



Advocacy Policy

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Responsible officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Policy owner	Advocacy Coordinator

1. Purpose

To outline Council’s approach to advocacy in influencing public policy and resource allocation decisions and investment by other levels of Government, and/or other key stakeholders, to fulfil responsibilities in the delivery of services, assets and infrastructure which benefits the City of Melton.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Council and its officers when defining, prioritising and implementing advocacy, and how Council resources its efforts to advocate on behalf of the community.

The role of the Mayor, councillors, CEO and officers in developing and maintaining political and broader stakeholder relationships to deliver on Council’s advocacy on behalf of the community.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Advocacy	An action intended to influence those who hold governmental, political or economic authority and or influence to implement public policies, resource and projects to the benefit of any specific affected or interest populations within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Melton; and/or • The Region, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Neighbouring Councils, ○ Greater Western Melbourne ○ Interface Municipalities.
Advocacy Framework	A high-level framework for Council, setting advocacy priorities that align with the Council and Wellbeing Plan, which seek to complement those of the State and Federal governments, the business sector and the community.
Advocacy Strategy	Individual strategies that assist the formation of actions and engagement to further the advocacy agenda.
Advocacy Campaigns	Individual campaigns that establish a program of activity to influence a target audience/s to achieve the strategic goal.
Advocacy techniques	Variety of practices such as effective submissions, direct engagement and relationship development, leading deputations, inviting decision-makers to tour, hosting consultations, establishing hearings, media strategies, and advertising.

4. Policy

Advocacy priorities will be aligned to the Council and Wellbeing Plan approved by Council.

Advocacy priorities will be reviewed annually following State and Federal budget cycles and following State and Federal elections.

Council's advocacy priorities will be underpinned by and supported by strategic plans for each priority.

Councillors will be engaged in campaigns for high priority advocacy initiatives.

The Mayor, supported by councillors, the CEO and senior managers will lead advocacy priorities to local State and Federal Members and relevant State and Federal Ministers and Members of Parliament and through regional and national advocacy bodies (e.g. Interface Councils, National Growth Areas Alliance).

The CEO and senior managers will advocate priorities with relevant agencies and government departments.

Council will build and maintain relationships with all levels of Government, including parliamentarians, local members and government department bureaucrats, conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, with recognition of each other's roles and responsibilities.

Council's advocacy will aim to have a focus on:

- A change in government legislation, policy or practices, to the overall benefit of residents, our local environment and/or local business;
- Committed investment / provision into local infrastructure and/or services by sources other than Melton City Council;
- Receipt of external funding to Melton City Council to implement services, projects and programs;
- Promotion of an issue or information to key stakeholder decision makers and other levels of government to influence positive change;
- Promotion of, or raised awareness of, issue or information to facilitate positive change;
- Empowering community to become more involved in local issues and contribute to influencing decision making initiatives.

4.1. Advocacy Principles

The following principles are to support Council's advocacy:

- 4.1.1. **Engagement** - meetings with local members, Ministers and the Council's CEO to further the Council's advocacy priorities including regular catchups with local members.
- 4.1.2. **Representative of local need** - based upon policy and strategic positions adopted by Council, established via an evidence base either developed by Council or sourced from other agencies.
- 4.1.3. **Community engagement** - commit where appropriate, to inform and engage our community on advocacy.
- 4.1.4. **Leadership** - on behalf of our community on key issues to protect and enhance our municipality, with an emphasis placed on working with and advocating to State and Federal governments.
- 4.1.5. **Transparency** - be open and transparent in our advocacy objectives, strategy and priorities.

- 4.1.6. **Partnerships and Alliances** - optimise likelihood of success by working in collaboration with other organisations with shared objectives, including but not limited to:

<p>Federal / National Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other councils• Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)• National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA)• Calder Action Group (CAG)• Local Federal Members of Parliament• Western Highway Action Committee (WHAC)• Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)
<p>State Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other councils• Local State Members of Parliament• Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA)• Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)• Victorian Disability Advocacy Network (VDAN)• Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF)• Property Council of Australia (PCA)
<p>Regional Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LeadWest• West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance (WOMEDA)• Interface Group of Councils• Western Region CEOs• Western Region Mayors• Greater Western Water• Victoria and Federation Universities• Women's Health West• Western Melbourne Tourism
<p>Local Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djerriwarrh Health Service• Djerriwarrh Employment and Education Service• Venture Melton membership• Local GP's and health bodies• Local Resident Associations• Best Start Partnership Group• Victoria Police

- 4.1.7. **Outcome Focussed** - seek to focus on solutions to problems, issues or concerns through the development of options that are proactive and innovative and achievable.

4.2. Advocacy Framework

Council will plan and deliver its advocacy through an operational Advocacy Framework to support delivery of this policy. The Framework includes:

- Roles and responsibilities of Executive, Managers and all staff in planning and delivering advocacy.
- Governance including processes and procedures.

- Protocols for engaging and communicating with State and Federal Members of Parliament.

4.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Council will review and confirm advocacy themes and priorities through:

- Quarterly and annual reviews of the Council and Wellbeing Plan;
- Ongoing community engagement;
- Review and evaluation of annual State and Federal budget cycles;
- Review and evaluation of State and Federal election commitments;
- Formal evaluations at key stages of advocacy campaigns;
- Continuing work of the development of new and review of existing policy and strategy that guides service delivery.

Changes and amendments as an outcome of evaluations and reviews will be aligned to Council annual budgetary process, to ensure campaigns are appropriately resourced to meet advocacy strategy objectives for the forthcoming years. This will involve review and public reporting on the performance of advocacy strategies and associated campaigns.

This will ensure that Council is agile in advocacy and continually improves its policy, procedure and services in response to advocacy efforts.

Individual evaluations will be focussed on delivery against established objective of actions which are typically focussed on levels of influence given Council is not the decision maker on most advocacy issues.

5. Responsibility /Accountability

5.1	<p>Mayor & Councillors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set advocacy priorities. • Advocate in accordance with Council policy. • Develop and maintain relationships to support Council’s advocacy.
5.2	<p>Chief Executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable and responsible for the operational implementation of the advocacy priorities and strategies of Council.
5.3	<p>Executive, Managers and Council Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to implementation of advocacy priorities and strategies of Council.

6. References and links to legislation and other documents

Name	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 	www.melton.vic.gov.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support organisational strategies and action plans 	