



Terms of Reference - Sunshine Coast Multicultural Advisory Group

1. Context

The Sunshine Coast is a diverse and dynamic society with many cultures, languages, and faiths – one in every five of our citizens are born overseas with our region being home to people from more than 150 different countries.

The Sunshine Coasts multicultural citizenship continues to grow by at least 2000 people per year and in addition the region hosts over 3000 international students and welcomes at least 230,000 international visitors annually.

Council is committed to the vision outlined in the Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041 (the Community Strategy) being: Together we thrive.

"In all our communities' people are connected, included, and feel welcomed. At the heart of our communities are our people who come together and actively participate in their community and contribute to the social, cultural, and creative life of our region. People are welcoming, caring, and respectful and equal opportunities are available to all".

The Sunshine Coast Multicultural Advisory Group (the Group) is an initiative that supports the vision and outcomes of the Community Strategy.

2. Guiding principles

The following principles which are embedded in the Community Strategy will guide the Group.

Place-based

Place-based approaches bring together the efforts of a range of stakeholders in local communities (residents, community organisations, the private and public sector) to respond to issues and opportunities of local importance. Place-based approaches are highly collaborative and drive shared accountability that leads to longer-lasting social change and impact within communities.

Collective approach

A collective approach brings together the four foundational elements of asset-based community development and best practice community engagement. A collective approach brings together communities and local organisation to build a vision of the future based on common values and narrative, in turn opening peoples' hearts and minds to new possibilities.

Outcome-focused

Outcomes are the effects of a program or activities on participants and communities. An outcome-based approach means outcomes are aligned with goals and that we try to measure the extent to which we have achieved our goals. Measurement of progress towards an outcome tracks performance and provided feedback that is used to inform adjustments to a strategy where necessary.

3. Responsibilities

The Group's responsibilities are:

- Provide expert advice to council on its policies, plans, programs, and services as they relate to the multicultural community and sector.
- Assist council to promote the benefits of the Community Strategy and support the deliverables under Outcome Area 3. Inclusive Communities.
- Provide advice to council regarding effective engagement with emerging and established multicultural communities, the not-for-profit and business sectors.
- Assist with reporting and recommendations as determined with the Group and council.

Sunshine Coast Council responsibilities are:

- Provide timely and accurate information as requested by the Group, including briefings on any related activities or matters.
- Support the Group in its activities through professional administration duties.
- Make strategic links with groups, organisations, agencies, service providers, State and Federal Government agencies that can contribute to the implementation of the Community Strategy.

4. Membership

The Group will primarily consist of members that reflect the cultural diversity of the Sunshine Coast also including members whose professional role responds to the multicultural sector and Councils portfolio Councillor/s.

Membership will be open to:

- Any member of the multicultural community who is a permanent resident of the Sunshine Coast.
- Specialists and academics on multiculturalism and cultural diversity.
- Representatives of community groups, organisations, agencies, and service providers who have a focus on provision of services to multicultural communities on the Sunshine Coast.
- Representatives from all levels of government who have a focus on provision of services to multicultural communities on the Sunshine Coast.

The membership shall comprise of:

- Ten (10) people who have the community or professional expertise relevant to achieving the responsibilities of the advisory group.
- Sunshine Coast Council Portfolio Councillor/s.

Members with the following knowledge or experience are desirable:

- Health and wellbeing (empowerment, participation, and resilience).
- Education (expanding knowledge, acceptance, and recognition of diverse cultures).
- Economic opportunities (skills, employment, and business networks).
- Racism and discrimination (diversity and inclusion strategies).
- Settlement (establishing, engaging, and connecting new multicultural residents).
- Multi-faith and intercultural dialogue (encouraging intercultural connections and leadership).
- Cultural diversity and inclusion (building capacity, engagement, and participation in community life).

Mentee positions

The membership also includes two (2) mentee positions for newly arrived migrants who have been living on the Sunshine Coast for less than twelve months at the time of their appointment.

These positions aim to provide a lived experience perspective of settlement and inclusion on the Sunshine Coast and contribute to the Group's understanding of current settlement challenges and opportunities for new arrivals.

Mentees will be offered mentoring and peer support to build their capacity to collaborate with community networks and Council initiatives.

