



**Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee**  
**Terms of Reference**

**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.

**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 'People Seeking Asylum and Refugees Action Plan (PSARAP) 2018-2021' and relevant plans.
5. Create a broader multicultural set of priorities and key actions.
6. 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.
7. Develop strategic partnerships in the community, strengthening advocacy efforts for improved or new services.
8. 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.
9. Seek funding to further the objectives of this committee and support collaborative approaches.

**REPORTING REQUIREMENT**

In accordance with Council's statutory reporting, an annual report (July – June) will be provided to Council at a public Council meeting. 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.

## **TERM OF APPOINTMENT**

The Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee will be appointed until 30 June 2022. 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 in accordance with the selection process outlined in these Terms of Reference.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

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

And also as ex officio members:

- Up to two co-opted members from State Government departments
- A senior officer from the Community Services Directorate
- 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 addressed through the formation of the Selection Panel and the Selection Process.

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

In the event of a vacancy on the committee being created for any reason, the position shall be filled through the process described in the Selection Process. 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.

## **ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR**

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.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

Membership of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee will be achieved by calling for nominations. 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.

## **CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE MULTICULTURAL AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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.

## **SELECTION PANEL**

When the 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.

## **MEETINGS OF THE MULTICULTURAL AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meetings will be held bi-monthly 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 in a Council venue to be decided by the Advisory Committee.

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.

## **WORKING GROUPS/NETWORKS**

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.

## **ATTENDANCE AND RECORD OF MEETINGS**

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.

## **CHAIRPERSON**

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 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.

## **QUORUM AND VOTING**

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

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.

## **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.



**Code of Conduct for Members of the  
Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee**

I agree to:

- Attend Advisory Committee meetings and provide apologies in advance where attendance is not possible.
- 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.

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....

Advisory Committee: .....