

Terms of Reference

September 2023

Maroondah Access, Inclusion and Equity Advisory Committee

Background

The Maroondah Access, Inclusion and Equity Advisory Committee (the Committee) is one of seven Council Advisory Committees that provide advice, feedback and input to support the activities of Council in working towards the community vision outlined in *Maroondah 2040: Our future together*.

The Committee was established in 2020 to holistically consider the accessibility, social inclusion and equity needs of all population groups in the municipality.

Collectively, these committees inform the social policy agenda of Council, collaborate with regional networks and provide authoritative advice on Council services and initiatives.

The Maroondah Access, Inclusion and Equity Advisory Committee is informed by a range of other committees and networks including:

- Maroondah Emergency Relief Network
- Maroondah Reconciliation Partnership Group.

The Committee also has relationships with a range of regional bodies including the following:

- Communities of Wellbeing Inc
- Eastern Regional Group of Councils (ERG)
- Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance
- Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) Health Planners Network.

Role of Committee

- To advance the “Key Directions” related to social policy and community wellbeing, within *Maroondah 2040: Our future together*.
- To advise Council on the development, implementation and review of the Maroondah Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy, embedded action plans, social policies and related strategic documents.
- To work towards building partnerships that enhance community wellbeing, promote social inclusion, equity and belonging and address social harms.

- To establish a collaborative partnership between Council and key community stakeholders.
- To inform and advise Council on key policy issues relating to their portfolio.
- To provide input into the development of strategy, policy, partnership activities and advocacy efforts in relation to community policy issues in Maroondah (listed below).
- To act as the peak Council advisory governance body on access, inclusion and equity.

Policy/Strategy Focus

The Committee will inform the development, implementation and review of the following Council policy/strategy documents:

- Maroondah Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031
- Maroondah Reconciliation Plan
- Maroondah Affordable Housing Policy 2018.

The Committee will provide advice on the impact that Council policies, strategies and initiatives may have on the following population groups:

- LGBTIQ+ People
- First Peoples
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People
- People experiencing adversity, e.g. due to homelessness, poverty, isolation
- People impacted by family violence
- People of faith

Policy issues for discussion may include, but are not limited to: :

- Intersectionality
- Child protection
- Continuous learning
- Digital inclusion
- Emergency relief
- Employment pathways
- Financial inclusion
- Gender equality
- Gender identity
- Needs of different age groups
- Social and affordable housing
- Social inclusion
- Volunteering
- Weight inclusivity.

Membership

The appointment of Councillor representatives is conducted on an annual basis in accordance with the Statutory Council meeting outcomes held in November for the forthcoming calendar year.

All community representatives will be appointed for an initial two (2) year term, with an option for a further two (2) year extension. Further two (2) year extensions of tenure for community representatives may potentially be considered, based on mutual agreement.

Recruitment to Committee positions will be undertaken every four (4) years, within twelve (12) months of a new Council term and during a Committee term as vacancies arise.

The Committee will consist of:

- **Councillors** - three (3) as appointed annually by Council
 - **Agency representatives and Community representatives**
 - **Director Strategy and Development**
 - **Manager City Futures**
 - **Manager Community Services**
 - **Council Officers** - two ex-officio officers to provide administrative support and technical advice.
- Other Council officers may be in attendance depending on the issues for consideration.

The Committee may co-opt individuals as required for specific purposes.

A review of membership for an individual will be undertaken should members fail to adhere to the requirements of these Terms of Reference or not attend two (2) consecutive meetings over a 12-month period.

Although attendance by nominated members is preferred, members representing agencies will be encouraged to provide a proxy if they are unable to attend scheduled meetings. Notice must be provided to the Manager City Futures (or delegated Council Officer) at least three (3) days prior to a meeting that a proxy will be in attendance.

Community representatives are not able to nominate proxies to attend on their behalf.

As part of their responsibilities, Committee members may be invited to participate in and provide input to a range of stakeholder engagement activities to support strategic activities of Council throughout the Council term. This may include deliberative engagement activities of Council as required by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Committee members may resign at any time, in writing to Council, attention to the Manager City Futures.

Committee membership may be terminated by Council for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to attend two (2) consecutive Committee meetings without prior notice.
- The member does not declare a conflict of interest, breaches confidentiality or exhibits unacceptable behaviour.
- The member expresses unauthorised views in a public setting, made specifically on behalf of the Committee or Council.

