

Disability Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Date adopted	24 March 2025
Adopted by	Council
Review due	December 2028
Responsible officer	Manager Community Care and Active Living
Records reference	11101309

1. Purpose

The Disability Advisory Committee serves as an advisory body to Melton City Council, providing recommendations, insights, and guidance on matters relating to accessibility and inclusion for people with disability and carers within the City of Melton. The committee works to enhance community engagement, inform policy decisions, and support the Council in addressing key issues relating to disability.

2. Membership

Membership of the Committee will be composed of between *thirteen (13)* members at any one time.

Membership of the Committee will include:

- a. A minimum of three (3) Councillors
- b. Maximum of four (4) community representatives, consisting of two (2) Person with disability, one (1) Carer of a child with disability and one (1), Carer of an adult with disability.
- c. One (1) Organisation Representative
- d. The sponsoring Member of the Executive Leadership Team and/or relevant Manager or staff member/s.
- e. Four (4) Council Staff

Position/ Panel Member Type	No. of Positions	Type of Appointment	Term
Chair (Councillor) (If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is on the Committee, they must be the Chair).	1	Appointed	Annually, as appointed by Council
Councillor (not including the Chair)	2	Appointed	Annually, as appointed by Council
Reserve Councillor The Reserve Councillor does not hold official standing unless the Chair or nominated Councillor representative is absent or otherwise unavailable.	1	Appoint	Annually, as appointed by Council
Sponsoring Member <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>	1	Ex-officio	Ongoing
Community Representative Person with Disability	2	Appointed	In line with Council Term, concluding in June prior to Local Government Elections

Community Representative Carer of a child with disability	1	Appointed	In line with Council Term, concluding in June prior to Local Government Elections
Community Representative Carer of an adult with disability	1	Appointed	In line with Council Term, concluding in June prior to Local Government Elections
Organisation Representatives Disability Service	1	Appointed	In line with Council Term, concluding in June prior to Local Government Elections
Melton City Council staff members Manager Community Care and Active Living Community Wellbeing and Inclusion Coordinator Advocacy and Inclusion Officer Engineering Manager	4	Ex-officio	Ongoing

2.1. Method of Appointment

2.1.1. Recruitment of Community Representatives

- a. The process for appointing community representatives will be as follows:
 - i. The Council will publicly advertise opportunities for community representatives to apply, requiring them to demonstrate how they meet the key selection criteria.
 - ii. When appropriate, the Council may invite representatives from specific organisations to join the Committee, ensuring subject matter expertise.
 - iii. Consideration for membership is given to individuals with relevant experience and/or interests.
 - iv. Consideration will be given to ensuring committee representatives are selected to reflect the geographic and demographic nature of the committee.
- b. Selection of community representatives is based on the following selection criteria:
 - i. Reside, work, study, or volunteer in the City of Melton and be at least 16 years old.
 - ii. Demonstrated leadership and relationship-building skills or a willingness to develop them.
 - iii. Relevant knowledge and experience in the portfolio area.
 - iv. Strong community connections with the ability to engage a broad range of perspectives.
 - v. Willingness to contribute constructively in an advisory capacity to the Council.
 - vi. Formal acceptance of the Terms of Reference and Confidentiality Agreement.
 - vii. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of the City of Melton are strongly encouraged to apply.
 - viii. Application from individuals with a disability are strongly encouraged.

Once applications are received and the closing date has passed, candidates will be assessed against the selection criteria and the need for a diverse and balanced membership. Appointments will be made by Council based on the advice given by a panel composing of Council staff with expertise in the particular subject matter.

Membership is granted to individuals in their personal capacity rather than as representatives of any group or organisation unless specifically recruited for that purpose.

2.1.2. Term of Appointment

- a. The appointment aligns with each Council Term, concluding in June prior to Local Government Elections.
- b. Committee members may reapply for one additional consecutive term.
- c. No member can serve more than a total of two consecutive terms.
- d. A Committee member may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Chair, Mayor or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- e. Council Officers may terminate a Committee member's appointment, declare the position vacant and seek a replacement if the member breaches these Terms of Reference.
- f. If the number of Committee members falls below the required minimum to meet a quorum due to resignation, Council will appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term.
- g. The Council may consider previous nominations from the same nomination period when filling a vacancy or re-advertise the position.
- h. If the advisory committee includes a member aged 16–18, other members may be required to obtain a Working with Children Check as per Council's Child Safe Policy.

2.2. Chair

- a. If the Mayor is a member of the Advisory Committee, the Mayor would automatically assume the role of the Chair. If the Mayor is not a member of the Advisory Committee and the Deputy Mayor is, the Deputy Mayor will serve as Chair. Meetings will be led by the Chair.
- b. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the Chair will nominate a Councillor Representative to undertake the role of the Chair.
- c. The Chair is responsible for fostering a collaborative approach to discussions held throughout the meeting.
- d. The Chair shall not permit any motion, question, or statement that is derogatory or defamatory toward any Councillor, Committee Member, Council staff member, or community representative.
- e. The Chair has the responsibility to maintain order by addressing any individual who is disruptive or unruly during a meeting.

