



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

Disability Inclusion Reference Committee (DIRC)

Terms of Reference

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1 Role

1.1 Purpose

The Disability Inclusion Reference Committee (Committee) will provide general advice, advocate and undertake initiatives that support greater social inclusion of people with a disability and their families/carers. The Committee will:

- (a) Represent the interests of all persons with a disability in the City of Greater Bendigo area, and others who may be affected by disability.
- (b) Provide advice to City staff on how City projects (including major), facilities and services can be inclusive of people with a disability.
- (c) Work with City staff on the development and implementation of strategies, plans, policies and projects concerned with increasing social inclusion of people with a disability, particularly the Community Access and Inclusion Plan.
- (d) Provide advice to Council on any disability related issues that are deemed appropriate for Council to advocate to other levels of government or other organisations.
- (e) Provide advice to Council on current and emerging issues of access to participation experienced by people with a disability and their carers, including issues related to, but not limited to economic, cultural, social and environmental aspects.
- (f) Participate in a range of consultative forums offered by the City for the purpose of informing and seeking feedback from people affected by disability.
- (g) Assist to develop partnerships and communication networks to ensure effective dissemination of City information.
- (h) Strengthen relationships, partnerships and opportunities to influence decision making between people with a disability and the City's staff and Councillors.
- (i) Assist in the development and implementation of programs, activities, events, and initiatives in line with identified community needs and aspirations.
- (j) Harness the opportunities that the City's community engagement meetings afford to profile issues relevant to people with a disability.
- (k) Contribute to research and investigation into strategic disability issues impacting on the City of Greater Bendigo municipality as required.
- (l) Stay abreast of sector policy changes and reforms and provide support for successful implementation.

- (m) Provide advice on the distribution of City resources based on community need, in particular the mid-year budget review allocation to capital works to increase inclusion.

Council will take the opinions of the Disability Inclusion Reference Committee into consideration as part of its deliberations.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Committee are:

- (a) City plans, strategies, events are more inclusive and accessible for people with a disability.
- (b) Prevention of overt and systemic discrimination for people with a disability based on their disability.
- (c) The City's legislative compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, the Equal Opportunity Act, the Human Rights Charter, and the Local Government Act.
- (d) Community Access and Inclusion Plan actions are delivered to achieve the most effective outcomes for people with a disability.
- (e) Community is supported to transition with changes in government policies.
- (f) Staff and decision makers better understand the needs of residents with a disability.
- (g) Increased understanding of local government processes for the community.
- (h) Increased opportunities for people with a disability to experience participation on committees and government bodies.
- (i) Increased agency and empowerment of people with a disability to self-advocate and influence systemic change in their community.
- (j) Greater social equality and improved wellbeing for people affected by disability.

2 Term of Committee

- (a) Community representatives on the Committee are to be appointed for two years, with half the group retiring each year to encourage continuity. Councillor appointments shall be for a twelve-month term.
- (b) Retiring Committee members may apply for further terms of office.

3 Members

3.1 Selection of members

- (a) Membership of the Disability Inclusion Reference Committee will consist of:
- nominated councillor(s); and
 - community representatives who are people with diverse disabilities; and
 - community representatives who are unpaid carers of people with disability, ideally with at least 1 carer of a child and 1 carer of an adult; and
 - representatives from local disability-specific agencies; and
 - representatives from local organisations or networks that have influence on social inclusion for people with a disability; and
 - City staff members from different units across the organisation whose responsibilities affect inclusion of people with a disability, with additional input from other City Officers as required.

Membership should always weigh in favour of the number of community representatives and unpaid carers versus agency and City representation.

The committee will have a maximum of 18 members; 8 community representatives, 4 disability agency and local organisation representatives, and 6 representatives from the City including councillor(s).

- (b) Persons appointed will be chosen based on those persons who:
- reflect the diversity of persons with a disability, including representation of people with cognitive or intellectual disabilities; and
 - reflect the cultural and indigenous backgrounds of persons with a disability; and
 - reflect the age diversity of people with a disability; and
 - have appropriate skills, knowledge and experience in matters relevant to persons with a disability, including children with a disability or willingness to learn about such issues; and
 - have an understanding and willingness to support local government processes and the interests of the organisation; and
 - in so far as is possible have a personal experience of disability; and
 - support the principles of the self-advocacy movement.
- (c) To ensure a balanced and comprehensive advice base, Committee members will collectively have a diversity of relevant expertise and experience. Ideally there will be balanced gender representation within the Committee.
- (d) Members will be required to have broad connections in the community and be able to take issues back to the community for discussion.

- (e) Members will live, work or study in Greater Bendigo.

3.2 Appointment of members

3.2.1 Community, disability-specific agency and local organisation representatives

- (a) Community representatives shall be appointed by the panel (see section 3.5.1) through an Expression of Interest process, to be conducted in July each year.
- (b) Expressions of Interest for Committee membership will be sought from the categories outlined in 3.1. The Expressions of Interest will also be publicly advertised.
- (c) All Expressions of Interest received for Committee membership will be considered by the Panel. The role of the Panel shall be to assess all Expressions of Interest received, interview and, following interview, make appointments.
- (d) Expressions of Interest for Committee membership must include responses to any Key Selection Criteria.
- (e) The selection panel will recommend successful applicants to the Council for formal appointment.

