

Darebin Gender Equity Advisory Committee
Meeting minutes



Date: Tuesday 5 December 2023 (Meeting 4)

Meeting time: 5.30pm - 7.30pm

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

Present

Chair: Cr. Susan Renni

Councillors:

Cr. Susan Rennie (Chair)

Community representatives:

Rosa Vasseghi, Anna Scovelle (online), Carmen Lahiff-Jenkin (arrived 5:40pm), Megan Burke (online), Amanda Wilczynski.

Council staff:

Jade Myconos (Gender Equity Officer)

Guest speakers:

Apologies:

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis, Jo Van-Dort, Felicity Rorke, Samantha Young, Melissa Collins, Emily Fraresso, Sandra Morris.

Minute taker:

Jade Myconos

1. Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country, and Apologies

The Acting Chair opened the meeting at 5:35pm and welcomed everyone, acknowledged the traditional owners and custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri people, and paid respect to their Elders, past and present and emerging.

Apologies were noted.

2. Actions arising from previous minutes

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

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Action: Jade to follow up opportunity for GEAC to provide input to the Climate Emergency Strategy.

Comment: Since our last meeting, Darebin's Equity and Diversity Team have undertaken a Gender Impact Assessment on the draft Climate Emergency Strategy. Part of the advice given during the assessment was for the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Transport to present the draft Strategy to GEAC for further input at GEAC's first meeting of 2024 or to circulate information to members for input prior to then.

ACTION:

Jade: 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.

3. Endorsement of minutes

Minutes were circulated to members 7 of September 2023

Moved: Carmen

Seconded: Anna

4. Conflict of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared for this meeting.

5. Round table check in – everyone

Opportunity for members to introduce themselves and greet the committee.

No items were added to the 'General Business' agenda item.

6. Thank you to all committee members, acknowledgement of members not continuing

The Chair thanked all committee members for their work and contributions to Darebin's GEAC during 2023 and further acknowledged the members who are not renewing their membership to continue serving on Darebin's GEAC from 2024.

7. Darebin's gender equity year in review

The Gender Equity Officer presented on the undertakings and achievements of 2023. See attached *Appendix A* document for summary of presentation.

Summary:

1. Members reflected on 2023 achievements.
2. The following discontinuing GEAC members were acknowledged and thanked:
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 - Emily Fraresso
 - Sandra Morris
 - Felicity Rorke
 - Anna Scovelle
 - Jo Van Dort
 - Samantha Young
 - Diana Pais
 - Melissa Collins

Member discussion and feedback:

Over the last year there has been an improvement in 'closing the loop' on topics members have provided feedback on, and improved communication and administration from Council to members.

8. Planning for GEAC 2024

The Chair led a discussion to help inform the planning for next year's meetings. Including meeting format, topics, and member representation.

Summary:

It was noted that meeting day, time, format, and time required outside of meetings should be made clear in member recruitment occurring over the New Year.

The committee discussed and decided the following items:

1. Meeting frequency:

As per the Terms of Reference, the committee will be meet four times per year.

2. Method, online or in person:

- Majority of members preferred attending meetings in-person (with hybrid option)

- Hybrid meeting options keep meetings more accessible.
- Different venues to 'de-colonize' meetings should be considered for 2024. For example, the Aboriginal Advancement League.

3. Meeting day and time:

- Tuesdays work best for most people present. Noting Wednesdays are preferred by one member due to conflict with university schedule.
- Time, majority of members agreed, after business hours (5.30-7.30pm) is the preferred meeting time.

4. Recruitment

We will recruit and welcome new members early in 2024.

There will be targeted engagement through community groups and organisations including but not limited to: Dardi Munwurro, Women with Disabilities Victoria, Islamic Museum of Australia, Youth Services, and Thorne Harbour Health, Pony Club Gym.

Questions to committee:

- What voices are missing from the group?
- How do reach out to we invite these voices to apply?

Member discussion and feedback:

- How do we make sure we are centring women's voices but also ensuring we are inclusive of gender diversity?
- Need to encourage more diverse community representation (including CALD community members and young people aged 16 and up)
- Need to ensure cultural and psychological safety is considered and in place for all committee members.
- Timing of recruitment. Acknowledgement that Dec and Jan are not ideal. Members were open to changing the first meeting of the year if it increased application time available to engage new members.
- Suggestion that interested applicants could be invited to meetings early in the year to 'test' if they would like to apply. Would need to think about psychological safety of

the group, but for consideration. Members present agreed this would be a good option to offer. – Cr. Rennie.

- Reach out to kindergartens and childcare to pass on to members too.
- Utilise members networks and connections for recruitment.
- Need to consider mix of community members and organisations represented on the Committee. Important to get this balance right.

ACTION: Jade: Send EOI information for new Committee member applications to current and past GEAC members to share with their networks.

5. Overall feedback to inform planning for next year.

Questions to committee:

- What would you like to be different?
- How can we improve?
- What did you like about 2023 meetings?

Member discussion and feedback:

- Role clarity: There was a strong sense from the members present that there is a need for more clarity (particularly with new members) about the expectations of members when providing feedback, and time required to prepare for meetings etc. greater role clarity would be of benefit.
- Guest preparation: It would be beneficial also to ensure guests presenting to GEAC are clear about what the group can provide feedback on.
- Impact: Would like to be able to see impact of feedback given on projects or services discussed in this Committee. The ad-hoc nature of presentations and vast topics can make it challenging to see the benefit of the feedback provided by GEAC. It would be great at the end of the year of every member of this committee could look at what Council has achieved in that year and feel as though they had contributed something to those outcomes.

- Meeting preparation: Where possible, more information to be given prior to meetings about expectation of members in relation to topics or upcoming meeting agenda items upcoming.
- Working groups and joint meetings: Members would be open to sub working groups, joint meetings with other Committee members or longer-term project involvement.
- Inclusive language guide: Consider including gender terminology language/definitions guides e.g., Rainbow Health or Minus 18.

Topics for future meetings

- Awareness raising: What role can Council plan in raising awareness of family violence resources available for community members experiencing family violence? E.g., communicating information on social media.
- Homelessness and the link with Family Violence/gender in-equality. Jade suggested we invite a Council Officer responsible for overseeing Council's homelessness portfolio and Functional Zero program in 2024.
- Engagement with CALD communities, particularly families and CALD women who might experience or be at risk of experiencing family violence.

ACTION:

Jade: Send Family Violence referral information to group to share with community (Darebin webpage and NIFVS). Link here: [Family Violence Posters | NIFVS](#)

Jade: Invite Council Officer with Homelessness portfolio to future meeting.

9 General business

1. Gender Equality Act (standing item)

Jade provided an update on Gender Equality Act reporting – due Feb 2024

Our first report will be due for the gender Equality Commissioner in February next year. This will include Gender Impact Assessments and a progress update on Darebin's Gender Equality Action Plan.

2. First meeting for 2024 – depending on new member recruitment, the first meeting is pencilled in for March. Jade will keep members informed.
3. Palestine: A member raised question as whether this Committee should consider making a statement about advocating for a ceasefire in Palestine. Member discussion that this committee isn't best placed to do this. Determined this is an issue for the Councillors to address as there are sensitivities to consider and different risks and impacts for community members in Darebin.

10. Meeting end

- The Chair thanked everyone for their time.
- The meeting was closed at 7.15pm

Next meeting

First meeting for 2024 will be in either March or April 2024. Jade will confirm with everyone.