

# Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

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## 1. Purpose

The Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee has been established to provide advice to Council on policies, plans and services that impact our multicultural communities. It will add value to other forms of community engagement used by Council to consult with and engage on issues relating to people seeking asylum, refugees and the broader multicultural communities. In fulfilling its purpose, the Advisory Committee will exercise a collaborative approach, seeking to engage and understand the experiences of existing and emerging groups.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee are to:

1. Consider and provide advice on the impact of key government initiatives, issues and programs, so Council can review services, plans, strategies and policies and advocate to all levels of government.
2. Seek to address issues impacting people seeking asylum, refugees and the broader multicultural communities.
3. Identify, and where appropriate, implement, effective ways to support engagement, interaction and capacity-building with the Greater Dandenong community.
4. Offer advice and support to Council on implementation of the 'Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Thematic Plan' and other relevant plans.
5. Celebrate and promote the achievements of people seeking asylum, refugees and the broader multicultural communities and residents of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the work of the Advisory Committee.
6. Develop strategic partnerships in the community, strengthening advocacy efforts for improved or new services.
7. Act in a primary partnership role with Council and the community, endeavouring to increase the understanding across the wider community of the challenges and opportunities for people seeking asylum, refugees and the broader multicultural communities.
8. Seek funding to further the objectives of this Committee and support collaborative approaches.

## 3. Membership Criteria

The Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee will consist of no more than 15 voting members and will include representatives from the following:

- Up to five community members
- Up to ten members from relevant community groups and organisations, including standing membership from the regional Refugee Health provider and Refugee Settlement organisations.

And also, as ex officio members:

- Up to two co-opted members from State Government departments
- A senior officer from the Community Advocacy unit.
- Up to three Councillors, appointed annually in accord with a statutory process

Council staff will provide administrative support and service expertise to the Advisory Committee. At all times Council officers and staff will act in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct.

Membership of the Advisory Committee is voluntary, and all members must be over 18 years of age.

Members of Advisory Committee may resign at any time. Vacancies which arise due to resignation or inability to attend the minimum number of meetings shall be advertised through an ongoing Expression of Interest process on Council's website.

A request received by Council for membership in addition to the appointed members will only be considered if a vacancy exists.

Provisional endorsement of applications for membership will be considered for approval at the next Committee meeting and formally submitted for endorsement by Council when the meeting minutes are noted at the scheduled public Council meeting.

If a vacancy arises less than six months before the end of the term, the Committee may resolve to leave the vacancy unfilled for the interim.

The term for any member appointed part way through the life of the Advisory Committee shall expire in line with the other members of the Advisory Committee.

## 4. Term of Appointment

The Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee members are endorsed at a Council meeting for a three-year period until 30 June 2028. Should there be a need for the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee to continue beyond this time, a re-appointment process will be undertaken for all members, except for standing members, in accordance with the selection process outlined in these Terms of Reference.

## 5. Role of Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee

- Committee members will be expected to demonstrate their commitment and due diligence by the preparation for, attendance at, and active participation in,

meetings and other activities of the committee. This also includes providing written feedback and endorsing minutes from previous meetings.

- It is required that each member of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee will attend a minimum of three meetings per financial year. Inability to attend the minimum number of meetings per year will result in a vacancy to be filled in accordance with the selection process outlined in this Terms of Reference.
- At all times, act in the best interests of Council and the community.
- Act with integrity, confidentiality, and objectivity.
- No members will disseminate, disclose or share confidential or personal information that is discussed at the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee.

### Councillor Representatives Role

Should a Councillor be nominated on the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee, the Councillor will:

- Be in an ex officio capacity.
- Be appointed by Council in accordance with the annual statutory Council appointments.
- Act as a link between Council and the Advisory Committee.
- At all times act in accordance with the Code of Conduct – Councillors.

### Chairperson Role

The Chairperson will be selected from the voting membership of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee by its members. The term of the chair is one year and may be extended by majority vote of the members and aligned with the term of the Advisory Committee.

The appointed Chairperson is responsible for the conduct of meetings and ensuring fair and equitable opportunities for views to be discussed by the Advisory Committee.

### Working Groups Role

Working Groups/Networks may be developed to implement particular actions or roles of the Advisory Committee and be established at its discretion. The establishment of working groups will be conducted under specific objectives and/or expected outcomes and timelines, which will be determined by the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee will determine the role, responsibility and resourcing of working groups, retaining the authority to conclude a working group or the

group's formal relationship with the Advisory Committee at its discretion or upon the achievement of its objectives.

While Working Group membership may be open to non-Advisory Group members, the Chair of any Working Group/Network shall be a member of the Advisory Committee and will report on the progress of the group to the Advisory Committee.

