

ACCESS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024 - 2027

Context

South Gippsland Shire Council is committed to supporting universal access and inclusion. To support this commitment, Council convenes an Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (the Committee) to provide Council with advice on development and implementation of a South Gippsland Access & Inclusion Action Plan, a plan for equitable access to goods, services and facilities across the municipality.

To ensure the Committee represents the interests of all people in the municipality with lived experience of barriers to access and inclusion and all who will benefit from universal design, Committee members will be selected to represent diverse views and lived experience of access and/or inclusion barriers. Council recognises groups within our society experience barriers to living an active, engaged, and happy life. These barriers affect different groups in different ways and are often part of the structures of our community. The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee will support these groups to overcome and dismantle these barriers.

The Committee's establishment supports the South Gippsland Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022–2025. This Plan seeks to improve the health and well-being of the South Gippsland community and the implementation plan contains actions and activities aimed at minimising and removing barriers to inclusion.

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Committee has an advisory role only, advice is given to Council for its consideration.

The Committee will provide advice to Council on:

- access & inclusion issues
- promoting inclusion, access, and equity
- development and implementation of the Council's Access & Inclusion Action Plan, and other policies, strategies, and plans.



2. Role of the Committee

the Committee will:

- a) assist Council in the development of the Council's Access & Inclusion Action Plan, based on the actions within the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022–2025
- b) provide advice to the Council on the implementation of the Access & Inclusion Action Plan in line with the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022–2025
- c) provide advice to Council on especially vulnerable people with disability and/or access and inclusion barriers
- d) provide advice to the Council on issues, policies, documents, and projects relating to universal access and inclusion
- e) provide advice to the Council on issues that may require advocacy
- f) provide a link between the community and the Council on advocacy issues for people with access and/or inclusion barriers
- g) assist in increasing awareness and knowledge of issues related to disability
- h) encourage and support; people with access and/or inclusion barriers and support groups to raise their profile.

3. Membership

The Committee will aim to reflect the community's diversity and will comprise up to 15 members.

- a) up to nine total community representatives. There must be a minimum of five members
- b) at least half the community representatives will be people with access and/or inclusion barriers
- c) Community representatives will:
 - have lived experience of access and/or inclusion barriers or
 - have experience caring for and/or advocating for someone with access and/or inclusion barriers
 - be able to consider universal access and inclusion from many points of view
- d) When selecting Committee members, Council will pay specific attention to reflecting the diverse gender and cultural identities of the community
- e) up to five total service organisation representatives. There must be a minimum of two organisations represented, and the organisations must have an access and inclusion focus.
- f) The nominated Councillor or Councillors
- g) Council's Social Planning Officer and Community Strengthening Officer (or delegates) will attend the meetings, but not have voting rights.
- h) Members of the Committee require endorsement by Council. Council may set terms of appointment.
- i) Councillor representatives will be appointed/reappointed at a Council Meeting
- j) Committee vacancies will be filled at the discretion of the Council



- k) Members may be granted a leave of absence and replaced by an appropriate substitute for the period of the absence.

4. Code of Conduct

- a. The Committee will work in line with the values of the South Gippsland Shire Council and Community.
- b. Members of the Committee will represent both the Committee and Council in general and will:
 - Be respectful of each other and the different views expressed in the Committee
 - act and speak in the interest of the Committee and Council
 - be respectful of different views expressed by the Committee and advocacy groups
 - consider the interests of the entire South Gippsland community

5. Removal Process and Losing Membership

Should a Committee member act against the Committee's interest or violate the code of conduct, and the situation cannot be resolved to allow the member to remain on the Committee, the Committee may vote to request that Council revoke their membership. This removal process details how this is done.

- a) The Committee becomes aware of a potential issue that following an investigation may require the removal of a member. This may be through:
 - A complaint or report by a community member
 - The report of Council staff
 - The report of a Committee member
- b) The Committee should try to resolve the issue to allow the member to stay on the Committee. A resolution would require the member to acknowledge the potential problem and decide to continue to work according to the Committee's goals and code of conduct.
- c) Where a resolution is impossible, a member may call for a vote to request the Council revoke the challenging representative's membership.
- d) This vote requires a two-thirds majority for the resolution to pass.

6. Resigning and Revoking

- a) Council may revoke the membership of any member of the Committee at any time.
- b) Council can withdraw the membership of any person found to be acting outside the interests of the South Gippsland Shire Council.
- c) A member will lose their membership if they are absent from three consecutive meetings without a Leave of Absence, and in agreement with the Chairperson.
- d) A member may resign from the Committee by informing the Chairperson of their resignation.
- e) Records of resignations are to be submitted to the Chairperson, who will forward



these to Council.