- The member ceases to live in, work in, or have expertise relevant to the City of Maroondah.
- The member does not adhere to the Code of Conduct as outlined in these Terms of Reference.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson

A Councillor will be appointed as the Chairperson for the Committee. This appointment will be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with the annual review of Councillor Advisory Committee representation. The duties of the Chair are to chair meetings of the Committee and represent the Committee as required. This may include representing the Committee at any relevant events and acting as the signatory to formal Committee correspondence (e.g. advocacy letters).

Deputy Chairperson

A Councillor will also be appointed as the Deputy Chairperson for the Committee, to act as Chair should the Chairperson be unable to attend a meeting or unavailable to represent the Committee.

Other Roles

Role	Responsibilities
Councillor representatives	Councillor representatives, including those with Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson roles, are involved in developing the agenda for committee meetings, participating in committee discussions, considering feedback and recommendations of the committee, and reporting back to Council on activities of the Committee.
Community representatives	Community representatives bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to provide advice and input through advisory committee meetings and associated activities on issues and topics as relevant to the scope of the Committee. This may also include informing and advising on Council policies, projects and service delivery. Community representatives may be invited to provide input on Council activities and/or participate in related activities outside formal Committee meetings.
Agency representatives	Agency representatives bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to provide advice and input to the Committee on behalf of their organisation on issues and topics as relevant to the scope of the Committee. As nominated representatives of their agency, this role may also include supporting the establishment of partnerships and acting as a conduit between their agency and Council. Agency representatives may be invited to provide input on Council activities and/or participate in related activities outside formal Committee meetings.
Council management representative/s	An identified Council management representative oversees Committee operations and is the formal point contact point for the Committee.
Council officer representative/s	Ex-officio Council officer representatives provide administrative and technical support to the operation and facilitation of the Committee. Guest Council officers may be invited to present and/or participate in committee meetings depending on the agenda.

Conflict of Interest

In the event of a conflict of interest arising, a Committee Member will disclose their interest prior to the matter being considered. The Chairperson will determine if the member should leave the room whilst the matter is discussed.

Code of Conduct

In performing the role of a Committee member, the member must:

- Act with integrity and honesty
- Treat others in a respectful manner
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence
- Not make improper use of their position
- Not make improper use of information acquired because of their position
- Not express any unauthorised views publicly on behalf of the Committee or Council.

Councillor representatives are to abide by the requirements of the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Meetings

- Meetings will be held three (3) or four (4) times per year for approximately two (2) hours. Additional meetings may be held and/or separate sub-committees/working groups may be formed from time to time as issues arise.
- Meetings shall not proceed without 50% of agency and community representatives (as a total), and a minimum of one Councillor representative in attendance.
- The meeting cycle may be changed during the life of the Committee with a majority vote of the Committee.
- Members of the Committee may be approached outside of the formal meeting cycle on an individual basis to provide further input into the development of programs, projects or policy matters.
- Meeting Agendas will be set by the Manager City Futures, in consultation with the Chairperson.
- Meeting Minutes will be reviewed and approved by the Manager City Futures, in consultation with the Chairperson. Minutes of meetings will be noted and received at a Council Meeting and tabled for endorsement at the next possible advisory committee meeting.
- Committee members will have an opportunity to propose content during each calendar year to be considered for inclusion in the Agenda.
- Meetings are conducted in accordance with meeting procedure principles as prescribed by Council's Governance Rules.

Voting Rights

Committee members may be required to vote on procedural matters to reach a consensus. Voting does not extend to include any decision normally made by Council.

Council officers provide administrative support and technical advice to the Committee and do not have voting rights.

Committee Minutes

All meetings are to be formally minuted reflecting the role of the Committee as an advisory body, providing advice on issues to Council.

At a minimum, these Minutes are to include:

- The name of the Committee
- The date, time and location of the meeting
- Attendees and apologies
- Confirmation of previous minutes
- Conflict of Interest disclosure
- Discussion Items
- Any recommendations from the Committee to Council.

Circulation of Agenda and Minutes

The Agenda and Minutes from previous meetings will be circulated to members at least five (5) working days prior to each meeting.

The Minutes will be provisionally endorsed and distributed to the Committee within four (4) weeks after a meeting has taken place. The Minutes will be tabled at a forthcoming Ordinary Meeting of Council.

The Minutes will be endorsed by the Committee at the next meeting.

Report to Council

The Committee will report to Council on an annual basis in relation to the work it has undertaken in the preceding twelve (12) months.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be subject to review and Committee endorsement every four (4) years, within twelve (12) months of a new Council term; or earlier if deemed necessary by either Council or the Committee.