3.2.2 City of Greater Bendigo Officers

- (a) The Panel will identify relevant City staff whose positions are influential at increasing social inclusion for people affected by a disability and request participation in the Committee. It is likely that such staff are responsible for Community Access and Inclusion Plan actions.

Ideally City staff representation will cover all of the City of Greater Bendigo directorates.

- (b) Any City Officers who attend Committee meetings shall do so in an ex-officio capacity.

3.3 Revocation or cessation of membership

- (a) If a Committee member misses more than 3 meetings in succession without informing the Committee support officer, their membership of the Committee may be revoked through the decision of the Committee.
- (b) Council and the Chief Executive Officer retain the right to revoke the membership of any person found to be acting outside the interests of the City of Greater Bendigo and the communities / sectors that the Committee is charged with representing.
- (c) If a vacancy arises the Committee may make recommendations to the Chair to fill any vacancy on the Committee and a new appointment shall be decided by a quorum. If no

recommendations are received a public notice will be placed in local newspapers and other mediums advising of the vacancy and asking for expressions of interest.

- (d) Given the resources required to advertise vacancies through a range of diverse mediums. A minimum of 3 vacancies is required for a formal recruitment drive.
- (e) Selection of new members will follow section 3.2 Appointment of members.
- (f) The term of office of the newly appointed Committee member shall expire at the same time as the Committee member being replaced.

3.4 Conduct of members

In performing the role of a DIRC member, persons are required to:

- (a) Have broad connections in the community and be able to take issues back to the community for discussion.
- (b) Participate in an induction session at the commencement of each term.
- (c) Comply with relevant City policies, e.g., the Bendigo Human Rights Charter, code of conduct, organisational values, and volunteer policy.
- (d) Act honestly.
- (e) Not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired during their time as a Committee member.
- (f) No member is authorised to speak on behalf of the Committee or Council around issues that may be raised without bringing the matter back to the Committee for consideration and a response.

3.5 Election and duties of office bearers

3.5.1 Selection panel

The panel will comprise one Councillor, one staff member from the relevant area responsible for the coordination of the Committee, one representative from another business unit within the City, and one Committee member with a disability (preferably the chairperson).

3.5.2 Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

- (a) The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson is to be determined by the Committee in January each year, through a nomination and voting process, and will hold a 12 month term. The chair person will be a person with a disability.
- (b) If the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson is to chair the meeting.

- (c) If both the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson are absent, one of the other Committee members present is to chair by agreement.
- (d) The role of the Chairperson is to facilitate an orderly and constructive discussion between members on matters.

3.5.3 Executive Group

- (a) The Committee will have an Executive Group to make decisions on behalf of the Committee in-between meetings.
- (b) The Executive Group will be comprised of:
 - The Chairperson; and
 - The Deputy Chairperson; and
 - One Committee member determined by the Committee through a nomination and voting process.
- (c) The Executive Group will hold a 12 month term from January each year.

3.5.4 Support officer

The City will provide staff resource of a supporting officer, to:

- (a) Provide secretarial and technical support for the Committee's meetings.
- (b) Provide a suitable venue for the Committee's meetings, including working group meetings as required.
- (c) Give due consideration to the Committee's advice / recommendations.
- (d) Support to enable full participation of members of the committee.
- (e) Distribute minutes and information from the Committee in accessible formats.

4 Meetings

4.1 Timing and frequency of meetings

- (a) Committee meetings are to be held from 2pm to 5pm on the third Thursday of every second month.
- (b) New Committee members first meeting will be in the September each year and their final meeting in the July two years later.

- (c) The Committee may change the timing and frequency of meetings by resolution.

4.2 Agenda and minutes

- (a) The Standard agenda items of a Committee meeting will include:
- Acknowledgement of Country,
 - present / apologies,
 - conflicts of interest,
 - priority area updates (report backs from working groups), and
 - correspondence from community and information sharing.
- (b) Annual updates on the City's Community Access and Inclusion Plan progress will be provided at the January meeting.
- (c) The Committee, by resolution or through the Chair, may invite any individual, interest group, or agency representative to attend a meeting as a delegation or to submit or present information that will assist the Committee in carrying out its functions.
- (d) Agenda items that are related to the Committee's priority areas for that 12 months will be prioritised.
- (e) Minutes of each Committee meeting will be recorded and distributed to all Committee members. The minutes shall also be made available to all Councillors, City of Greater Bendigo's Executive Management Team and placed on Council's website.

4.3 Attendance and quorum

- (a) It is expected that members make a reasonable effort to attend all meetings. Should a member not be able to attend a meeting they must notify the chair or City support officer prior to the meeting.
- (b) A quorum will consist of six of the Committee's community members plus one other Committee member.

4.4 Inclusive practices

Any disability-related support required to enable participation on the Committee will be provided by the City. This includes:

- (a) Support for accessing information (minutes, agenda and documents in Easy English, large print, Braille, electronic).
- (b) Support to develop knowledge relevant to participation (e.g. self-advocacy training).

