

DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2022-2026

Report Author: Disability Inclusion Officer

Responsible Officer: Director Communities

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) was established in 2012 as an advisory committee to Council. It assists in the consultative process for a wide range of activities and initiatives, provides advice to support Council's decision making and monitors the achievement of objectives of the Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy.

The Disability Advisory Committee is appointed by Council for a four year term. The process for recruiting a new advisory committee has been conducted and recommendations are presented in this report for membership of the 2022-2026 Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Appoints the following representatives to the 2022-2026 Disability Advisory Committee:***
 - (a) Representatives of people with disability - Michelle McDonald, James Wood, Isabella O'Hara, Paul Stoney, Marie Pleuger and Allyson Lees***
 - (b) Unpaid Carer representatives - Shek Kho, Tracey Wannet and Renae Purcell***
 - (c) Service Providers/representative of Community Organisations - Lesley Grimes – Belgravia Leisure, Julie McDonald – Montrose All abilities Netball group, Lisa McIlfatrick – Capability in Action***
- 2. Directs officers to notify the new members of their appointment and extend Council's congratulations.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- Disability Advisory Committee Terms of Reference adopted by Council on 27 July 2021; and
- Access, Equity and Inclusion Strategy (2013-2023) endorsed. Page 14

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

An expression of interest was advertised through Council's website, social media, local media and through communications to the sector and other relevant local and peak community organisations, for individuals, representatives of service providers and community organisations interested in being a member of the DAC.

The recruitment process involved written applications followed by shortlisting candidates for interview. Interviews were conducted by the Disability Advisory Committee Chair, the Disability Inclusion Officer and a council staff member with broad professional and lived personal experience. This experience included as a carer for more than 30 years and extensive experience across the sector in NDIS planning and engagement (including holding the lead for the Victoria/Tasmanian portfolios for CALD, Indigenous, LGBTIQ+ and "Hard to Reach" communities) and in the private sector as a Senior Support Coordinator.

Options considered

Council is presented with a group of proposed members who:

- Represent a diverse range of disability and life experiences (6 members);
- Have the unpaid carer perspective, which is a critical group in our community with unique needs and experiences (3 members); and
- Bring the skills and expertise of local service providers and community organisation representatives (3 members).

The proposed new DAC includes some former members and new members. This provides a balance of experience and fresh input to this important advisory committee.

Over the past four years the role and influence of the DAC has grown. A key commitment to the inaugural DAC was that Council would genuinely and openly seek the advice of the DAC on important decisions. The retiring DAC commented on the value of this to the people they represent.

The DAC continues to be a critical advisory committee for council officers, gaining insight and input into processes, projects, plans and strategies. This work will continue and strengthen with the new DAC.

Recommended option and justification

Council endorse the recommended appointments to the DAC listed above.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The expenditure associated with the operation of the Disability Advisory Committee is met through the approved operational budget. This includes the costs of advertising the Advisory Committee recruitment and ongoing operational expenditure.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The establishment of the DAC contributes to the following strategic objectives:

- The Council Plan: Connected and Healthy Communities; and
- Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Plan: To promote inclusive and equitable communities.

The Disability Advisory Committee directly relates to the Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy.

The Committee will also be a key advisor for the development of Yarra Ranges Council's upcoming Disability Action Plan (2023).

RELEVANT LAW

Council is required by legislation to develop a Disability Action Plan. The Disability Advisory Committee plays a key role in the development and implementation of this plan. In recruiting members, Council strives to establish a committee that is diverse and representative of the community. This includes, but is not exclusive to, Aboriginality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, culture, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status, and geographic location.

The proposed membership aligns with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020, in ensuring diverse representation.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental impacts arising from the recommendations in this report.

Economic Implications

The DAC has previously promoted economic participation of people with a disability. Achieving greater participation of people with a disability within the workforce presents significant economic opportunities for local communities including increased spending at local businesses and through tourism for example. This

involves removing barriers, creating awareness of the opportunities and informing and resourcing businesses. The DAC will continue to offer this advice and support Council's efforts.

Social Implications

The social impacts of the DAC are many. Feedback from the retiring DAC members indicated positive impacts of the DAC arising from:

- Having a voice and being heard;
- Representing their community on important local issues;
- Influencing projects to include the needs and aspirations of people with a disability; and
- Engaging with other people with a shared commitment to improving access and inclusion for all.

Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications for this recommendation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

No collaboration with other Councils, Governments or statutory bodies was sought.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The process undertaken has ensured Council recruits a balanced representation of people with disability, unpaid carers and service providers to provide advice to Council across a diverse range of issues relevant to Council's role and responsibilities. The Terms of Reference bring clarity to the role and responsibilities of the Committee, its members and those who support it.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

No Attachments