal Contact Officer will take responsibility for providing executive support to the Committee including provision of meeting agendas and minutes.

- Committee agendas will be forwarded to DAAC members by email no later than one week (five working days) before a scheduled meeting,
- Minutes will be provided to Committee members no later than two weeks (ten working days) after a scheduled meeting, including details of proceedings and clearly expressed resolutions (where applicable), and including relevant documentation as attachments where necessary,
- Records of agendas and minutes will be maintained in accordance with *Public Records Act* requirements.

5.4 Recommendations to Council

The role of the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee is to provide advice to Council. As such it does not have any decision-making powers. The role and input provided by DAAC members is valued however, Council receives submissions from a wide range of stakeholders and all submissions are considered in Council's decision-making processes.

Where the committee needs to make recommendations to Council, a consensus of all members present will be sought.

In the absence of such consensus and provided there is a quorum of at least half of the members (apart from Councillor(s)/Chair and officer(s)) present at the meeting, the recommendation will be put to a vote with the majority recommendation being endorsed. Officers can never take part in the vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

It is up to the supporting officer to follow up on the Committee's recommendation, including deciding on the most appropriate means to report back on it to Council or internal departments.

The Committee **does not have an operational role and may not direct Council staff** in the performance of their duties.

5.5 Conduct of Committee members

Members will:

- Act honestly and treat others with respect. Failure to do so will be dealt with by the Chair as appropriate,
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence,
- Not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired because of their position.

Where there is a requirement for confidentiality, this is to be noted in the minutes if the matter arises during a meeting, or made clear to members if arising in communication outside of a meeting (e.g. provision of a draft policy ahead of a meeting, for discussion and feedback at the meeting), and addressed accordingly.

Members must disclose a conflict of interest in relation to any matter the Committee is concerned with or that the committee will, or is likely to, consider or discuss. The conflict of interest, including the nature of the relevant interest, must be disclosed before the matter is considered and must be recorded in the minutes.

Members of the Committee are ***not authorised to speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of the Committee (and much less Council)***, unless the member is a Councillor. In that case, any engagement with the media will be in accordance with Council's standard media and communications policy.

Members are authorised to disclose general information such as objectives of the Committee, membership procedures, list of activities and information regarding any issues that have already been previously dealt with and approved in the Committee's discussions.

Members must ensure that new issues raised by the public or community are brought back to the Committee for consideration before any public information or response is provided publicly in relation to the issue.

6. Induction

Prior to starting their term, committee members are required to attend an induction session provided by Council and which informs the Committee about Councils' role, services, policies and organisational structure.

All new members, including Councillor representative will be provided with an information/resource package by the supporting officer consisting of:

- Meeting schedule,
- Terms of Reference,
- Relevant Council Strategies,
- Council Structure – including organisational chart and councillors,
- Community Profile,
- Membership list,
- Officer contact details.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Operations of DAAC will be evaluated annually via a number of methods (including reflective self-evaluation of the Committee) to ensure that the Committee is achieving its objectives. Results of the evaluation will be reported in an annual progress report submitted to Council detailing the Committee's activities and achievements.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee are to be reviewed annually no later than October (prior to the statutory meeting) and any changes are to be endorsed by Council.