

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Group

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Group is to provide a voice for people with disability, their families, and carers, who are living, working, or studying in the City of Casey, on all issues related to disability access and inclusion.
- 1.2 The committee will be Council's main source of advice regarding disability access and inclusion for policies, programs and services which impact people with disability, their families, and carers.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the committee are to draw on the diverse lived experiences of people with disabilities, their families, and carers, within the City of Casey, of all ages, disability types, genders, and sexualities, as well as those from migrant, refugee and cultural and linguistic backgrounds and:
 - a. Advise Council on issues and opportunities that may affect people with disabilities and carers living, working, studying, or visiting the City of Casey.
 - b. Identify, acknowledge, and celebrate activities that improve the lives of people with disability within the City of Casey.
 - c. Participate in community consultation processes and contribute to the development and review of policies, programs and services which may impact people with disabilities, their families, and carers.
 - d. Contribute to the development, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP).
 - e. Provide advice on accessibility and inclusion for Council community events and activities.
 - f. Advocate for people with disabilities and carers across all levels of government.
 - g. Develop leadership skills and provide learning opportunities for people with disability.
 - h. Raise awareness of the positive contributions that people with a disability and carers make to community life.

3. Integrated planning framework

Council strategies and plans

- 3.1 The committee will work towards the development, implementation and monitoring of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan which is situated within Council's broader integrated planning framework.
- 3.2 The committee will support key themes in Council's Community Vision (2021-2031). These themes include:
- a. A more connected community (welcoming environments that encourage social and cultural connection and strengthened culture of collaboration, partnerships, and community-led networks)
 - b. A bold community (a willingness to embrace change and build a sense of community pride and, design more ways community can contribute to shaping initiatives)
 - c. A resilient community (use data and research to design the future and help build a resilient community ready for the post-pandemic opportunities).
- 3.3. The committee will support the strategic objectives and directions outlined in the Council Plan (2021-2025). These include to:
- a. Drive stronger connections and places:
 - *Foster partnerships*
 - *Cultivate places that create a sense of belonging, connection, and pride.*
 - b. Develop platforms for community empowerment:
 - *Address key health and wellbeing needs within the community.*
 - *Improve Council decision-making to reflect community needs and priorities.*
 - *Grow the capacity of community leadership.*
 - *Continue to identify opportunities to improve better decision making through community engagement.*
 - c. Become a future ready organisation:
 - *Ensure positive outcomes are delivered to the community.*
 - *Build Council's ability to pursue innovative partnerships for greater community outcomes.*
- 3.4 The committee will support Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2021-2025) strategic objectives including:
- a. Domain 3: Family Violence and Gender Equality
 - *Embed a culture of non-violence, respect and gender equality across Council and the community.*
 - *Drive regional leadership and advocacy on gender equality and family violence prevention.*
 - *Improve the local evidence base and monitoring of data related to gender equality and health.*
 - *Lead a strategic approach to family violence prevention and gender equality.*
 - b. Domain 5: Mental wellbeing and social inclusion
 - *Support communities to co-design innovative programs, events, and activities.*

- *Activate community facilities and spaces to promote accessibility, connection and inclusion.*
- *Support the integration of the principles of access and inclusion into the policies and programs of Council, Council partners and community organisations.*
- *Work with local and regional partnerships to support community members to have the resources, opportunities, and capabilities to learn, work, engage and have a voice.*

Australian and Victorian legislative and policy obligations

- 3.5 The Victorian *Disability Act 2006* and the *Disability Inclusion Act* requires council's and other defined entities to produce a Disability Inclusion Action Plan to promote access and inclusion and reduce discrimination for people with disability.
- 3.6 The committee will support the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, ensuring that it will address (4) areas identified in the *Disability Act 2006* including:
- Reducing barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services, and facilities.
 - Reducing barriers to people with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment.
 - Promoting inclusion and participation of people with a disability within the community.
 - Seeking changes to attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.
- 3.7 The committee will ensure that Council meets its obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. To meet these obligations, the committee must:
- Provide advocacy and advice on policies, programs, and services to enhance the access and inclusion for people with disability.
 - Support Council in achieving the goals outlined in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.
- 3.8 The committee will ensure that Council meets other statutory and moral obligations under the following legislation and policies and plans:
- United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (CRPD)
 - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth)
 - National Disability Strategy 2021-2031
 - National Disability Employment Strategy 2021-2031
 - Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026
 - *Disability Act 2006* (Victorian Government)
 - *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Victorian Government)
 - *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Victorian Government)
 - *Disability Inclusion Act* (Victorian Government)
 - Australian Standard 1428 (Design for Access and Mobility)
 - Building Code of Australia
 - *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Victorian Government)
 - Casey Planning Scheme
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4. Membership

General membership

4.1 Membership of the committee will comprise of 15 members:

- Eight (8) community representatives with a lived experience of disability.
- Four (4) organisational representatives (disability service providers).
- Three (3) community representatives who are (unpaid) carers of people with a disability (both children and adults).

