

# Darebin and Yarra Ranges Planning Partnership

Final Report





# Contents

- 1. BACKGROUND ..... 4**
- 2. PROGRESS REPORT ..... 5**
  - PART A Project and Funding Recipient Details ..... 5
  - PART B Details of Activity Performance..... 6
  - PART C Evaluation Questions ..... 8
  - PART D Final Financial Information ..... 10
  - PART E Other Details ..... 11
  - PART F Declaration and Certification (Statement by Chief Executive Officer) ..... 13

## 1. Background

In 2006, the City of Darebin and the Shire of Yarra Ranges formed a partnership and made a submission to the Department for Victorian Communities for \$100,000 in funding under the Local Area Planning Support Program.

The application sought funding for the establishment of a partnership between the City of Darebin and the Shire of Yarra Ranges to implement an integrated planning system at the City of Darebin, supported by appropriate computer software and systems. The partnership then aimed to further develop the capacity of the existing system at Yarra Ranges and the new system at Darebin to allow the development of issue-based and place-based strategies and action plans and their integration into organisational business plans.

The objective of these changes was to make it possible for both Councils to provide greater opportunity for their communities to be directly involved in planning for their local area. The intention was that the project be undertaken in a manner whereby its outcomes and learnings will be transferable to other Councils and the local government sector.

The application was successful and in October 2006 a formal funding agreement between the City of Darebin (as the lead local government partner) and the Department for Victorian Communities was signed.

## 2. Progress Report

### PART A Project and Funding Recipient Details

Project		Darebin and Yarra Ranges Planning Partnership
Project Manager	Name	Rhys Thomas
	Telephone	(03) 8470 8443
	Mobile	0419 750 516
	Facsimile	(03) 8470 8877
	Email	rthomas@darebin.vic.gov.au
Funding Recipient	Name	City of Darebin
	Address	PO Box 91 PRESTON VIC 3072
	ABN	75 815 980 522
Approved subcontractors		Not applicable

None of the project and funding details have changed.

## **PART B Details of Activity Performance**

### **Period covered by this report.**

1 December 2007 to 8 February 2008

### **What milestone does this report relate to?**

Conclusion of the Project, as detailed in Annexure 1 of the Funding Agreement.

### **Provide a description and analysis of the progress of the Activity to date, including detail(s) of the outputs achieved during the period.**

#### **City of Darebin**

##### ***System Pilot***

Following the purchase and installation of Corporate Information Database, a pilot of the system by the Business Improvement Branch has been conducted. The objective of this pilot was to identify any improvements to the system that were required, as well as any planning process changes to Darebin's existing arrangements.

The pilot has identified a range of outstanding issues with the system, which have been addressed by the vendors. In addition, the pilot has revealed a number of changes which are required to Council's planning processes to ensure best practice in planning and reporting.

##### ***Organisational Rollout***

Following the system pilot, as well as drawing on the experiences of other users of Corporate Information Database, it has been decided to conduct a staged introduction of Corporate Information Database across the organisation – releasing the system to one department at a time.

This process will enable sufficient resources to be devoted to hands on assistance with new system users, as well as enable the introduction of performance measurement and reporting systems to support the functionality of CID. This approach is consistent with the planned organisational rollout of a formal continuous improvement framework.

This process has now commenced.

#### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

##### ***Locality Based Forward Community Planning***

The Forward Community Plan has been developed to identify the significant planning activities currently planned or proposed. It aims to initiate and support a 'place-based' approach to planning that encourages greater integration and coordination of planning activities and is complemented by a suite of criteria that will guide future planning processes and encourage greater transparency in decision making. The forward Community Plan has been presented to Council for consideration and will inform Council's future community planning and capital works activities.

***On-line Community Portal for the Yarra Ranges Community***

The Shire has engaged Aussoft Pty Ltd to develop the Yarra Ranges Community Portal. A test site using the software 'Webcom' has been designed and installed. The On-line community portal is currently being populated with locality based profiles and relevant information links. The implementation of this system will enable an integrated and place-based 'lens' through which Council strategies and activities are made available for Council staff and community.

**Are all the timeframes and milestones for the Activity being met?**

The implementation of Corporate Information Database at Darebin has proceeded in accordance with the most recently updated timetable, and the system is now fully installed and operational.

