



Environment and Rural Advisory Panel Terms of Reference Amended July 2017

Introduction

Council is committed to:

- Preserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Providing for growth whilst ensuring the intrinsic values and character of the shire are retained
- Supporting innovative, sustainable businesses and activities that create jobs and are valued by the community and visitors
- Creating an inclusive community where everyone can participate and contribute
- Delivering valued services to the community

Input and advice from the Environment and Rural Advisory Panel (the Advisory Panel) will assist Council to deliver these commitments and the strategies and outcomes in its Council Plan 2017 – 2021 (incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Role and Objectives

The panel members will participate in a series of environment and/or rural themed workshops over a twelve month period. Guided by strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2017 - 2021, topics for 2017/18 may include:

- Resource re-use: organic waste diversion pilot
- Managing pest plants and animals
- Rural Hinterland Strategy and Local food Program: feedback on final drafts
- Building community resilience to emergencies/fire management in the Shire
- An emerging priority topic under Council's *Towards Environmental Leadership Program*
- Agribusiness strategy

The workshops will address these broad topics and each session will be designed to concentrate on particular aspects of the broader topics to enable focussed workshop outcomes. The workshops will be facilitated and include community advisory panel members, Councillors, Council staff, and relevant experts from industry, state government or other fields. Panel members may be asked to prepare for workshops by undertaking a small amount of background reading.

The workshop process and outputs will inform Council's formal Council activities and advise the decision making process of the Council. It is expected that there will also be a social or community building outcome as a result of this process.

2. Membership and Workshop Sessions

The Advisory Panel Workshops will be introduced by a Councillor and run by a facilitator. Members will be appointed as independent participants and not as representatives of groups or organisations. Workshop sessions will include a range of other stakeholders relevant to the topic under discussion, including state government and agency representatives, community group members and experts on the topic.

The Advisory Panel will include a total of up to 24 members (not including Councillors), comprised of people with a mix of the following attributes:

- Skills and knowledge of environmental and rural issues relevant to the Surf Coast Shire
- Extensive community or business networks
- A passion for contributing positively to the future of the Surf Coast Shire

- Ability to think strategically
- Availability to attend at least three workshops
- Ability to communicate effectively and engage constructively in the discussions
- Ability to understand and interpret information
- Capacity to respect confidentiality on matters that may be raised as part of the Panel's work
- Ability to comply with all media protocols including the need to direct all media enquiries to the Mayor, Surf Coast Shire Council for a Council response

Membership selection

The process for selection of Members with the above skills will be made through a transparent Expression of Interest advertising process to be conducted by Council. Membership will be reviewed annually.

Key criteria for all members should include:

- Knowledge and experience in managing environmental and /or rural issues
- Ability to think strategically and constructively engage in discussion on specific topics
- Well networked in the community or in rural business

Councillor membership

Council will nominate three Councillors as representatives on the Panel. All Councillors are welcome to attend any workshop.

3. Terms of the Environment and Rural Advisory Panel

Advisory Panel membership will be for a minimum 12 month period. During the 12 month period, the Advisory Panel will participate in four facilitated workshop sessions on specific topics, as well as an introductory meeting at the beginning of the 12 month period and a review meeting at its conclusion.

4. Meeting procedures

- An introductory meeting to be held with the Advisory Panel to go over the proposed topics and outline of the workshop sessions.
- Four facilitated working sessions to be held over a twelve month period
- A Councillor to introduce each workshop session
- A facilitator to run the workshop series and record the outputs and discussion
- The Advisory Panel members will need to attend at least three of the workshop sessions

The workshop series would involve 2-3 hour facilitated working sessions enabling participants to actively engage in the topic. Key outputs of the session would include

- engagement of a broad range of stakeholders including community groups, state agencies, business and industry
- allowing constructive discussion and debate
- clear advice to Council on how to progress the issue

5. Council Commitment

Council will:

- Commit resources to facilitate the workshop series and support the Advisory Panel's participation in the workshops with ongoing communication and the provision of briefing materials
- Provide timely feedback to the Advisory Panel on the outcomes of workshops and subsequent Council actions related to their advice
- Manage all media enquiries about the Advisory Panel and the topics it works on.
- Provide a recommended list of topics to be considered for the workshop series for input from the Advisory Panel