4.2 The membership of the committee will seek representation from a diverse range of groups in relation to age, gender diversity and sexuality, and migrant, refugee and cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Non-voting members

4.3 The committee will include a non-voting Councillor delegate, to be nominated after October 2024.

4.4 From time-to-time meeting observers may be invited to attend committee meetings. Meeting observers can attend a maximum of two (2) meetings per year and must register their interest in attending a meeting to the support officer.

4.5 From time-to-time, the committee may invite experts of other skilled people to join the committee as a co-opted member, for a specified purpose and period of time in an advisory capacity only.

Chairperson

4.6 Meetings will be either chaired by a chairperson selected from the committee members, or meetings will be chaired by the support officer. The committee will select its preference at the commencement of each committee term.

4.7 Chairpersons can be self-nominated or nominated by the committee and voting will proceed by all voting members of the committee via a confidential majority vote.

4.8 The chairperson is responsible for ensuring meetings are conducted in a timely and effective manner and that all members can share their views. The chairperson may also be required to liaise with committee members, Council officers, Councillors and/or the Council and may on occasion be required to represent the committee at Council meetings or briefings.

4.9 The committee will appoint a chairperson for the term of one (1) year.

Support officer

4.10 Secretariat support for the committee will be provided by the support officer, who will be either the Disability Inclusion Advisor or nominee.

4.11 The support officer will do the following:

- Maintain committee contact information.
- Prepare and distribute meeting agenda and papers.
- Prepare and distribute meeting minutes.
- Report on actions and matters arising from previous meetings.
- Assist with monitoring and evaluating the committee.

- Preparing an annual report on committee activities for Council.
- Managing all other administrative processes associated with the committee.

Term of office

- 4.12 Membership of the committee is for a term of three (3) years.
- 4.13 At the conclusion of their first term, existing members may re-nominate for a second term.
- 4.14 Committee members can serve a maximum of two (2) terms and must undergo the selection process outlined in section 5.

Resignation

- 4.15 Resignations may be received in writing addressed to the chairperson and the support officer.
- 4.16 A member will be deemed to have resigned if they fail to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the committee without notice.
- 4.17 The supporting officer will contact the representative prior to advertisement of the role as a casual vacancy.

Casual vacancies

- 4.18 Given the resources required to advertise vacancies through a range of diverse mediums, a minimum of two (2) vacancies are required for a formal recruitment drive. The term of office of the newly appointed Committee member will end at the conclusion of the next recruitment period.
- 4.19 When a vacancy arises, expressions of interest will be advertised on the Council website, to be filled as soon as possible.

5. Eligibility and selection

Eligibility criteria

- 5.1 Community representatives must live, work, study or play in the City of Casey and someone who identifies as a person with a disability.
- 5.2 Membership of the committee will be, as far possible, selected to represent a range of disability impairment types, including physical, cognitive, neurological, sensory, and psychosocial disabilities.
- 5.3 Organisational representatives must live, work, study or play within the City of Casey and:
- Represent a community group with a demonstrated interest in disability issues.
 - Represent a government organisation operating within the City of Casey for the health and wellbeing of people with disability.
 - Represent a community-based disability service provider.
 - Have substantial knowledge or expertise within the area of disability.
- 5.4 Carer representatives must live, work, study or play within the City of Casey and:

- a. Provide unpaid care for a child or adult with disability.

5.5 Members of the committee will represent a diverse range of groups including age, gender, sexual orientation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrant and refugee and cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Recruitment and selection process

5.6 Recruitment will be undertaken via expression of interest prior to the conclusion of each three (3) year term.

5.7 Committee members will be assessed against the following criteria. They will either demonstrate or represent some of the following:

- a. Demonstrate an interest and understanding of access and inclusion for people with a disability.
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of the City of Casey and its community.
- c. Represent a diverse experience of disability.
- d. Represent diverse intersectional groups including gender, age, ethnic or cultural background, aboriginality, religion, or sexual orientation.

5.8 The committee will appoint a selection panel to review expressions of interest applications and assess them against the eligibility and selection criteria.

