



Darebin Emergency Relief Network Terms of Reference – February 2025

1. Background

The Darebin Emergency Relief Network (DERN) held its inaugural meeting in October 1999. DERN membership is open to a range of local emergency relief providers and other community agencies providing services to Darebin.

DERN was originally funded by the City of Darebin under its community grants program until the end of the 2003 financial year. The funding was auspiced by Northcote Community Information & Support Service (NCISS) to resource the network. The final meeting as a funded network was in August 2003.

Between 2004 and 2009 the network remained inactive.

In 2009, Council hosted a one day forum with local emergency relief providers and other community agencies with the aim of re-convening the emergency relief network and exploring emerging issues resulting from the current economic crisis.

A key outcome was renewed commitment by Darebin City Council to support the network and continue to work closely with emergency relief providers and other community agencies in ensuring a coordinated response to meeting the needs of Darebin residents experiencing financial or material disadvantage.

2. Statement of Purpose

DERN is a consortium of local emergency relief providers and other community service agencies providing assistance to the Darebin community and will continue to be supported by the City of Darebin.

DERN has a primary role to co-ordinate a regional approach to meeting the needs of Darebin residents experiencing financial or material disadvantage.

DERN aims to achieve this by:

- Improving links and information sharing between service providers concerned with the provision of emergency relief in Darebin;
- Supporting coordinated service delivery through sharing information between agencies, including detailed mapping of what, how and when emergency relief is provided resulting in a Darebin Emergency Relief Agency Guide and community hand out to support referrals;
- Supporting referral procedures across Darebin during peak times of demand including Christmas with the development of a Christmas Opening Hours Form.
- Developing referral procedures which reflect principles of access & equity, flexibility, relevance and responsiveness to the individual/s.
- Subject to resources and capacity, identify and explore ways to deliver emergency relief that are innovative, effective and appropriate, including food

banks, meeting culturally specific needs and having access to fresh food supplies.

- Liaising with the City of Darebin and developing strategies relevant to DERN's role in implementing the Municipal Emergency Management Plan as required.

DERN will participate in the broader context of Emergency Relief by:

- Keeping abreast of issues affecting emergency relief provision through links with relevant agencies such as Emergency Relief Victoria, Victorian Council of Social Service & Centrelink.
- Undertaking strategic advocacy including making submissions and feedback to departmental discussion papers, reviews etc.
- Participating in forums which contribute to the development of DERN's aims & objectives.

3. Membership

Membership is open to local emergency relief providers and other community agencies in Darebin who have an interest in emergency relief provision in Darebin.

Members of Council Officers includes:

Community Development Officer – Community Services & Development
Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator – Operations & Waste
Coordinator Community Inclusion – Community Services & Development

Membership will also extend to Statewide or peak bodies such as VCOSS, Department of Justice, Emergency Relief Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) and Services Australia to inform and support the work of the network.

4. Chair

The Network Chair will be the Community Development Officer, who is part of the Community Services & Development Department at Darebin City Council.

5. Meeting Frequency

DERN will hold meetings on a quarterly basis and make provision for regular reviews of its purpose, aims and objectives. Additional meetings may be convened if required.

6. Term and method of nomination

DERN has open membership policy, therefore nomination is not required. Term of participation is in line with the duration of the network.

7. Pecuniary interests

DERN members must disclose any pecuniary interests to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

8. Resources

The Community Development Officer will resource the network including preparation of Agenda, Minutes of Meeting, booking of meeting space, information dissemination and other network coordination duties as required.