



Terms of Reference - Sunshine Coast Multicultural Advisory Group

1. Context

The Sunshine Coast is a diverse and dynamic society with many cultures, languages and faiths – one in every five of our citizens are born overseas with our region being home to people from more than 150 different countries.

The Sunshine Coasts multicultural citizenship continues to grow by at least 2000 people per year and in addition the region hosts over 3000 international students and welcomes at least 230,000 international visitors annually.

Council is committed to the vision outlined in the Sunshine Coast Community Strategy (the Community Strategy) 2019-2041 being: Together we thrive.

“In all of our communities people are connected, included and feel welcomed. At the heart of our communities are our people who come together and actively participate in their community and contribute to the social, cultural and creative life of our region. People are welcoming, caring and respectful and equal opportunities are available to all”.

The Sunshine Coast Multicultural Advisory Group (the Group) is an initiative that forms part of the Community Strategy Action Plan 2019-2024 (the Action Plan).

This terms of reference must be read in conjunction with the Community Strategy and the Action Plan.

The Group will provide expert advice and a structure for the implementation of the Action Plan outcomes and objectives. The Group will also provide a framework for on-going communication and consultation between the Sunshine Coasts’ emerging and established multicultural communities, the not for profit sector, government agencies and Sunshine Coast Council.

2. Guiding principles

The following principles which are embedded in the Community Strategy will guide the Group.

Place-based

Place-based approaches bring together the efforts of a range of stakeholders in local communities (residents, community organisations, the private and public sector) to respond to issues and opportunities of local importance. Place-based approaches are highly collaborative and drive shared accountability that leads to longer-lasting social change and impact within communities.

Collective approach

A collective approach brings together the four foundational elements of asset based community development and best practice community engagement. A collective approach brings together communities and local organisation to build a vision of the future based on common values and narrative, in turn opening up peoples’ hearts and minds to new possibilities.

Outcome-focused

Outcomes are the effects of a program or activities on participants and communities. An outcome-based approach means outcomes are aligned with goals and that we try to measure the extent to which we

have achieved our goals. Measurement of progress towards an outcome tracks performance and provided feedback that is used to inform adjustments to a strategy where necessary.

3. Responsibilities

The Group's responsibilities are to:

- Support the deliverables under each of the actions in the Action Plan through the provision of expert advice.
- Provide rigorous and transparent advice to Council on its policies, plans, programs and services as they relate to the multicultural community and sector.
- Assist Council to promote the benefits of the Community Strategy.
- Provide advice to Council regarding effective engagement with the multicultural community and sector.
- Assist with reporting, reviewing and updating of the Action Plan.

In addition, Sunshine Coast Council will:

- Provide timely and accurate information as requested by the Group, including providing briefings on any related activities or matters.
- Support the Group in its activities through professional administration duties.
- Make strategic links with groups, organisations, agencies, service providers, State and Federal Government agencies that can contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan, and advise the Group on such.

4. Membership

The Group will consist of members that reflect the diversity within the multicultural community of the Sunshine Coast as well as Council representatives.

Membership will be open to:

- Any member of the multicultural community who is a permanent resident of the Sunshine Coast.
- Specialists and academics on multiculturalism and cultural diversity.
- Representatives of community groups, organisations, agencies and service providers who have a focus on provision of services to multicultural communities on the Sunshine Coast.
- Representatives from all levels of government who have a focus on provision of services to multicultural communities on the Sunshine Coast.

The Membership shall comprise of the following persons:

- a) A total of up to (10) members and (1) ex-officio member who have expertise relevant to achieving the deliverables in the Action Plan.
- b) Up to nine (9) seats are identified positions for stakeholders with knowledge/experience relating to:
 - Health and wellbeing (empowerment, participation and resilience).
 - Education (expanding knowledge, acceptance and recognition of diverse cultures).
 - Economic opportunities (skills, employment and business networks).
 - Racism and discrimination (diversity and inclusion strategies).
 - Settlement (establishing, engaging and connecting new multicultural residents).
 - Multi-Faith and intercultural dialogue (encouraging intercultural connections and leadership).
 - Cultural diversity and inclusion (building capacity, engagement and participation in community life).

- c) One (1) seat is specified for the Sunshine Coast Council, Portfolio Councillor
- d) One (1) seat is specified for an ex-officio member of the Sunshine Coast Council who will act as Chairperson.

Members who are not participating in the Group as part of their core work responsibilities will be required to register as a Council volunteer. This ensures the members activities while volunteering are covered by appropriate insurances. The member will also be required to complete a Volunteer Application Form and undertake a police check and an online safety induction.

The Group membership is to comprise at least 50 per cent representation of members from a culturally diverse background.

The Group membership may establish sub-groups or task groups as required for the implementation of actions identified in the Action Plan.

Additional representatives may be invited to attend meetings as observers and to provide specific expert advice on matters as required.

How is the Advisory Group established?

Council will establish the Group through an expression of interest process.