## 6. Selection Process

### Call for Expression of Interest and Nominations

Membership of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee will be achieved by calling for nominations. For the initial intake an advertisement will be placed in the local media and on Council's website. Specific representatives may also be invited to nominate. A nomination form must be completed by interested representatives and all nominations will be assessed against the Criteria for Membership.

For emerging vacancies throughout the three-year term, an ongoing Expression of Interest will be available on Council's website.

### Selection Panel

When the initial appointment of members of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee is required and nominations are received, the following selection panel shall convene:

- A senior member of Council (Director – or delegated officer).
- A Council staff member from the specific service area that is relevant to the Committee.
- A representative from a local organisation, agency, or government department (provided the organisation has not nominated a representative for membership on the Advisory Committee).

All nominations will be assessed by the selection panel against the selection criteria.

A recommendation about the membership of the Advisory Committee will then be made for the consideration and endorsement of Council.

It is noted that once the Advisory Committee has been appointed, the selection panel will be disbanded.

### Selection Criteria

Nominees for membership of an Advisory Committee must be able to demonstrate:

- Current engagement with the community on issues relating to multicultural, refugee and people seeking asylum communities.
- Endorsement by their own organisation, if appropriate.
- Strong community networks and linkages within Greater Dandenong.
- An ability to constructively participate in an advisory capacity.
- An ability to represent a broad range of views that reflect the diversity of the community.
- A strong understanding of the local community and its social, environmental and economic influences.
- A sound knowledge and understanding of local issues that is relevant to the interest area.
- A willingness to contribute positively to meetings in a fair and unbiased manner.
- An ability to look beyond personal interests for the benefit of the community and residents of Greater Dandenong.
- An ability and willingness to encourage participation from, and provide feedback to, the community regarding issues experienced by people seeking asylum, refugees and the broader multicultural community.
- A capacity to commit to the Advisory Committee and actively contribute for the required duration.

## 7. Induction

Committee meetings are noted by Council at public Council meetings and the opportunity for nominated Councillor/s to provide further information if required. Additionally, in accordance with Council's statutory reporting, an annual report (July – June) is provided to Council at a public Council meeting. A summary of actions associated with multiculturalism and people seeking asylum will be included. The nominated Councillor/s will have the opportunity to speak to the report on behalf of the Advisory Committee. Committee advice may also be provided to Council through Infosums to Councillors or a scheduled Councillor Briefing Session.

## 8. Meetings

### Schedule and Participation

Meetings will be held quarterly for a maximum duration of two hours. A schedule of meetings will be developed and agreed to annually.

Under special circumstances, a meeting may be cancelled or re-scheduled.

All meetings shall be held either online or at a Council venue.

The Advisory Committee may engage with community members, groups, leaders, industry representatives, practitioners, and qualified experts through periodic forums. This may assist to identify priority themes or action areas as a focus for the addressing issues of relevance to people seeking asylum, refugees and the broader multicultural communities.

## 9. Reporting of Minutes

All meetings will have an agenda. Minutes of the meeting will record attendees, apologies, decisions and actions.

The Chairperson will oversee the preparation of the agenda in consultation with Council staff. Any member may submit agenda items prior to the finalisation and distribution of the agenda.

Council staff will provide administrative support and service expertise to the Advisory Committee and will ensure the timely preparation and distribution of agendas and minutes.

### Administrative Support and Distribution of Agendas and Minutes

The management of the Advisory Committee will be overseen by the Coordinator Community Advocacy.

Administration support will be provided by Council staff to assist the Advisory Committee to function efficiently and effectively, including but not limited to servicing all scheduled Advisory Committee meetings and the timely preparation and distribution Agendas and Minutes.

All Committee Members are able to submit an Agenda item in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Agenda items must be submitted to Council (either by the Committee Chairperson or a nominated Council Contact) no less than five (05) working days prior to the finalisation and distribution of the agenda.



The Chairperson in consultation with the (Council Officer representative) will be responsible for coordinating the preparation and distribution of Agendas.

Agendas will be made available to Committee Members no less than five (5) working days prior to a scheduled committee meeting.

Minutes will be distributed in a timely manner to all members to ensure accuracy prior to formal endorsement by the Committee at a subsequent meeting.

Unconfirmed Minutes will be reported to an Ordinary Meeting of Council for noting.

### Attendance and Record of Minutes

All attendance, apologies, conflicts of interests, recommendations and outcomes will be recorded in the Minutes of all meetings held where a quorum is present.

The meeting will be recorded for minute taking purposes.

Administrative Support and distribution of agendas and will be overseen by Council staff from the Community Advocacy unit.

### Quorum

A quorum for the advisory committee is five voting members. Decisions require more than half of the voting membership in attendance at the meeting.

### Voting Rights and Decision Making

It is preferable that decisions of the Advisory Committee are made by consensus; however, there may be circumstances where a matter is decided by a vote. Each member is entitled to one vote, except that the Chairperson may exercise a casting vote.