5.9 Preferred candidates may then be invited to an informal interview with a representative of the selection panel before a final decision is made.

5.10 The selection panel will recommend successful applicants to the chairperson for formal appointment.

5.11 All applicants will be contacted to inform them whether they were successful.

5.12 Unsuccessful applicants will be supported to find alternative options to contribute to Council and wider community.

6. Meetings

Meeting frequency

6.1 Meetings will be held eight (8) times per year according to an annual meeting schedule which will be set during the first meeting of each calendar year.

6.2 Additional out-of-session and sub-group meetings will be held at the discretion of members.

Meeting format

6.3 Meetings will be held in hybrid format, with members able to choose to attend online or in person.

Attendance and apologies

- 6.4 Committee members will commit to attend as many meetings as possible.
- 6.5 A formal apology must be sent to the support officer if a member is unable to attend. Council recognises that people with disability experience more health issues and differential health issues than people without disability.
- 6.6 Organisational representatives may elect to send a delegate from their organisation if unable to attend.

Quorum

- 6.7 A quorum of fifty percent (50%) is required for a meeting to proceed.

Voting

- 6.8 The Committee will follow the 'general consensus' principle when determining its preferred position on matters under discussion.

Meeting agenda and minutes

- 6.9 The support officer will provide administrative support to the committee and chairperson including the provision of meeting agendas, papers, and minutes.
- 6.10 Agendas and any additional relevant documentation will be sent to committee members no less than ten (10) working days before a scheduled meeting.
- 6.11 Records of meeting agendas and minutes will be maintained by Council in accordance with *Public Records Act 1973* requirements.
- 6.12 Meeting minutes will be provided to committee members no later than 20 working days after a scheduled meeting.

7. Code of conduct

General conduct

- 7.1 Committee members will recognise that people with disability are not a homogenous group, and that they may come from diverse backgrounds.
- 7.2 Committee members are expected to act in a courteous manner and respect the views of others.
- 7.3 All members are expected to respect the consensus view as adjudicated by the chairperson.

Conflict of interest

- 7.4 Committee members are expected to disclose any conflict of interest in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- 7.5 In the event of a conflict of interest arising, a committee member must:
- a. Disclose the conflict interest and state the nature of the interest before the matter is considered by the committee.
 - b. Leave the room while the matter is being discussed.
- 7.6 The disclosure of conflict of interest must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Dispute resolution

- 7.7 Any disputes arising among Advisory Group members will be resolved by the chairperson of support officer in session.
- 7.8 If disputes are unable to be resolved in session, they will be set aside and reviewed by the chairperson and support officer out of session.
- 7.9 All parties involved in the dispute will be given the opportunity to express their views to the chairperson and support officer.
- 7.10 The chairperson will seek to resolve the disputed matter fairly and communicate the decision to all involved parties.
- 7.11 The decision of the chairperson is final.
- 7.12 Dispute resolution will be recorded in the meeting minutes for reference.

8. Accessibility

Accessible information

- 8.1 Any disability-related support required to enable participation on the committee will be provided by Council.
- 8.2 This includes providing information in alternative formats including large print, Braille, Easy English, and Auslan.
- 8.3 Other non-disability support will be provided including information provided in other languages and flexibility to bring children to meetings as required (parents and guardians have sole responsibility for supervision of children).
- 8.4 Council will reimburse reasonable cost of travel to attend meetings.

Capacity building

- 8.5 Where possible, Council encourages and supports committee members to enhance their skills and capacity both personally and professionally. This could be in the form of guest speakers, events, training, and participation in other Council or external opportunities.
- 8.6 Support will be provided to committee members to develop knowledge relevant to participation, including self-advocacy training, meetings skills, participation, and communication skills.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

Committee monitoring and evaluation.

- 9.1 The last meeting of each calendar year will involve evaluating the previous 12 months committee activities and functioning, and the first meeting of the year will involve planning for next 12 months.
- 9.2 Committee members are encouraged to provide feedback about the committee and their experience throughout the year during meetings or by contacting the chairperson or supporting officer.

Annual report on activities

- 9.3 A report on the activities of the committee against its objectives will be prepared for Council at the conclusion of each financial year.

Terms of reference

- 9.4 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed each committee term; however, the committee may review the Terms of Reference earlier if required.
- 9.5 Any proposed changes to the Terms of Reference must be agreed by the committee as outlined in 6.7 (Voting).

Contact the City of Casey:

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Customer Service Centres:

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