

Sunshine Coast Biosphere Community Advisory Group:

Terms of Reference

Sunshine Coast Biosphere Community Advisory Group Scope

The focus of the Sunshine Coast Biosphere Community Advisory Group (CAG) will align to that of the biosphere management framework including, but not limited to, providing advice on strategic biosphere program priorities and delivery mechanisms, budget allocations, ongoing communications and engagement, branding use, and potential business certification pathways.

The CAG will not formally make decisions on behalf of Council, and instead provide feedback and advice to be considered by the Sunshine Coast Biosphere Coordinating Committee, whose membership will include the CAG Independent Chair.

The CAG will focus on community interests being reflected in the implementation and management of the Sunshine Coast biosphere.

The CAG will be complemented with a range of other communication processes and broader community engagement activities, through a suite of biosphere projects, led by the Biosphere Lead, with oversight provided by the Coordinating committee.

Independent Chairperson

A Chairperson will be appointed by Council to conduct and manage meeting proceedings with the objective of ensuring the meetings are run fairly and without bias. The role of the Chairperson includes:

- Assisting Council to recruit and select CAG members;
- Ensuring individual CAG members are heard and can contribute to the process. At times the Chairperson may have to mediate the process to ensure all parties in the discussion are heard, actions are summarised and conducive working relationships are maintained;
- Conducting and managing meetings consistent with this Terms of Reference, including facilitating the flow of information and discussion;
- Ensuring meetings are focused on the Group's purpose and scope, and on delivering clear outputs and/or outcomes;
- Supporting members and resolving any conflicts that may occur within the CAG;
- Contributing to the preparation of meeting agendas and minutes and communicating with individual members on a regular basis;
- Attending community information sessions as part of the wider public consultation for the program;
- Collating issues raised by the CAG and forwarding to the Council Project Team and Biosphere Coordinating Committee (as appropriate) for a response;
- Spokesperson for media enquiries; and
- Attending Biosphere Coordinating Committee meetings as a member.

Proxies

Proxies will not be permitted to attend a meeting.

Observers

Observers may be invited to attend a meeting, or part of a meeting, but are not able to participate in the meeting without the Chairperson's agreement.

Guest Presenters

The Chairperson may, from time to time, invite people to make presentations to the meeting and/or provide information, advice and opinion about a topic. These presenters do not have any other role in the meeting.

Council Officers

Council officers, State or Australian Government officers may attend the meeting from time to time.

Administrative Support

Administrative support will be provided by Council. This will extend to:

- Arranging meetings;
- Preparing and sending out agendas, minutes and other documentation;
- Maintaining up to date contact details for members;
- Carrying out or monitoring follow-up actions which arise from the business of meetings; and
- Preparing deliverables from CAG actions.

Voluntary Representation

Representation on the CAG may occur by:

- A member agreeing to continue their appointment from the former Biosphere Planning Community Reference Group;
- The council directly approaching community members and inviting them to become a member of the CAG; and
- Via an open Expression of Interest process.

If an EOI process is used for the appointment of voluntary representatives it will be consistent with the following process:

- The process will be coordinated by the Council Biosphere Lead responsible for the group;
- The Biosphere Lead will establish a selection advisory panel with two members who have an understanding of the group's purpose and role of the member;
- The selection advisory panel members will include the Chairperson, Biosphere Lead and a Councillor representative from the Biosphere Coordinating Committee;
- The selection process will be merit based, as inclusive as possible, and be based on the statement of claims provided by the EOI process;
- Council will maintain a database of candidates and anyone can nominate themselves by completing the EOI form and submitting it to council; and
- Successful nominees will be confirmed by the Coordinating Committee and advised in writing of the intention to appoint them and will be asked to complete a declaration of interest.

The following criteria shall be considered when selecting voluntary members:

- Interest: Members should be able to demonstrate interest in one or more issues or elements relevant to the proposed project;
- Capacity to communicate: Ability to communicate information from the CAG to other interested stakeholders;
- Constructive participation: Ability to commit to working constructively and cooperatively as part of the CAG. They should agree to fulfil their role as defined in this Terms of Reference;
- Capacity and skills to contribute: Members should be able and willing to commit to the role and responsibilities of the CAG, and actively participate in the business of the CAG. It is desirable that members have had previous experience in a similar role; and
- Availability and flexibility: Members should be available and willing to meet on agreed dates.

Recruitment

The selection advisory panel needs to ensure that, collectively, the members of the Group represent a diverse cross section of our community.

The selection advisory panel will strive to ensure a gender balance of members.

