

Cardinia Shire Multicultural Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Date February 2024
Version 3.0

Introduction

The latest census data indicates that cultural diversity within Cardinia Shire continues to significantly increase. Almost one quarter of residents were born overseas and one in five community members speak a language other than English¹. The largest increase in population is from the greater Southeast Asia Region. The Cardinia Shire Council is playing an emerging role in the settlement of residents from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Council recognises this growth of cultural diversity in our community presents both opportunities and challenges to greater health, social and civil participation in the Shire.

Cardinia Shire Council is committed to supporting our multicultural residents and promote an inclusive and cohesive communities through their meaningful participation in the decision-making processes that affects their lives.

The Cardinia community's **vision statement** starts with its aspiration for an inclusive community where everyone is valued:

"We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Bunurong, Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri people. We value their contributions past, present and future.

We are all valued for who we are. We are different, but we are together as a community.

We empower everyone to have a voice. We speak with the optimism and insight of our young people, the energy of our community members, and the wisdom and memory of our older citizens including those who came before us.

We support the people of Cardinia Shire to be strong, resilient, socially connected and physically and mentally well. We protect the vulnerable, who come from all walks of life in our community. We look out for each other."

Purpose

The Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG) has been established to assist Council on the following matters:

- Provide information and input into Council's policy and decision-making processes through regular promotion of, and input into, engagement activities.
- Assist with identifying the best ways to communicate to and engage with the Shire's Multicultural communities.
- Assist Council in continuing to build a culture that welcome and celebrate diversity.
- Continuing to enhance existing partnerships and explore the development of new partnerships to further support Multicultural communities within the shire.

¹ 2021 Census Data [Overseas arrivals | Cardinia Shire | Community profile \(id.com.au\)](#)

- Inform and monitor the implementation of the Cultural Diversity Action Plan and evaluation.
- Foster a group culture that seeks to understand and explore diverse views of Community and Committee members so that advice to Council reflects such diversity of views, and.
- Coordinate effort, strengthen community partnerships and share information. on issues affecting the Shire's newly arrived Multicultural residents

Membership and Composition

Membership of the Multicultural Advisory Group will consist of a maximum of 15 members with the following tenure:

- Initial 12-month commitment as a member
- Optional membership renewal annually for up to a total of 2 additional consecutive years.
- A member's term may cease if they fail to attend 2 consecutive meetings without notice or apology.

Members will include representation from the following:

- Community members from ethnic and multicultural backgrounds
- Representatives from relevant community groups and organisations that provide services, programs or represent ethnic and multicultural communities in Cardinia Shire.
- Councillors and Council officers. (minimum of one, maximum of two)
- Membership where possible should reflect diversity in ethnicity, language, age, ability, religion, and gender identity.

Recruitment of members.

- Positions will be both publicly advertised and via direct invitation from Council to maximise participation.
- Membership applications will need to be received in writing as per application form.
- An interview may be arranged by the Council Officer to discuss the ability to meet the role statement.
- Decisions on new applicants will be based on ability to meet the purpose and role and diversity of membership.
- The membership role is voluntary and must be over 16 years of age.

Members will provide a copy of a current Working with Children Check (WWCC)(Volunteer)

Member roles and responsibilities

Members of the Cardinia Shire Multicultural Advisory Group have a unique opportunity to be a strong voice for Cardinia's culturally diverse communities.

The role of members is to

- Be willing to work collaboratively and respectfully within the group, consider ideas, listen and discuss issues.
- Prepare for, attend, and actively participate in regular group meetings.
- Assist Council with its communication, consultation, and engagement with multicultural communities through two-way information exchange, from Council to communities and from communities to Council.
- Engage with Cardinia's diverse communities to identify opportunities and challenges to build inclusive and harmonious communities.
- Support greater engagement of culturally diverse population groups by providing input and disseminate information on Councils policy and decision-making processes into community.

- Provide advice and recommendations to Council on multicultural issues in and beyond Cardinia Shire.
- Be a spokesperson for and support the celebration of Cardinia Shires growing culturally diverse communities.
- Assist in building a strong sense of connections and belonging between and among Cardinia Shire's diverse communities by sharing information, events and encouraging intercultural participation.
- Foster connection between key cultural community leaders and council to strengthen understanding.
- Assist Council to develop, implement and monitor Cultural Diversity Actions where appropriate.
- Adhere to the Cardinia's Code of Conduct **Role of the Chair**

The Chairperson is the leader of the committee, and as such is responsible for maintaining the conduct of business.

- Ensure administrative, and other tasks to carry out meetings in a timely manner.
- Chair all meetings of the Committee or nominate the Deputy if unavailable.
- If no deputy has been appointed members will appoint a fill in chair
- Ensure meetings are correctly convened.
- Meeting decisions/actions are properly recorded in the minutes.
- The agenda is adhered to.
- All members are given the opportunity to speak and be heard.
- Maintaining order and ensuring conduct of members is consistent with the code of conduct.

