

# Environment and Sustainability Reference Group

## Terms of Reference

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### Classification

Stakeholder Reference Group

### Purpose

To provide a mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist opinion and enable community participation in environmental sustainability issues, initiatives, policies and strategies.

### Objectives

- Provide a forum for environment and sustainability issues of interest and concern for Whitehorse to be reviewed and considered prior to Council decision making processes on all aspects of the environment.
- Assist in the preparation or review of key environmental sustainability strategies and policies.
- Assist in the design and delivery of specific environment and sustainability programs by Council.
- Provide input to Council on issues of environmental sustainability.
- Monitor the progress of implementation of Council action / management plans relating to environmental sustainability.
- Provide coordination, liaison and communication with other Council appointed community groups and key external stakeholders.

## **Membership and chairperson**

- A Councillor to act as chairperson, with second Councillor to act as alternate chairperson
- Eight community representatives, selected to reflect applicable expertise and experience from across the Municipality.
- GM City Development to act as secretariat for the Committee with GM Infrastructure to act as second secretariat. Secretariat duties may be designated to council officers as required.
- Four Council officers (two from each Division) to be nominated as administrative support to the panel including minute taking. One Council officer is to be an Arborist

## **Term of appointment**

Community representatives will be appointed by Council for a two year term or until otherwise resolved by Council.

## **Co-opted members**

The Committee may invite suitably skilled persons to join the Committee as a co-opted member for a specified purpose and period of time. A co-opted member joins the Committee in an advisory capacity and does not form part of the quorum.

## **Quorum**

A meeting can only take place with a minimum quorum of:

- Five community members, where a community member can nominate a substitute if unavailable to attend.
- One Council officer must be present for administrative purposes.

## **Member responsibilities**

In order to fulfil the Committee's objectives, community members are expected to:

- Undertake induction as a volunteer of Whitehorse City Council.
- Demonstrate an understanding of diverse environmental and sustainability issues relevant to Whitehorse
- Understand the role of local government in environmental and sustainability management.
- Be conversant with relevant Council plans and policies.
- Be reasonably available and able to commit to meet quarterly over the two-year period.
- Prepare for and actively participate in regular meetings of the group.
- Keep informed on current developments, issues and concerns in relation to urban environments
- Have knowledge of State Government policy and current issues regarding urban environments.
- Respect confidentiality, if required, of matters discussed in meetings
- Declare conflicts prior to the discussion of an agenda item

Whitehorse is committed to providing a safe workplace for employees, councillors and volunteers. Members of Council Committees must:

- Be respectful at all times.
- Adhere to the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*, and refrain from discriminating, harassing or bullying other people and using offensive language in their capacity as a member of the Committee.
- Adhere to the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and have regard to the principles of health and safety. Committee members must ensure that they contribute to the notion of a healthy and safe workplace.
- The council officer with responsibility for convening the Committee will provide an overview of the relevant legislative requirements and Council's Equal Opportunity and Anti-Bullying and Violence Policy as part of the Committee induction process.

### **Recruitment**

- Council seeks both continuity within the Committee and generation of new ideas and direction, and as such a mix of new and existing members is encouraged. All existing members seeking another term must re-nominate.
- Vacancies will be advertised via the Whitehorse News, on Council's website and via other channels.
- Council seeks applicants with an ability to work collaboratively with other members and Council, a strong interest in local environment and sustainability issues, a proven understanding of environmental issues, and a willingness to commit 2 hours every three months to attend Committee meetings.
- It is intended to create a committee with the following attributes:
  - a) Diversity of environmental interests and knowledge including climate change, waste, transport, community development and education, urban biodiversity, water, open space;
  - b) Representation of members of different local community groups;
  - c) Representation of a variety of sectors in the municipality, including community agencies, business, education, and interested citizens;
  - d) A mix of skills and attributes to complement other members of the Committee;
  - e) Members will be selected on the merits of their skills and their ability to contribute to ensuring the attributes are achieved

### **Resignation**

A member of the Committee may resign at any time. Notice of resignation is to be provided in writing to the Secretariat.

Membership of the Committee will be deemed to have resigned if they fail to attend two consecutive meetings without prior notice.

Any member who resigns or whose membership is terminated, may be replaced at the discretion of the Committee Chair and Secretariat, seeking members initially from the pool of previously unsuccessful applicants.

## **Meeting frequency**

Meetings are held quarterly at Council venue or via virtual video conferencing, unless otherwise advised.

## **Management of the Committee**

- General Manager City Development and General Manager Infrastructure or nominated delegate to share the role of secretariat, will resource the Committee and attend all meetings, provide information, support and technical advice.
- The secretariat is responsible for the preparation of meeting agendas, minutes, reports and other administrative functions.

## **Reporting procedure**

- The Environment and Sustainability Reference Group is not a formal committee but rather a group that is established by Council to provide advice to Council.
- Any advice provided by the Reference Group will be reached by consensus where possible. A vote may be entered into to resolve a specific recommendation. Where differing views may be expressed by members of the group, these views will be reflected in any reports and statements issued.
- Minutes of the meetings will be recorded and acknowledged in the various reports on the various issues reported to Council.
- Recommendations made by the Reference Group require consideration and approval by Council or Council's delegate before being fully endorsed and acted upon.

## **Public Statements**

Members of the Reference Group cannot make public statements on behalf of Council.

## **References**

- Whitehorse Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2011 and the Climate Response Plan update
- Open Space Strategy
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Sustainability Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Whitehorse Planning Scheme

## **Contact details of group**

General Manager City Development and General Manager Infrastructure

## **Approval date**

April 2021

## **Next review date**

April 2023