- f) Council has the authority to terminate the services of the Committee at any time after consultation with the Committee.

7. Filling Vacancies

- a) When there is a vacancy on the Committee, it will be filled according to these terms of reference and the selection criteria.
- b) The Advisory Committee Chair or their delegate will actively participate in the recruitment and induction of new members.
- c) Proposed membership of the Advisory Committee is to be confirmed by Council.

8. Resources

To ensure community members are provided equitable access and inclusion within the Committee all community Committee members will be provided with the resources and support required to attend meetings and make meaningful contributions to the Committee's work.

As members of this Committee may be people with lived experience of disability, the needs of each member may differ and be unique. Resources that Council will provide include but are not limited to:

- Helping with transport when required to attend a venue.
- Provide IT help and expertise when required to attend virtually.
- Providing the equipment, including IT equipment, needed to attend and contribute to the meeting.
- Ensuring both virtual and in-person venues are accessible to all members of the communities.
- Provide training and leadership opportunities to support the Committee's work
- Considering the individual inclusion and accessibility needs of the members with disability.

9. Committee Operations

- a) The Committee will appoint the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson (if required) for the period of one year, with an option to extend if the Committee agrees.
- b) Council Officers will be regularly invited to meetings to discuss developments and initiatives relevant to the Access & Inclusion Action Plan and broader universal access related issues.
- c) the Community Strengthening team will provide administrative support and information to the Committee
- d) Committee members may be reimbursed for expenses incurred, as agreed with the Council.

10. Proceedings

10.1 Meetings



- a) The Advisory Committee will meet at least four times per year or more often as required.
- b) Each meeting should not be longer than two hours.
- c) Meetings will follow standard meeting procedures (training will be provided)
- d) The agenda will be prepared by the appointed Officer and provided to the Committee members at least four days before the meeting.
- e) Council encourages Committee members to add items to the agenda.
- f) Minutes will be taken by the appointed Officer for each meeting and distributed to Committee members and relevant staff in the week following the meeting.

10.2 *Quorum*

- a) A quorum of the Committee is half of the members plus one.
- b) If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes after the start of the meeting, the meeting will not be able to make any binding decisions.
- c) The notes from this meeting can be ratified at the next meeting as long as there is a quorum.

10.3 *Recommendation making*

- a) The Committee will make every effort to reach consensus on recommendations to Council.
- b) If consensus is not possible, a recommendation may be voted on by a simple majority. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson has the casting vote.
- c) Council is not obligated to respond to or act upon recommendations made by the Committee

10.3 *Reporting*

- a) Recommendations to Council should reflect a consensus view. Where there is no consensus, the report will clearly outline the different points of view
- b) Reports to Council will be coordinated through the Councillor Representative
- c) Members may present the minutes to their organisations.

11. Terms of Committee, Evaluation and Review

- a) The Committees' term will run until the end date of the Access & Inclusion Action Plan or until disbanded by Council.
- b) Council will review the Committee and these Terms of Reference every four years.
- c) The Committee will be an active participant in this review and will use this process to monitor and evaluate the Committee's effectiveness.

12. Conflicts of Interest

- a) A conflict of interest, in this case, would be the decision of the Committee



conflicting with other interests' members may have.

- b) Committee members must disclose any conflict of interest to the Chairperson (or nominated Councillor in the case of the Chairperson).
- c) The conflict of interest may be of a direct or indirect nature.
- d) The disclosure must be made at the beginning of the meeting, and the Committee member should leave the meeting when the matter is being discussed. The Committee member may return to the meeting immediately after deciding the matter.
- e) Advisory Committee members should be guided by the Conflict of Interest legislation and guidelines as they apply to Councillors. Guidance and training will be provided for the Committee by Council.

13. Confidentiality

The Committee may deal with items of a confidential nature. This requires confidentiality, discretion and sensitivity. This Committee, more than others, may become aware of sensitive and personal information about our community as it will be working on issues relating to disability and barriers to access and inclusion. Disability is an intensely personal and often stigmatised aspect of our community. This Committee will strive to create a safe space for any confidential information to arise and be kept confidential within the Committee.

If members of the public (not members of the Committee) are in attendance, they should be asked to leave during such discussions.

14. Dispute resolution and grievance procedure

Should a dispute or grievance arise, the Committee should attempt to resolve the matter. If unable to resolve the issue, it should be referred to Director Economy and Community who will arrange guidance and appropriate dispute resolution.