Induction

Members will be required to complete a general safety induction online and register as a Council volunteer. This ensures members' activities while volunteering are covered by appropriate insurances.

Guests

Additional guests may be invited to attend meetings as observers and to provide specific expert advice on matters as required.

Tenure of appointment

The Group membership is for a period of two (2) years, with the option to renew for another two (2) years.

If a member fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the Group, their appointment shall be automatically terminated, unless leave of absence has been granted and approved by the Group.

Council shall advise any member, in writing, when their membership of the Group is terminated.

Council may terminate the appointment of any member prior to the expiry of their term, if:

- a) The member is not making a positive contribution to deliberations of the group.
- b) The member is found to be in breach of the Sunshine Coast Council Code of Conduct or a serious contravention of the Local Government Act 1995.
- c) A member's conduct, action or comments brings the Sunshine Coast Council into disrepute.
- d) Member has the right of appeal through the chairperson should they feel their termination is unreasonable.

Vacancies

Membership to the Group is by nomination only. Nominations from individuals can be sought through a public announcement, and members of the Group can nominate a person they recommend for the role.

Nominations will be assessed by the Group and council.

Council will advise nominees if they have been successful or unsuccessful.

Members filling a vacated position will hold that position for the remainder of the two (2) years duration of the convened advisory group.

5. Meeting procedures

Council employees will host the Group meetings and provide administrative support.

Council will be responsible for:

- hosting meetings
- issuing the agenda
- recording apologies
- preparation of the minutes
- room booking
- catering requirements.

Meetings

The Group shall convene no more than six (6) meetings each year, from February to December.

Additional meetings may be convened if there is a need to address an urgent issue.

The Group shall determine a schedule of meeting dates for each year.

Quorum

A quorum will be by simple majority plus one, which must include at least one council member.

Agendas

Council will determine the agenda for each meeting. The Group may submit items for listing on the agenda.

Minutes

Council shall be responsible to ensure the preparation and accuracy of the minutes.

The minutes will record consensus agreement on actions. They will not reflect verbatim discussion on issues or matters discussed prior to consensus agreement being reached.

Minutes of the meeting will be prepared by council and distributed to members within fourteen (14) working days after the date of the meeting.

A copy of the minutes shall be included in the agenda for the next meeting of the Group for endorsement.

Dispute resolution

Where any dispute or dissent arises in respect of prevailing views, opinions or research evidence, the alternative view will be noted in the minutes.

Confidentiality

Discussions at the Group meetings are to be treated by members as confidential.

Advisory group recommendations

Implementation of any Group recommendations in relation to strategies and responses will be subject to council consideration and approval.

6. Code of conduct

The Sunshine Coast Councils Code of Conduct shall apply to members of the Group.

All members shall be required to declare any conflicts of interest in matters being considered by the Group.

A copy of Council's Code of Conduct will be provided to each member upon their appointment.

7. Conflict of interest

All members need to be aware that any conflict of interest needs to be recognised. Generally, if a matter is being discussed by the Group and a member has an interest in the matter, then the member is required to declare their interest and remove themselves from the discussion.

The minutes of the meeting will record the declaration and note the member has abstained from the discussion.

If a member is unsure whether they have an interest in a matter, they are encouraged to raise the issue with the Group.

8. Media and public relations

Official public comment on the Group deliberations may only be made by a Council Officer or Portfolio Councillor with agreement from the Council's Corporate Communications Department.

Group members are not precluded from commenting to traditional or social media platforms on issues in the capacity of their daily role/s which are outside their Group responsibilities.

9. Budget and honorarium

Council will meet the administration costs of the Group including, venue hire, catering, printing, publicity etc.

Participation in the Group is voluntary. To recognise the time and expertise contributed by members, Council will pay all members (online or in-person) a flat rate honorarium of \$60 per meeting. While online attendance is supported, in-person participation is preferred wherever possible.

On occasions members of the Group will be invited to participate in professional development opportunities. Council will meet the costs if the development opportunity has been directly implemented or negotiated by Council for the Group to participate in.

10. Evaluation and review

Feedback will be gathered from the Group regarding the content of the meetings and ideas for future discussions.

A review of the Group will be carried out to identify successes, challenges, and areas of improvement for the group, along with general planning for the coming year.

The Advisory Group Terms of Reference will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis or as required for any significant changes.