Council Officer/Secretariat Support

The role of council officer will be to provide administrative support associated with the meeting. Duties include:

- Support the recruitment, selection, and induction of members.
- Act as the key liaison officer between members and Council.
- Scheduling meeting date, time, and location and provide information to members prior to the meeting.
- Maintain up to date membership contact details including email and WhatsApp group.
- In consultation with the members and Chair, plan meetings including invites and guest presenters.
- Prepare and send out the agenda at minimum four days prior to the meeting.
- Receiving all incoming correspondence and bringing it to the attention of the committee.
- Disseminating relevant information to group members including engagement opportunities, information, and events.
- Support chairperson whenever required to facilitate the meeting.
- Liaising with the chairperson between meetings so that the business of the committee is attended to and, in consultation with the chairperson, to call working parties as appropriate.
- Takes notes or records the meeting to enable clear and accurate minutes to be written up.
- Organises minutes and disseminates to members and relevant council staff along with any other relevant documents such as discussion papers.
- Ensures that follow-up actions which arises from the business of the meeting are addressed.
- Support the committee to achieve their objectives.

Meetings

- Meetings will be minimum bi-monthly on each 3rd Thursday of February, April, June, August October, and December from 5:30pm – 7:00pm
- Meeting days and times may change only as agreed by Council Officer in consultation with the members.
- Meetings can be in person or via a secure electronic mode.
- Special guests / subject matter experts may be invited to the meeting at the combined discretion of the Chair and the Council officer.
- Agenda items will be identified by a Council Officer in consultation with the Chairperson.
- Members can request items to be added to the agenda either prior to the meeting or within the 'other business' standing agenda item.
- Special working groups may be formed and work outside of meeting on special projects. Working groups will report back to the Multicultural Advisory Group at meetings and progress and outcomes will be recorded. Participation will be voluntary by members.

At the start of the meeting the Chairperson enquires:

- if there are other items of business that any member wishes to be added to the agenda, and
- if any member wishes to change the order of the agenda.
- The addition of new items at the meeting is generally acceptable, but if those items are contentious and/or some members are absent from the meeting, the Chairperson may decide to refer such items to a subsequent meeting of the Group.

Voting and decision making

- Actions and decisions where the Multicultural Advisory Group is represented will be voted on. For example, a group project, advocacy piece, presentation on behalf of the group. A minimum of 50% of members or 5 members whichever is greater must be present for the vote.
- The Council Officer/ Secretariat will preside over the vote.
- The Council Officer will not have a vote.
- Decision will be based on majority vote; a drawn vote will be recorded as a negative vote.

Conflicts of Interest

As detailed in Clause 6.2 the [Local Government Act 2020](#) defines general and material conflicts of interest.

- A general conflict of interest arises if a member has an interest in a matter that is being considered by the committee if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the member's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.
- A material conflict of interest arises if a committee member would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter before the committee.

At the time indicated in the agenda, a member with a conflict of interest in an item on that agenda must indicate they have a conflict of interest by clearly stating:

- (a) The item for which they have a conflict of interest; and
- (b) Whether their conflict of interest is general or material; and
- (c) The circumstances that give rise to the conflict of interest.

Immediately prior to the consideration of the item in which they have a conflict of interest, the Member must indicate to the meeting the existence of the conflict of interest and leave the meeting. The key factors in dealing with conflicts of interest are to:

- Avoid all situations which may give rise to conflicts of interest.

- Identify any conflicts of interest, and
- Disclose or declare all conflicts of interest.

Communications

- Information on the Multicultural Advisory Group including membership, recruitment and purpose will be available on Councils website.
- Agenda's, minutes of meetings and accompanying documents will be sent out via email.
- Members can voluntarily elect to join the MAG - Multicultural Advisory Group WhatsApp group for informal sharing of information among members including events, special celebrations, achievements, engagement opportunities. Personal contact information is not to be shared with any person outside of the group.
- Council will undertake relevant activities to promote the Multicultural Advisory Group which may include social media posts, news articles, internal communications, Councillor bulletins, videos, and printed information.

Accountability and extent of authority

- The Advisory Group has a consultative role to Council and does not hold any authority to make decisions or commitments on behalf on Council.
- The Advisory Group members cannot make public statements on behalf of Council as an independent group.

Review /Evaluation and reporting

- An annual review will be conducted with the Multicultural Advisory group to discuss successes, challenges and learnings that can improve future outcomes.
- The notes from the Multicultural Advisory Group meetings will be provided in plain English and distributed to all members and relevant Council Staff and third parties.
- The notes from the Multicultural Advisory Group meetings will be recorded on Councils Record Management System
- A summary of highlights and Multicultural Advisory Group achievements will form part of the annual report provided to council for the cultural Diversity portfolio.
The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually with amendments proposed as necessary to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Review date: February2025

Chairperson (signature)

Approved: (date)