Membership will be determined by a panel of representatives from the multicultural sector and Council.

Tenure of Appointment

The Group membership is for a period of two (2) years.

If a member fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the Group, his/her appointment shall be automatically terminated, unless Leave of Absence has been granted and approved by the Group.

Council shall advise any member, in writing, when their membership of the Group is terminated.

Council may terminate the appointment of any member prior to the expiry of his/her term, if:

- a) The member is not making a positive contribution to deliberations of the group.
- b) The member is no longer employed by the organisation they represented when joining the Group. If applicable the new employee representing the organisation may be considered.
- c) The member is found to be in breach of the Sunshine Coast Council Code of Conduct or a serious contravention of the Local Government Act 1995.
- d) A member's conduct, action or comments brings the Sunshine Coast Council into disrepute.
- e) Member has the right of appeal through the chairperson should they feel their termination is unreasonable.

Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled by calling for nominations.

Members filling a vacated position will hold that position for the remainder of the two (2) years duration of the convened Advisory Group, as approved by the Council.

5. Meeting Procedures

A Council employee will be assigned as Secretariat to provide administrative support to the Group.

This person will be responsible for the following:

- Issuing of the Agenda
- Recording of Apologies prior to the meeting
- Preparation of the Minutes
- Room booking
- Catering requirements.

The Chairperson will act as the link between Council and the Group and will table issues and concerns to Council on behalf of the Group.

Meetings

The Group shall convene no more than six (6) meetings each year, from February to December. Additional meetings may be convened if there is a need to address an urgent issue.

At the first meeting after convening, the Group shall determine a Schedule of Meeting dates for the remainder of the year.

Quorum

A quorum will be by simple majority plus one, which must include at least one Council member.

Presiding Member

The Chairperson will preside at all meetings. In the absence of the Chairperson, a person elected by the quorum will assume the Chair.

Agendas

The Chairperson will determine the Agenda for each meeting. The Group may submit items for consideration and listing on the Agenda.

A Council Officer will be assigned to the Secretariat role to assist the Chairperson.

Minutes

The Secretariat shall be responsible to ensure the preparation and accuracy of the Minutes.

The Minutes will record consensus agreement on actions and any points of agreement/disagreement. They will not reflect verbatim discussion on issues or matters discussed during debate prior to consensus agreement being reached. At the end of each meeting, the Secretariat in attendance will read out the agreed actions and any points of agreement to ensure they are accurately reflected.

Minutes of the Meeting will be prepared by the Secretariat and distributed to members within five (5) working days after the date of the meeting.

A copy of the Minutes shall be included in the Agenda for the next meeting of the Group for endorsement. Upon endorsement the minutes will be published on Council's website.

Dispute Resolution

Where any dispute or dissent arises in respect of prevailing views, opinions or research evidence, the alternative view will be noted by the Chairperson and minuted.

Confidentiality

Discussions at the Group meetings are to be treated by members as confidential.

Advisory Group Recommendations

Implementation of any Group recommendations in relation to strategies and responses will be subject to Council consideration and approval.

6. Code of Conduct

The Sunshine Coast Councils Code of Conduct shall apply to members of the Group.

All Advisory Group members shall be required to declare any conflicts of interest in matters being considered by the Group.

A copy of Council's Code of Conduct will be provided to each member upon their appointment.

7. Conflict of Interest

All members need to be aware that any conflict of interest needs to be recognised. Generally, if a matter is being discussed by the group and a member has an interest in the matter, then the member is

required to declare the interest and remove themselves from the meeting whilst discussion on that issue is taking place.

The Minutes of the meeting will record the declaration and note the vacancy during the discussion. Once the matter has concluded, the Chairperson will invite the member back into the meeting. If a member is unsure whether they have an interest in a matter, they are encouraged to raise the issue with the Chairperson.

Any person who has a financial and proximity interest in a matter shall exclude themselves from the room and not participate in that part of the meeting.

8. Media and Public Relations

Official public comment on the Group deliberations may only be made by the Chairperson or Portfolio Councillor with agreement from the Councils Corporate Communications Department.

Group members are not precluded from commenting to traditional or social media platforms on issues in the capacity of their daily role/s which are outside their Group responsibilities.

9. Budget and Remuneration

Council will meet the administration costs of the Group including, venue hire, catering, printing, publicity etc.

Participation in the Group is voluntary and members will not be remunerated for attendance at meetings. However, if participation sits outside the member's core work responsibilities a remuneration for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be provided i.e. travel and expenses incurred.

On occasions the Group will be invited to participate in professional development opportunities. Council will meet the costs if the development opportunity has been directly implemented or negotiated by Council for the Group to participate in.

10. Evaluation and Review

Informal verbal feedback will be gathered from the working group regarding the content of the meetings and ideas for future discussions.

A review of the Advisory Group will be carried out to identify successes, challenges and areas of improvement for the group, along with general planning for the coming year.

The Advisory Group Terms of Reference will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis or as required for any significant changes.