The software for the Yarra Ranges Community portal has been installed and staff have been training in-line with proposed timelines. The site is currently being populated with community planning data.

## **PART C Evaluation Questions**

### **How has the project made a difference and changed the way council does business?**

#### **City of Darebin**

This new system enables Council to better understand the way it does business and provide accountability reports within the organisation. While the system itself has not changed the way we do business (we already had a manual business planning and reporting system), it has introduced improvements to the efficiency and timeliness of our planning and reporting processes.

#### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

The locality based forward community plans and on-line portal enable Council to undertake integrated planning and engagement activities centred around the needs of specific communities and localities. This presents a new approach to place-based planning at the Shire.

### **How has the project made a difference to the community and other stakeholders?**

#### **City of Darebin**

The new system has no direct impact on the community or other external stakeholders as it is entirely operational in nature and internally focussed. Over the long term, improved planning and reporting will assist the organisation in the delivery of all of its programs and services, so the community impact of this system is very much 'downstream'.

#### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

This project has allowed Council to better plan and coordinate work being undertaken in specific places, bringing benefits to our local communities. The project also provides a means through which community members can access information about their local areas, as well as projects being undertaken by Council in their local communities.

### **What recommendations do you have for other Councils who may be undertaking similar projects?**

#### **City of Darebin**

Critical to the success of the implementation of a system like CID is properly understanding the requirements before selecting a system. The City of Darebin invested heavily in the scoping and selection process – something which is now reaping dividends. Further, organisations must be realistic about the timeframes for implementation of a system of this scale, particularly if their organisation is new to the formal business planning discipline. The City of Darebin has been undertaking regular business planning and reporting for some years, but still found the need to be patient in the implementation phase.

#### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

The development of forward community plans and an online portal has been a significant cross-organisational process, requiring considerable time and input from many departments across Council. This process has proven challenging, requiring skills in bringing departments

together, the introduction of a new way of thinking about how the organisation plans, and the capacity to facilitate the development of agreement about the content of the final plan.

### **How could the project have a sector wide implementation?**

#### **City of Darebin**

CID is essentially an 'off the shelf' product, and there are a number of similar products on the market as well. With suitable planning and preparation, and organisation in the local government sector could implement such a system.

#### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

Placed-based planning is increasingly presenting opportunities for local governments to develop better integrated plans that respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities. The use of web-based applications to bring this information together and provide a link between council and communities could be easily introduced by other councils.

### **How are State Departments involved in the project?**

#### **City of Darebin**

There has been no State Government involvement in the project.

#### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

There has been no State Government involvement in the project.

## PART D Final Financial Information

### Project Budget

<b>Project Income</b>	<b>Actual (\$)</b>
LAPS Grant Amount	100,000
Funds from your organisation (City of Darebin)	2,500
In kind from your organisation (City of Darebin)	37,000
Funds from partnering organisations (Shire of Yarra Ranges)	7,000
In kind from partnering organisations (Shire of Yarra Ranges)	15,000
Other contributions	0
<b>Total Project Income</b>	<b>161,500</b>

<b>Project Expenditure</b>	
Project Management and Governance	5,000
<i>Phase One – City of Darebin</i>	
System design and specification	7,000
Software purchase and licensing	80,000
Hardware purchase and installation	0
System commissioning and roll out	25,000
<i>Phase Two – Shire of Yarra Ranges</i>	
System design and specification	15,000
Software purchase and licensing	16,000
Hardware purchase and installation	3,500
System commissioning and roll out	5,000
Evaluation	5,000
<b>Total Project Expenditure</b>	<b>\$ 161,500</b>

### Is the Activity proceeding within the initial agreed Budget?

No. The amount of time and resources spent on designing the integrated planning framework was severely under-estimated. The framework is the platform that's driving the 'whole of organisation' process rather than solely a system solution. It is considered that organisational input and buy-in will be the key to successful implementation of this project.

### Are there any other issues relating to Your performance of the Activity that We should be aware of?

No.

## **PART E Other Details**

### **Acknowledgement and Publicity**

#### **City of Darebin**

No publicity has been undertaken regarding the new system, as it is not yet in use across the organisation. While the system will essentially return internal, operational benefits, it is anticipated that a media release will be circulated that outlines the benefits of the system for the community and appropriately acknowledges the Department for Planning and Community Development (formerly DVC). Acknowledgement of the Department is also included on the system's opening screen.

#### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

As the Yarra Ranges system is not yet fully operational, no publicity has been undertaken to date. It is anticipated that once the system is launched, a media release will be circulated that outlines the benefits for the community and appropriately acknowledges the Department for Planning and Community Development.

### **Case Study**

#### **City of Darebin**

The development of the City of Darebin Council Plan 2005-2009 was a process that involved significant consultation and engagement between Councillors, Council officers, community representatives and local residents. The completion of this plan left the Council with a document articulating 50 commitments to ratepayers – a clear statement about Council's strategic objectives for the coming four years. Despite this process, the City of Darebin found it difficult to see these commitments reflected in business plans and budgets across the organisation.

To address this situation, and following a grant from the Victorian Government, the City of Darebin purchased and implemented an integrated planning system to support the ongoing implementation of the organisation's integrated planning framework.

In order to successfully implement this system, the City of Darebin went through the following steps:

- Determining the system requirements and preparing a project scope
- Identifying potential system developers and vendors
- Undertaking a process of competitive quotation and selecting a successful vendor
- Working with the successful vendor (Corporate Strategic Systems) to develop a scope for the system and negotiating and signing a contract agreement
- Implementation of the system (Corporate Information Database)
- Pilot of the system using a small group of staff
- Implementation of the outcomes of the pilot
- Progressive rollout of system across the organisation

The successful implementation of Corporate Information Database has given the City of Darebin:

- The capacity to develop an integrated hierarchy of departmental and service level business plans, individual work plans and supporting budget documents – all linked to the objectives outlined in the Council Plan.
- The ability to link Council objectives with broader community and State Government objectives.
- Better integration between Council services and clearer links between the policy development and service delivery functions of Council.

### **Shire of Yarra Ranges**

Over the past eight years, the Shire of Yarra Ranges has developed and implemented an integrated planning framework that aligns the planning, monitoring and reporting of its activities to the strategic direction of the organisation and the community. The need to further develop our models of community engagement was identified and a broad Community Planning Framework developed to guide how the Shire will engage with communities, support community planning activities and support community strengthening measures – in addition to a number of internal process changes.

Two key elements within this framework are the development and implementation of a locality based forward community planning program and the development and implementation of an on-line community portal that acts as a conduit between Council processes and our community.

The core purpose of the Locality Based Forward Community Plan was to introduce a place-based approach to planning. This was achieved through:

- Cross-organisational workshops that identified and documented future community planning activities by locality and developed a suite of criteria to inform planning processes and assist in the prioritisation of activities.
- The compilation of a Locality Based Forward Community Plan to be review by internal key stakeholders and presented to Council for consideration.

The development of an On-line Community Portal that provided the community with information about the local area and Council's strategies and future planning activities as identified in the Locality Based Forward Community Plan.

To provide this information source to both staff and the Community, Council:

- Developed 38 community profiles encompassing 59 localities across the municipality.
- Customised and designed an on-line software system to ensure easy access for all.
- Established an eSubscription to enable updates of information to be sent to interested community members.

Both initiatives serve to better ensure that local planning efforts flow through into organisational business plans and capital works programs and provide a 'whole of organisation' response to community needs to improve community engagement.

**Have you have any decision or order of any court or tribunal made against you of involving you during the reporting period?**

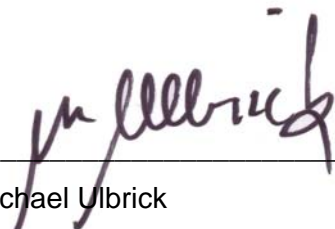
No.

## **PART F Declaration and Certification (Statement by Chief Executive Officer)**

I, Michael Ulbrick, hereby certify that:

- a. all Funding received was spent for the purposes of the Activity and in accordance with the Agreement, and that We have complied with the Agreement;
- b. unless the Activity Period has expired or the Agreement has been terminated, the unspent portion of the funds (if any) are available for use within the next Reporting period
- c. the financial information is presented in accordance with the financial Reporting requirements You notified to Us;
- d. at the time the Report of financial statement is provided, We are able to pay all Our debts as and when they fall due and We have sufficient resources to discharge all Our debt at the end of the current Financial Year.

Signature of Authorised Person



---

Name of Authorised Person

Michael Ulbrick

Position

Chief Executive Officer

Telephone

(03) 8470 8602

Date:

8 February 2008