Tenure

Unless otherwise determined, appointments to the CAG are for a minimum of one year, and maximum two-years duration from the time of appointment confirmation. Exceptions may be made to ensure continuity of CAG experience, for example, limit turnover of new CAG member positions to no more than half in any one financial year.

Removal of Existing Members

Council may remove existing members on request from the relevant member or the Chairperson.

Vacancies

Where a vacancy arises in the membership of the Group, the position may be left vacant or may be filled in accordance with the voluntary representation process and the selection advisory panel, having regard to the length of time remaining in the project and advice of the Chairperson.

As vacancies arise in the Group, nominees who have already registered an interest will be considered by the selection panel.

If no suitable nominee is available, the panel may call for additional nominations through Council's communication channels, requiring interested parties to complete and submit the EOI form.

No Payment

Participation in the CAG is voluntary and no payment shall be made by Council to any standing or voluntary member for attendance or disbursements.

Member Conduct

Code of Conduct

Members of the CAG have a duty to discharge responsibilities entrusted by Council and the laws made under the Australian Constitution according to the highest standards of conduct.

The following Code of Conduct outlines principles that should be observed by all members of the Group and should be read in conjunction with the *Public Sector Ethics Act (Qld) 1994*.

- A CAG member should perform the duties of the office impartially, uninfluenced by fear or favour;
- A CAG member should be frank and honest in official dealings with colleagues and with Council;

- A CAG member should ensure their personal conduct does not reflect adversely on the reputation of Council or the biosphere nomination and planning;
- A CAG member should demonstrate respect for fellow members, Councillors, Council employees and other members of the public;
- A CAG member should avoid situations in which any private interest, whether pecuniary or otherwise, conflicts or might reasonably be thought to conflict with their public duty;
- CAG members should not:
 - engage with the media or participate in public forums in relation to the activities of the CAG without prior agreement of the relevant Council manager and the Chairperson;
 - use information obtained in the course of their CAG duties to directly or indirectly gain an advantage for themselves or for any other person;
 - discuss or publicly disclose information gained in the course of their CAG duties without prior approval of the Biosphere Lead;
 - solicit or accept from any person any remuneration or benefit for the discharge of their duties;
 - solicit or accept any benefit, advantage or promise of future advantage for themselves, their immediate family or any business concern or trust with which they are associated, from persons who are in, or seek to be in, any contractual or special relationship with Council;
 - accept any gift, hospitality or concessional travel offered in connection with the discharge of their duties.
- A CAG member should avoid actual or potential conflicts between their duties to the CAG and their personal interests. Members should also be aware of possible perceived conflicts of interest; and
- A CAG member should comply with all laws and other Council policy, procedures, and requirements.

Declarations of Conflict of Interests

As part of the appointment process, members will be required to complete a conflict of interest declaration. Additionally, members should update their declarations of interest as they become aware of any real, perceived, or potential conflicts.

Members of the CAG who have or acquire directly or indirectly a personal or pecuniary interest in a matter decided or under consideration by the CAG must as soon as reasonably practical disclose to the Group full and accurate details of the interest.

Termination of Member's Appointment

A member's appointment may be terminated in writing by the Biosphere Lead for any of the following reasons:

- The term of appointment has expired;
- The member has submitted a written resignation;
- The member breaches the code of conduct; and
- A performance issue or behaviour documented by the Biosphere Lead (in consultation with the member), has not been rectified within a reasonable or agreed timeframe.

CAG Operations

Meeting Protocols

It is expected that the Sunshine Coast Biosphere CAG will meet every two months at a minimum, or at specific milestone points of the implementation phase. Meetings may be more frequent when required. Meetings are expected to occur in the evenings (i.e. 5.00pm to 7.00 pm) for a period of about two hours each.

Administrative support will be responsible for coordinating and distributing agenda and minutes, including when and how they are distributed and finalised as well as preparing CAG deliverables.

The outcomes from each meeting will be confirmed prior to the close of the meeting by the Chairperson with the CAG and recorded in the meeting minutes. Minutes will be prepared for each meeting and circulated with the following meeting's agenda for confirmation at that meeting.

The group will seek to provide feedback and advice based on a consensus building approach. Where consensus cannot be achieved a 'show of hands' by the members will be required by the Chair and the outcomes documented as part of the minutes, including dissenting views.

A quorum for this group is deemed to be a majority of the members and a meeting may be cancelled if a majority of members cannot attend.

Reporting

The Chairperson of the CAG (or deputy Chair) will report the advice of the CAG to the Biosphere Coordinating Committee.

Media Statements

All media communication with the CAG will only occur via the Chairperson through media statements jointly prepared and endorsed by the Chairperson and Council's Communications Branch.