

## 21.03 KEY INFLUENCES AND ISSUES

The development of this planning scheme has been guided by Council's understanding of the critical issues which are likely to challenge the development of Darebin both in the immediate future and long-term.

A brief summary of the key influences and arising issues are described below. The objectives, strategies and implementation actions set out in Clause 21.05 respond to these.

### **Changing Demographics**

The changing demographic profile of the City has implications for provision of facilities and services, and in particular those for ageing residents. It is predicted that the ageing profile will continue, with a gradual increase in younger adult households and young families.

In line with metropolitan trends, household sizes are decreasing. This means that even though general population growth is stable in Darebin, there is going to be increasing demand for additional dwellings.

The socio-economic profile of the City is changing - as a result of 'gentrification' processes common throughout the inner-middle suburbs - to encapsulate a broader mix of education levels, lifestyles, incomes and occupations than in previous years. This process will continue as house and land prices continue to rise in the areas closer to the City and with good public transport access and other desirable attributes such as views and proximity to parkland, family and friends, shops and services.

### **Ecologically Sustainable Development**

The Darebin community has indicated to the Council that 'sustainability' is a very important issue. The Council is committed to reducing car usage and requiring the highest possible environmental standards for reduced energy and water consumption in new development. The community would like to see Council support best practice ecological sustainability models to encourage innovation and action in this area. Melbourne 2030 also places emphasis on achieving ecological sustainability principles.

However change is not uniform across Darebin, with it creating difference pressure in different areas. The MSS needs to be cognisant of this.

### **Housing Diversity**

The mix of housing types in Darebin is far greater than the metropolitan average, and this diversity needs to be retained to meet the varied needs of the community. The housing needs of the aged and the disabled need to be considered, as do the needs of families, different cultural groups and those on low incomes. Retaining affordable housing options is a major challenge for the City.

Melbourne 2030 also encourages the provision of a variety of housing types to meet differing needs of the future. The housing needs of the region that need to be accommodated in Darebin are yet to be fully determined through the process initiated in Melbourne 2030.

### **Urban Character and Heritage**

The character and heritage of Darebin is highly valued by the community, and Council has some policies in place to manage these issues. There is the opportunity to take this work further by developing a 'place planning' approach through the identified neighbourhoods of the City. In addition, aspects of the heritage and character studies require review to ensure the most appropriate places are identified in the planning scheme, and the correct tools are used to protect and/or enhance them. As part of this process, a heritage strategy is required to establish the various components of cultural heritage within Darebin, as well as an approach for council in undertaking its responsibilities with regard to managing and conserving Darebin's cultural heritage.

## **Economic Development and Employment**

The changing structure of the employment base in the City requires management to ensure that the identified industrial and employment areas in the City are retained and their role strengthened. Appropriate new industries need to be attracted and fostered to create opportunities for local employment. There is a danger that industrial activities could otherwise be lost from the City by gradual conversion to or encroachment by residential development. The community is keen to retain a balanced mix of employment opportunities, and shopping facilities.

Activity centres are the focus of the achievement of many directions of Melbourne 2030. The opportunities for incorporating residential development in and around centres need to be identified and quantified. The role of each centre also needs to be identified, and objectives for each developed to ensure the individuality of each is retained and enhanced.

## **Cultural diversity**

The cultural diversity reflects many things including ethnicity, income, age, lifestyle etc. The existing cultural diversity of the community of Darebin is valued by those who live here, and this aspect of the City needs to be reflected and nurtured. An opportunity exists to respond to the cultural identity of various groups and areas through the physical environment, but also through forums, events and facilities.

## **Natural Environment**

Though urbanised, Darebin contains pockets of remnant natural features and environments, including significant vegetation communities, particularly in the vicinity of its waterways. Darebin's natural assets require enhancement and conservation. The riverine environments and pockets of indigenous vegetation have been protected to some extent through the planning scheme and reinstated to some extent, however further work is required to ensure this is complete, and that potential impact on biodiversity is considered in all relevant matters. The heritage or cultural significance of natural environments, vegetation and landscapes also requires assessment and conservation.

## **Transport**

The community says it values the excellent transport choices in Darebin including all forms of public transport, bike paths and walking tracks, as well as the car. However, although parts of Darebin are exceptionally well serviced by all types of transport infrastructure, patronage of public transport is declining while the commuter use of private vehicles is increasing. Therefore, there is an opportunity to improve public and other alternative transport use in Darebin. Moreover, consultation has revealed that the community would like to see further improvements to all forms of public transport, particularly in relation to safety, regularity and cost. Managing increasing levels of car and truck movements through the City is an issue for the Council.

## **Infrastructure**

The Council has undertaken significant strategic work in recent years to identify the physical infrastructure requirements of the City with completion of the 10 year Drainage and Road Infrastructure Plan and the Integrated Travel Plan for Darebin. Further work is now required to identify physical infrastructure needs around activity centres in particular, given their importance to the achievement of the directions of Melbourne 2030. Council has prepared and adopted a Storm Water Management Plan, as well as a Development Contributions Plan which aims to ensure that the costs of additional infrastructure are met by developers.