

Darebin Gender Equity Advisory Committee
Meeting minutes



Date: Tuesday 26 March 2024 (Meeting 1)

Meeting time: 5.30pm - 7.30pm

Meeting venue: In person (Darebin's Birnum Djirri room, Preston) with hybrid attendance.

Present

Chair: Cr. Susan Rennie (5.30-6pm), Kathie Duncan (6-7.30pm)

Councillors:

Cr. Susan Rennie

Community representatives:

In person: CLJ, AW, RG, ZB, SL, AG, MT, LR, GDS

Online: JWN, LB, MB, ES (WHIN)

Council staff:

- Kathie Duncan (Coordinator Equity and Diversity)
- Jade Myconos (Gender Equity Officer)

Guest presenters:

- Martti Martinson (Strategic Project Officer, Darebin)
- Natalie Jamieson (Environment Programs Officer, Darebin)
- Stephanie Lai (Senior Environment Strategy Officer, Darebin)
- Yash Duggal (Manager City Safety and Compliance, Darebin)
- Rhett English (Coordinator Civic Compliance, Darebin)
- Jessica Creed (Team Leader Local Laws and Animal Management, Darebin)
- Narelle Wilkins (City Safety Operational Support Officer, Darebin)

Apologies:

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis, RV, SD

Minute taker:

Jade Myconos

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1. Acknowledgement of Country

The Acting Chair opened the meeting at 5:35pm and acknowledged the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Land, the Wurundjeri people, and paid respect to their Elders, past and present and emerging.

2. Introductions and apologies

New committee members were welcomed. Eleven new members have joined the Gender Equity Advisory Committee. All members and staff introduced themselves and shared a little about why they wanted to join GEAC.

Apologies were noted.

3. Actions arising from previous minutes

The Gender Equity Officer provided an overview of the actions from the previous minutes as follows:

Action: Jade to invite representatives from the Operations Centre to share any targeted recruitment plans or learnings of value to community. Noting they advertised Street Sweeper roles identified for women applicants in recent years and may have learnings to share with community.

Comment: Still in progress.

4. Endorsement of minutes

December 2023 meeting minutes were adopted.

Moved: Carmen

Seconded: Committee members.

5. Conflict of interest

Committee member MB declared a potential conflict of interest for any future matters which may arise relating to the Department of Families Fairness and Housing.

No conflicts of interest were declared for this meeting.

6. Other business

No additional items were added to this meeting agenda.

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7. LGBTQIA+ Action Plan development, consultation.

Darebin's Strategic Project Officer, Martti Martinson, presented the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan Development and consultation.

Summary:

We want Darebin to be a safe and inclusive place for everyone. There is a growing body of evidence about how not feeling included and safe impacts the health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTQIA+ (or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTQIA+)) communities including an increased risk of physical and mental health issues. Council has made a long-standing commitment to support the rights of people and groups who experience discrimination and disadvantage, including within the LGBTQIA+ communities. Darebin previously had a Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Action Plan which expired in 2017. Council is currently in the process of developing an LGBTQIA+ Action Plan which will build on the previous action plan and will continue supporting Council in this area.

Please find more information and to respond to our survey [Development of Darebin's LGBTQIA+ Action Plan | Your Say Darebin](#). Consultation is open until 31 March 2024.

Response to questions or clarification from members:

- Over 100 submissions have been received so far.
- Engagement has occurred at events including Midsumma Festival, Northcote Rise Festival and the Pride Makers Market.
- Council is aware of the change.org [petition](#) advocating for Darebin to include hat protection measures in Darebin's LGBTQIA+ Action Plan.
- When using the Your Say platform to provide feedback there is a 'vision tool' where survey respondents can post photos etc.

Questions to the Committee:

1. How welcoming, safe and inclusive is Darebin for members of LGBTQIA+ communities, particularly for trans and gender diverse people?
2. What could be done to make Darebin as a place more welcoming, safe and inclusive for trans and gender diverse people?
3. How could Council improve its services, programs and facilities to make them more accessible, safe and welcoming for LGBTQIA+ communities?

Member discussion and feedback:

- Darebin has a fairly-good reputation overall.
- Well-lit streets would improve safety for everyone.
- Toilets, Darebin needs more public toilets.
- Businesses could be encouraged to provide safe spaces for members of the community to access their toilets. Note: Further discussion needed around how to identify 'safe' businesses, and incentives to encourage businesses to engage. This could include reviewing Darebin's [Social & Sustainable Procurement](#) policy or having expectations around Council owned venue use.
- More research is available about prevalence of intimate partner violence perpetrated by cis-gender men against trans women. Victim-survivors often experience barriers to accessing support. Could Council provide information to businesses and their patrons to help destigmatise experiences of community members who do not identify as [cis-heteronormative](#). [Zoe Belle Gender Collective](#) mentioned as a resource service.
- [Your Community Health](#), Youth and Leisure services do most of the 'heavy lifting' to be inclusive and accessible for trans people. While bathroom accessibility is important, sometimes 'smaller' actions like proactive pronoun understanding and use helps increase feelings of safety and inclusion. Inclusive and welcoming neighbourhood houses and public pools have the allot of work to do.
- Can Council play a role in supporting schools to respond to gender related bullying which is very prevalent?
- Darebin should consider seeking feedback from participants in new [parent groups](#) supported by Darebin. For example, sending a survey to parents who have participated in those groups about how inclusive it has felt, as there is no 'Rainbow group' option for new parents.
- Darebin does not have a LGBTQIA+ social group, we need queer groups! And not just for young people!