- (c) Support for engaging in the processes of the Committee (e.g. one-to-one support or support staff at meetings).
- (d) Support for forming collegial relationships that provide informal support.
- (e) Direct skill development (e.g. meeting skills, participation skills, how to communicate effectively).
- (f) Covering costs for travel, attendant care, respite care, language interpreters (including Auslan) and other reasonable costs.
- (g) Structure and processes of the meetings will be designed to ensure the voices of people with an intellectual disability are heard.

Necessary support will be provided to participants to ensure full participation.

4.5 Conflict of interest

- (a) Where a Committee member has an interest or conflict of interest in relation to an item to be discussed, that if supported by Council could result in a direct or indirect benefit or loss to them as opposed to a large sector of the community, the member must declare their interest to the Committee at the beginning of the meeting.
- (b) Disclosure must include the nature of the relevant interest and be recorded in the minutes.
- (c) The provisions of the Local Government Act 1989 apply to Councillor members.

5 Priority/focus areas and working groups

- (a) The Committee will decide on its priority and/or focus areas for each 12-month period at the September meeting.
- (b) The Committee may resolve to establish working groups to focus on priority areas of action for the Committee.

5.1 Conduct of working groups

- (a) Working groups will meet and conduct activities separate and in addition to Committee meetings. A minimum of one meeting per working group will be held between Committee meetings.
- (b) Working groups will develop annual action plans for submission at the November Committee meeting, or as required, for Committee agreement. Progress on the action plan/s will be reported on at each Committee meeting.

- (c) Committee members may nominate to be added or removed from a working group at any time by contacting the City support officer.
- (d) Committee members on working groups are responsible for the coordination of the working group and implementation of action plans. City support officers may provide support as per sections 3.5.4 and 4.4.

6 Reporting requirements

Committee minutes and records of meetings are on the public record and therefore available to any member of the public wishing to view them. Where there is a requirement for confidentiality this is noted in the minutes and shall be addressed accordingly.

6.1 Communicating within Council

City of Greater Bendigo's appointed officers shall generally be the primary liaison between the Committee and Council.

7 Insurance

- (a) Public Liability Insurance: Members of any Committee established by the Council under the Local Government Act or any other enabling legislation all, whilst acting in that capacity within the scope of their duties for and on behalf of the Council, are provided with cover under the LMI Broadform Public and Products Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance, subject to the LMI policy terms, conditions, endorsements, exclusions and deductible and the like.
- (b) Council appointed Committee members, whilst acting in that capacity within the scope of their duties for and on behalf of Council, are covered within the terms and conditions of the Council's LMI Public and Products Liability Insurance Policy for third party personal injury or damage to property (as defined) caused by an occurrence, and where applicable for breach of professional duty, in connection with the Business of the Council.
- (c) The City of Greater Bendigo's insurance policies provide indemnity for personal injury, property loss, products liability and claims for breach of professional duty, subject at all times to the Policy "Conditions and Exclusions".

8 Dissolution

- (a) The Committee may, at any meeting, agree to disband.

- (b) The Council may - for any reason - resolve to disband the Committee and, upon written notice to that effect being given to Committee members, the Committee shall be disbanded.

9 Monitoring and evaluation

- (a) The Committee shall review its Terms of Reference annually and provide advice on any suggested amendments. The Committee may on occasion, review the Terms of Reference earlier in special circumstances. Any proposed changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference resulting from a review must be agreed to by the Committee.
- (b) Committee members are encouraged to provide feedback about the committee and their experience throughout the year during meetings, via agenda items or by contacting the Chair or supporting officer outside of meetings.
- (c) The first meeting (September) of each term will involve evaluating the past 12 months agendas items and committee functioning, as well as planning for the following year.
- (d) An annual progress report will be submitted to Council detailing the activities and achievements of the Committee against its stated objectives.

9.1 Review of the DIRC

A full review of the effectiveness of the Disability Inclusion Reference Committee will be undertaken after 3 years, as per Action 3.12 in the City's Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2018, and relevant actions will be undertaken from the findings.

Appendix

Information package:

All new committee members will be provided with an information package consisting of:

- Terms of Reference
- Meeting Schedule
- Relevant City documents including the Council Plan and Community Access and Inclusion Plan
- The City's organisational chart and councillors
- Community profile
- Most recent Agendas and Minutes
- Officer contact details

Induction program:

The structure and function of the DIRC meetings will need to be conducted different to the standard meetings procedures in order to ensure full participation of Committee members of all abilities. A time will be allocated to induct all new committee members, including Councillors (either as a group or one on one depending on time of appointment).

The induction program will include:

- Familiarisation with the contents of the information package
- An overview of the City's structure and functions and relationship with Councillors and community
- An overview of the structure and running of the DIRC meetings
- Self-advocacy training for members with a disability

Professional / Personal development for Committee members:

Where possible, the City will support the DIRC members to enhance their skills and capacity both personally and professionally as leaders in the community. This could be in the form of guest speakers, events, training, and participation in other Council or external opportunities.