## 10. Evaluation and Review

A review of the Advisory Committee will be undertaken as required to ensure the purpose, membership and operations of the committee remain effective and in line with Council objectives.

Appropriate changes to the purpose and outcomes of the Committee and amendments to the Terms of Reference maybe made as part of the review process.

The Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee Terms of Reference will be reviewed prior to the appointment of a new committee by the Strategic Growth and Advocacy department and if there are changes to the document, re-endorsed at an Ordinary Meeting of Council, unless otherwise advised by Council.

Council has the right to conclude the Advisory Committee by resolution of Council at any time if it is found that the Committee is no longer beneficial to the needs of the Community.

## 11. Policy Adherence

### Confidentiality

Information discussed, received, used or created by the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee deemed confidential, must not be disclosed to any person who is not a member of the committee.

Any member who discloses information that they know or should reasonably know to be confidential will be found in breach of the Terms of Reference.

The Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee must act in accordance with Council's Transparency Policy and the Public Transparency Principles as outlined in the Local Government Act 2020

### Freedom of Information

All documents produced by or relating to Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee that are not publicly available or deemed confidential are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

### Breaches

The City of Greater Dandenong by resolution of Council may terminate a Committee member's appointment for breaching the Terms of Reference set out in this document and/or Council's Code of Conduct – Staff/Councillor.

### Conflict of Interest

Any matter deemed by a member to represent a Conflict of Interest shall be reported to the Chairperson either prior to a meeting or before the specific item is discussed.

### Media Protocols

All Advisory Committee members must act in accordance with Council's Media Policy and refer all media enquiries to Council's Media and Communication Department for a response.

The Mayor of the day remains the spokesperson for all Council activities, Advisory Committee members are not to represent the Committee or Council to the media or on social media, unless approved by the Manager Media and Communications.

### Terms and Conditions

All members of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee will be required to accept and sign the agreed Terms and Conditions as part of their membership.

### Disclosure of Personal Details

In accordance with Council's Transparency Policy, members name, qualifications and current committee position will be listed on Council's website.

### Code of Conduct

All members of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee will be required to abide by Council's Code of Conduct - Staff (which includes volunteers) or Code of Conduct - Councillors.

### Authority Constraints

The Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee has no authority to:

- Act on decisions or advice without Council approval
- Expend money on behalf of Council
- Commit Council or its resources to any arrangements
- Consider any matter outside its area of reference
- Direct Council Officer in the performance of their duties.

## 12. Contact Details

Peter Johnstone  
Coordinator Community Advocacy  
City of Greater Dandenong  
225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong  
PO Box 200  
Dandenong 3175  
Tel: 8571 1624  
[council@cqd.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@cqd.vic.gov.au)

## Terms and Conditions

### I agree to:

- Attend Advisory Committee meetings and, if unable to attend, provide advance notice with apologies or nominate a delegate to represent your organisation or community group.
- Act in an advisory capacity by disseminating authorised information within the community and provide insight and advice into community perspectives on issues impacting people seeking asylum, refugees and the broader multicultural communities.
- Seek at all times to obtain and represent the views of the broader community.
- Respect the ideas and beliefs of all members and provide an atmosphere where all members feel comfortable to participate.
- Contribute in a positive way to finding solutions to issues or concerns.
- At all times act in good faith, with honesty and integrity and apply the skills and expertise I possess with diligence and care.
- Represent the views of my organisation, interest group or community and not individual views at odds with my organisation or group.
- Notify Council of any potential conflict of interest that may arise with respect to my participation on the Advisory Committee.
- Allow Council to promote my participation in the Advisory Committee in order to facilitate community feedback and participation.
- Not disseminate confidential information that is discussed at the Advisory Committee meetings as advised by the Advisory Committee chair.
- At all times act in accordance with the Agreed Meeting Etiquette.
- No members will disseminate, disclose or share confidential or personal information that is discussed at the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee.
- No members should make public comments regarding what is discussed at the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee. As per Council's Media Policy, the Mayor and the CEO are the official spokespeople on behalf of Council and any public comment that the Advisory Committee wishes to make should be discussed with Council's Media and Communications Unit in the first instance.
- Give consent for my name and email address to be made available in the public realm as a direct result of my involvement on the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee.

Greater Dandenong City Council is required to comply with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) in relation to the collection, use, storage, security and disclosure of personal information. If you have any questions or concerns about how Council handles your personal information please contact Council's Privacy Officer on 8571 5100 a copy of Council's Privacy and Personal Information Policy is available on Council's website [www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au](http://www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au).

Modification or withdrawal of consent may be made in writing at any time to Council's Privacy Officer, however any changes to the use of your name or email will only apply from the date Council receives your withdrawal or modification of the consent, any information published prior is unable to be withdrawn from publication.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_