ACTION:

- 1: Jade to provide Martti's email – with group. [Actioned with meeting minutes distribution.](#)
- 2: Public toilet discussion – invite Darebin Officers overseeing the public toilet strategy to a future meeting. [Actioned](#)
- 3: Jade to send previous [LGBTQIA+ Plan](#) to the Committee for comparison. [Actioned with meeting minute distribution.](#)

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8. Draft Climate Emergency Plan, presentation.

Darebin's Environment Programs Officer, Natalie Jamieson and Senior Environment Strategy Officer, Stephanie Lai presented on the Draft Climate Emergency Action Plan's development and consultation.

Summary:

Darebin is a leader in climate action, having been the first in the world to declare a climate emergency (in 2016). In our new draft Climate Emergency Plan, we step up our efforts to reduce emissions, while keeping our community safe and helping our city thrive. Based on the feedback from Stage 1, the new draft Climate Emergency Plan includes four core pillars (or key directions):

1. Caring for Country,
2. Towards Zero Emissions Darebin
3. Community Resilience and
4. Innovation and Leadership.

We have developed goals and actions under each of these pillars to guide our response until 2030. Members are encouraged to review the actions in the Climate Resilience Pillar in particular for any missing actions.

Please find more information and to respond to our survey before the meeting: yoursay.darebin.vic.gov.au/climate Consultation is open until 7 April 2024.

Questions to the Committee:

1. What do Gender Equity Advisory Committee members think of these proposed goals and actions?
2. Do they support Council and community to take strong action to reduce greenhouse gases?
3. Will they help make the Darebin community stronger and more resilient, and support those people most impacted?
4. Will they enable our city and natural environment to thrive?
5. Are there any actions we have missed?

Member discussion and feedback:

- Reference to a research paper which tells us that local governments are our only option to mitigate climate change because State and Federal have not succeeded.
- Council budget and resourcing to support this work is important.
- Sliding scale of impact – can we incentivise solar in insulation installing for residential properties on a sliding means scale for community members?
- Council permits can take a longtime and this is difficult to accommodate in the building process. Can we streamline the Council process for things that have a climate impact?
- Climate resilience inquiry open until 1 May:
<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/climateresilience> - should Council make a submission?
- What is the role for Council to play in encouraging people to use active transport and lowering emissions that way.
- People are cynical about recycling etc – should there be more of a recycling piece included?
- Electricity chargers for cars – kerbside
- Broader opportunities to use Council land for growing vegetables, etc.
- Zero carbon economy – should circular economy be more clear in the Strategy?

Q: How do we support and resource people and businesses? **A:** Often with partnerships with other services or organisations etc.

Q: How do we get money/resources to do this work? **A:** Budget discussion is underway at Councillor level. Ideally State and Federal Governments need to contribute also.

9. Local Laws, consultation.

Darebin's Manager City Safety and Compliance, Yash Duggal; Coordinator Civic Compliance, Rhett English; Team Leader Local Laws and Animal Management, Jessica Creed and City Safety Operational Support Officer, Narelle Wilkins presented on the Local Law review consultation.

Summary:

Darebin's current General Local Law No.1 2015 is ending 30 June 2025. Therefore, there is a legislative need under the *Local Government Act 2020* to conduct a review and adopt a new Local Law. The Darebin's current General Local Law (commonly referred to as Local Laws) includes a set of laws relevant to local municipal area that respond to issues and community

needs within a local context. They are dealing with, but are not limited to, protection of local amenity, community safety & wellbeing, environment as well as regulating activities on Council controlled land and roads. The Council Plan 2021-25 Action Plan includes, “Develop a proposal for improvements to the General Local Law including, consultation with community.”

Response to questions or clarification from members:

Council is moving to de-criminalising homelessness in the Local Laws. Council understands the link between homelessness and family violence and takes a person centred not criminal response. Darebin has a Memorandum of Understanding with Merri Outreach Support Service who provide an Assertive Outreach Program to people sleeping rough in [Darebin](#).

Questions to the Committee:

1: Nothing specific at this stage, but any feedback is welcome.

Member discussion and feedback:

- Important to consider why are people engaging in certain types of behaviours. People sleeping in vehicles experiencing homelessness for examples.
- Household waste– considering reasons someone might not bring their bin in within the timeframe – could be due to disability for example.

Note: Limited time left for discussion. Members encouraged to send through additional feedback via email.

ACTION: Actions: Jade to send email address for group to provide direct with any feedback about the Local Laws review. *Actioned with meeting minute distribution.*

10. General business

Nil.

11. Meeting feedback and meeting end.

- The Chair thanked everyone for their time.
- Noted that future meetings will allow more time for discussion.
- The meeting was closed at 7.32pm

12. Next meeting

Tuesday 25th of June 2024