



Alexandrina Council

Terms of Reference

Environmental Advisory Panel

1. Background & Establishment

In April 2014, Council endorsed the *Environmental Action Plan 2014-2018 (EAP)* which included as an action the establishment of an Environmental Advisory Panel (**the Panel**).

The EAP describes in detail how Council will deliver on the strategic environmental aspiration contained in the *Community Strategic Plan 2014-2023*, namely to “Thrive in Clean Green Futures”.

The Environmental Advisory Panel was duly established in September 2017 after Council endorsed the first iteration of these Terms of Reference in May 2017

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Panel is to:

- provide input and advice to Council regarding implementation, monitoring and review of Council’s environmental strategies and policies including current and future iterations of the EAP;
- facilitate meaningful community involvement in Council’s environmental decision-making;
- provide feedback and information to and from other interested community groups and members about Council’s environmental objectives and activities; and
- provide thought leadership and recommendations to Council, to encourage Council to become leaders in local government environmental sustainability.

It is expected that the Panel will provide input and advice to Council on environmental and sustainability matters including, but not limited to:

- water resource management;
- biodiversity conservation;
- climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- carbon sequestration and regenerative agriculture;
- resource recovery and waste management;
- environmental education and engagement; and
- reduction of Council’s corporate footprint including energy, water and waste management.

3. Membership

Membership of the Panel shall consist of up to ten (10) members comprising two (2) Elected Members appointed by Council and between six to eight (6-8) community representatives.

Community representatives shall be selected on the basis of their skills, knowledge and experience in one or more of the following:

- water resource management;
- biodiversity conservation;
- climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- carbon sequestration and/or regenerative agriculture;
- resource recovery and waste management;
- environmental education and engagement; and
- reduction in corporate footprint including energy, water and waste management.

Community representative should also have skills, knowledge or experience in one or more of the following:

- relevant Federal and State government legislation, goals, policies and objectives;
- links to relevant network, community groups and wider community; and/or
- track record of achieving positive outcomes through collaborative projects.

Community representatives shall live, work or have an active interest in the Council area.

Appointment of community representatives shall be to individual persons and not to representatives of particular interest groups or organisations.

Membership of the Panel will be sought via community advertisements and by invitation to members of Council's partnering conservation organisations. Nominations for Chairperson will also be sought. At the conclusion of each Panel term, a selection panel will be established comprising the two Elected Members appointed to the Panel, and an administration representative from Council's Leadership Department. The filling of casual vacancies during the term of a Panel shall be achieved by a resolution of Council after consideration of a recommendation from the Panel.

4. Appointment of Chairperson

The Council will appoint a Chairperson from the successful nominees. One of the two Elected Members will be appointed by Council as Deputy Chairperson. In the absence of the appointed Chairperson, Panel meetings will be chaired by the Elected Member appointed Deputy Chairperson.

5. Term of Office

The term of office for community representatives shall be two years or as resolved by Council. The term of office for Elected Members shall be the term of the Council.

6. Responsibilities of Panel members

The responsibilities of Panel members are as follows:

- prepare adequately for and attend scheduled meetings of the Panel or provide an apology prior to the meeting;
- participate constructively in Panel discussions and deliberations;
- respond to written communications within the nominated time period;
- in providing input and advice, be mindful of the strategic objectives and policies of Council as they relate to matters before the Panel;
- be able and willing to look beyond personal and/or organisational interests for the benefit of the community and residents of Alexandrina;
- be able and willing to encourage participation from and provide feedback to the community regarding Council's environmental objectives and activities;
- observe confidentiality when it is required;
- abide by Council's Volunteer Code of Conduct; and
- abide by Council's Communication Policy.

Panel members must not have direct contact with the media in relation to matters discussed by the Panel. All media enquiries regarding matters associated with the Panel must be directed to the Council administration.

7. Meetings

Meeting frequency, time and location will be determined by the Panel members but meetings will be held at least quarterly at a mutually convenient time and location.

Meetings will be supported by Council's administration, and in particular Council's Environmental Strategy Officer or as required, any other officer appointed by the Group Manager – Leadership.

The administration and/or Panel may invite attendees with specialist skills to attend and/or present to a meeting with prior approval of the Chair.

Meetings are public and community members are welcome to attend meetings of the Environmental Advisory Panel however their contribution to the discussion must be by invitation of the Chair.

8. Advice and Reporting

The administration will prepare meeting agendas in consultation with the Chair. Panel members may also request that items be included on the agenda. Items considered by the Panel may result in advice and recommendations being put to Council.

The Panel's quorum shall consist of a majority of Panel members. It is preferable that decisions of the Panel are made by consensus however there may be circumstances where a matter is decided by a vote. Each member is entitled to one vote. The Chairperson does not have a casting vote.

Regular reports to Council attaching the minutes of Panel meetings will be prepared by the administration.

Council will remain the ultimate decision-maker with respect to any matters put before and/or recommendations made by the Panel. The Panel has no delegated decision-making power from Council.

9. Terms of Reference

No change to these Terms of Reference shall be made without a resolution of Council.