If a reserve Councillor has been nominated by Council, it should be noted that this is not a formally recognised role. While the reserve Councillor may attend and participate in meetings, they do not hold official standing unless the Chair or nominated Councillor representative is absent or otherwise unavailable. In the instance that the Chair is unavailable, the reserve Councillor may be required to chair committee meetings and perform other duties on behalf of the Committee as appropriate.

2.3. Attendance and Quorum

- a. Members who are unable to attend a meeting should submit their apologies to the Committee Chair.
- b. If a member anticipates being absent for three or more consecutive meetings and wishes to retain their membership, they should request a leave of absence. If a member misses three or more consecutive meetings without applying for a leave of absence, the member will be withdrawn from the committee.
- c. Leave of absence requests must be submitted to the Committee Chair and will be presented to the Committee for a decision.
- d. The Committee shall not unreasonably deny a leave of absence request.
- e. A quorum must be achieved for a meeting to commence. A quorum is at least 50% of each member category present, as detailed in the following table:

Total Members in a Category	Minimum Required for Quorum
3 Councillor Representatives	2 must be present
4 Community Representatives	2 must be present
1 Organisational Representative	1 must be present

3. Meeting Guidelines

- a. Meetings will be held Bi-monthly.
- b. Meetings will be limited to a duration of two (2) hours.
- c. Meetings may be conducted in person and/or online.
- d. The Committee will operate in an advisory capacity to Council. While the Council values the Committee's contributions and input, it is not a decision-making body. Council considers information from a broad range of stakeholders before making decisions.
- e. The Committee does not have the authority to direct Council Officers in their duties.
- f. Committee members shall not publicly comment on behalf of the group or advocate for the interests of individual organisations. The Chair may make public comments, in line with Council's Media Policy.
- g. Council will provide the necessary support for the Committee's effective functioning, including maintaining member contact details, preparing and distributing agendas, minutes, and pre-meeting materials.

4. Agendas and Minutes

A standardised agenda template and minutes template must be used for all Committee meetings. These templates will be provided by Governance to ensure consistency and accuracy in meeting documentation.

Each Committee must designate a dedicated Council staff member who is a part of the committee, to be responsible for preparing agendas and recording minutes. Agendas and minutes must be distributed to Committee members in a timely manner.

The staff member responsible for preparing agendas and minutes, in consultation with the Chair, will determine agenda items, focusing on matters relevant to Council policies, programs, and strategic objectives.

Minutes are presented to Council for receiving and to consider adopting any recommendations made by the committees. The dedicated person for recording minutes must ensure accuracy of minutes prior to presentation to Council.

To ensure transparency in Committee operations, Advisory Committee Minutes will be published in the Council Meeting papers.

5. Conflicts of Interest

Committee members are required to disclose any Conflict of Interest in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. If a Committee Member has a general conflict of interest (as defined in *Section 127 of the Act*) or a material conflict of interest (as defined in *Section 128 of the Act*) regarding an item under discussion, they must disclose it to the Chair. If a Conflict of Interest arises, the member must take the following steps:

- a. Formally declare the conflict to the Chair and clearly outline the nature of their interest before the matter is discussed at the meeting.
- b. Leave the room or online meeting and refrain from participating in any discussion or decision making related to the matter.
- c. The disclosure and the actions taken must be recorded in the meeting minutes to ensure transparency and accountability.

Should the Chair declare a Conflict of Interest, a nominated Councillor Representative will assume the Chair for that item.

6. Confidentiality and Privacy

Any information discussed, received, used, or created by the Committee should be treated as confidential. Committee members must not disclose any information they know or should reasonably know is confidential, in accordance with *Section 125 of the Local Government Act 2020*.

Members are also prohibited from disclosing, recording, retaining, or reproducing confidential information in any form.

If the meeting is held online, or in a hybrid format (both online and in person), the Chair must seek confirmation from online attendees that they are joining from a confidential space where no one, other than them, can see or hear proceedings of the meeting.

In cases where confidential information is recorded in the minutes and necessary to provide context for a specific component of the minutes, it must be redacted before distribution or publication to ensure privacy and compliance with confidentiality requirements.

The Council may appoint members to a Committee without publicly disclosing their names if doing so could reasonably be expected to endanger their life or physical safety. In such cases, their names will be redacted from publicly available documents, including meeting minutes.

7. Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the commencement of each Council term to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with the needs of the Committee and stakeholders. Council may also review and amend the Terms of Reference as necessary to reflect changing circumstances.

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