

### Role

The role of the Community Reference Panels is to support Council in reviewing the vision objectives and goals of the Community Strategic Plan and its translation to the 4-year Delivery Program through an active and ongoing community engagement program. The aim is to ensure that current knowledge, critical thinking, and analysis is applied to strategy development, increasing the confidence that Council is making the right decisions and that those decisions are not made in isolation, but in a genuine partnership with community.

### Structure

- Chairperson – Council staff member
- 2 - 4 Technical specialists from relevant government or non-government agency
- 8 Community Representatives sought via Expression of Interest process
- Ex officio internal and external experts as required

### Skills of Community Representatives

- 2 - 3 Representatives on the Reference Panels should have a specialist knowledge and / or some technical expertise in the Panel's topic area. Representatives may be drawn from, for example, other levels of government and / or private enterprise.
- The remaining community members should demonstrate a broad knowledge of and interest in the individual Community Reference Panel's topic area. Demonstrated connections to networks within their communities will also be highly valued.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Community Reference Panels

- To represent the views, interests and/or identified issues that affect communities within the Wingecarribee Shire.
- To provide input and feedback to Council on issues that fall within the parameters of its authority and relate to their communities or the identified issue the Community Reference Panel is concerned with.

### Membership

- All members of Council's Community Reference Panels must meet the stated requirements of membership.
- The duties of members are to:
  - Attend and participate in a compulsory induction workshop which will include information on the role of the Community Reference Panel including the role and responsibility of members and Council
  - Attend and participate in meetings of the Community Reference Panel
  - Work co-operatively with other members in achieving the aims of the Panel
  - Contribute ideas and suggestions relating to items on the agenda
  - Provide input and feedback and recommendations to Council on items relating to the agenda
  - Action and follow up tasks established by the Community Reference Panel and resolved by Council.
  - Report back to existing networks within the communities they represent on Council's role, responsibilities and its decisions relating to the Community Reference Panel of which they are a member of.

- Use existing networks to remain informed regarding the views and interests of the community they represent.

### **Membership Application Process**

- The term of membership is the period that coincides with Council Elections. At this time, all positions are declared vacant.
- Council will implement an Expression of Interest process to recruit members for the Community Reference Panels and this will be advertised in the local media and promoted through Council's and relevant community networks and social media.
- All applicants for membership must apply using the relevant Expression of Interest form which require applicants to address the stated criteria for membership.
- An interdepartmental panel of 3 Council Officers will assess Expressions of Interest against the stated criteria of each Reference Panel. In addition, Access and Equity principles will be applied in the selection of members and the composition of the Committees will reflect a diversity of views and opinions, variations in, length and quality of related experience and gender balance.
- Membership applications and recommendations are then submitted to Council for its decision and ratification.
- Where a casual vacancy occurs the Council Officer convening the Committee is responsible for distributing information regarding the vacancy and encouraging applicants to fill the vacancy, through existing Council, community and the Reference Panels' members' networks. Applicants must apply using the Expression of Interest Form which will be forwarded to Council for its decision and ratification.
- Where a casual vacancy occurs within 12 months of the commencement of a new Panel term then the vacancy can be filled from previous expression of interest process, if suitable applicants exist

### **Invited Guests**

- Depending on the nature of issues raised, relevant Council staff and/or other stakeholders will be invited to attend the meetings
- Guest speakers may attend meetings if invited to do so by the Community Reference Panel and as approved by the Council Officer convening the Panel.

### **Duties of the Chairperson**

- Convene the meeting according to Terms of Reference and meeting agenda
- Facilitate the discussion of items on the agenda in a timely manner
- Ensure all committee members have the opportunity to participate

### **Frequency of Meetings**

- Each Community Reference Panel will meet quarterly.

### **Attendance**

- When a member is absent for three (3) consecutive Panel meetings without an apology, their position will be declared vacant, however contact shall be made by the Council Officer who convenes the Community Reference Panel following the second absence to clarify whether or not she/he/they is still interested in continuing to be a member of the Community Reference

Panel. If there is no response by the following meeting their membership will cease and their position declared vacant.

### **Council Support for Community Reference Panels**

- Each Community Reference Panel is convened by a Council Officer. This officer sets each meeting's agenda with input from membership and/or Council, attends each meeting, ensures meetings are run according to Council's Terms of Reference, liaises between the Community Reference Panel and other officers within Council as determined by the Community Reference Panel business and finalises Community Reference Panel minutes Panel Minutes
- Panel minutes will be reported to Council and provide an overview of the meeting proceedings including attendees, apologies, agenda topics, overview of discussion and Panel action items.

### **Panel Conflict of Interest**

- Community Reference Panel members are to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary conflict of interest regarding any issue on the agenda at the commencement of the meeting.
- All conflict of interest is to be declared and recorded in the minutes and if necessary, the parties involved will be asked to leave the room while the matter is discussed.

### **Representation on/from other Council Community Reference Panels and Attendance at Forums**

- From time to time one Community Reference Panel may be approached to supply a representative to another Community Reference Panel / Working & Action Groups / Committee of Council. Where the Community Reference Panel determines that representation is appropriate, nominations will be called for at the meeting and a vote shall take place to select a representative.

### **Changes to the Terms of Reference:**

- The Community Reference Panels' Terms of Reference are ratified by Council and any changes or additions to them must be ratified by Council.