

Darebin Council Fact Sheet: Support for International Students



Darebin Council is a local government area (also called a municipality) that takes in the suburbs of Northcote, Fairfield, Alphington, Thornbury, Preston, Reservoir and parts of Kingsbury and Macleod. For more information see [here](#) and also the [Living in Darebin Guide](#).

International students are eligible to use a range of community services and programs offered by Darebin Council.

We know that Covid-19 is making life difficult for many international students who live, work or study in Darebin. The following information will help you to understand what you can access to support you in the local Darebin community, including if you're feeling isolated.

This is in addition to the supports available through your university, TAFE, college, through [Study Melbourne](#) or through Victorian organisations such as [Tenants Victoria](#), [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#), [the Victorian Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission](#) or [VicWise](#).

Community Navigation Service (CNS):

The Community Navigation Service (CNS) is Darebin Council's one-stop-shop for support or local information during the Covid-19 pandemic. This phone service is a quick, easy and supportive way to find information about what is available in the local Darebin community, including where to access food or meals, get medication, social activities, how to access government and other grants/supports - or to have a chat if you're feeling worried or lonely.

Call Council's Customer Service team **on 8470 8888** and ask to be connected to the Community Navigation Service, weekdays from 9am to 4pm. Alternatively email covidsupport@darebin.vic.gov.au.

Accessing food and basic goods: Food vouchers, meals and food parcels:

If you need assistance to access food relief and essential items, we have put together a [guide](#) to help you find a local service that can assist you with grocery vouchers, food parcels and pre-made meals. If you'd prefer to speak to someone, contact the Community Navigation Service (see above).

Other agencies in the northern suburbs offering food support to international students:

- **Gurdwara Sahib Craigieburn & Khalsa Foundation** Australia are providing free essential groceries to needy international students in Melbourne. For more info **contact 0423 654 033, 0404 475 901, 0430 211 180** or email secretary@sgss.org.au
- **Himalayan Grocery & Spices**: providing food to all intentional students for \$0.99 per meal. For food order, SMS one of the following numbers 2 hours prior of pick up between 4:30pm-9:30pm. **Contact numbers: 0449 505 555, 0410 599 945, 0405 651 125, 0411 785 765**. Address: 12 Railway Crescent, Broadmeadows, 3047

Darebin Information Volunteer Resource Service (DIVRS):

Over the next six months Council will be working with our partner agencies to provide weekly grocery vouchers, food parcels and pre-made meals to households. To get this started, we've partnered with Darebin Information Volunteer Resource Service (DIVRS) as central intake point for all people needing food relief in Darebin.

Call the DIVRS phone service **on 9480 8200**, Monday – Thursday between 9.30am -12.30pm. You may need to leave a message with your name and contact details and you will receive a call back the same day.

Housing and homelessness Support in Darebin:

If you are at risk of becoming homeless, contact Darebin agency Haven Home Safe **on 9479 0700** or visit [Haven Home Safes](#).

Legal advice and assistance

- International students can receive free legal advice and assistance from [Fitzroy Legal Service, Migrant Employment Law Clinic](#). The clinic can assist with advice on wages, unlawful dismissal and work conditions.
- Visit [International Student Legal Information](#) by [Inner Melbourne Community Legal](#). It is free resource for international students living in Victoria (It is not legal advice), designed specifically to help international students living in Victoria with problems connected to where they live, work and study.

Join the Library: Darebin Council operates four Libraries (in Northcote, Fairfield, Preston and Reservoir). All Libraries' are currently closed due to Covid-19. However, you can still become a member right now and for free (membership is free and available to everyone). [Join online](#) today or at any branch during [opening hours](#) once branches have re-opened.

Darebin Libraries are a place of knowledge, inspiration and adventure. As a member you can access many online resources including e-books, magazines, films and podcasts – all for no cost! There are also virtual events such as story time for children. Contact the Darebin Libraries team to find out more **call 1300 655 355** (9am–5pm, Mon–Fri).

You can stay informed with library updates via Darebin Libraries [website](#) and [Facebook](#). Search the [online catalogue](#), [upcoming events](#), [digital library](#) and much more.

Take a free, virtual exercise class: Access the free Get Active in Darebin program from home and choose from virtual classes in Pilates and yoga classes, cardio and running lead by professional trainers. Videos of the classes will be posted on the [Darebin Leisure Facebook page](#). For more info please visit [Get Active in Darebin](#).

For more information, check and follow our Facebook pages: [Darebin City Council](#), [Darebin Arts](#), [Darebin Libraries](#), [Darebin Leisure](#) and [Darebin Youth Services](#).

Family Violence Support Service:

Family violence is the use of violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour by an individual against a family member(s), or someone with whom they have, or have had, an intimate relationship.

Violent behaviour includes not only physical assaults but an array of power and control tactics used along a continuum, in concert with one another, including direct or indirect threats, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, economic control, property damage, social isolation and behaviour which cause a person to live in fear.

If you are affected by family violence, **contact 1800 RESPECT National Counselling Helpline, Information and Support - 1800 737 732**. If you are in immediate danger, call the Police **on 000 (triple zero)**.

If you or you suspect that someone you know is experiencing family violence, support is available. For more information please visit [Family Violence Support Services](#).

Other services that can help international students in Darebin:

- [Your Community Health](#) is a local health organization with centers in Northcote, Preston and East Preston. Your Community Health can help you stay healthy, safe and connected during this time. For more information or to refer a neighbor **call 8470 1111** and choose option 5 or email: COVID19@yourcommunityhealth.org.au. Services available Monday to Friday between 9.00am to 5.00pm.
- Northern Buddies Program is a mentoring program by Brotherhood of St Laurence for refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and international students. Northern Buddies matches people who are new to Australia with volunteers to get support with: living in Australia, connecting to local community, finding activities and hobbies, improving study skills, finding job and practicing English.
If you would like to receive support please contact Northern Buddies in the Brotherhood of St Laurence Multicultural Communities Team at northernbuddies@bsl.org.au or **on 03 9422 5650**.
- There is a range of LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and intersex) community services that support LGBTIQ international students, their friends and families. For advice, support and referral here are three LGBTIQ+ organizations to talk to:
 - [Switchboard Victoria](#) – Phone: **1800 184 527**
 - [Q-Life Australia](http://www qlife.org.au) – Phone: **1800 184 527**. Webchat <http://www qlife.org.au>
 - [Drummond street services](#) – Phone: **03 663 6733**

Make a report of racism or discrimination: sadly there has been an increase in racism in Victoria. Darebin Council has a strong and long-term commitment to combating racism in our community. We encourage anyone who experiences or witnesses racism to make a report to the [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#). Make a quick, confidential report (anonymous if you wish) using the [Community Reporting Tool](#) on Council's website or directly to the [Commission](#) by email or webchat.

Other sources of information:

[Ask Izzy](#) can help you to find the services you need, now and nearby. It is free and anonymous, and you can search over 360,000 services to find housing, meals, healthcare, counselling, legal advice, addiction treatment and a whole lot more.