

EME025	REFERENCE GROUPS		
POLICY OWNER:	Council		
DEPARTMENT:	Office of the CEO		
CREATION DATE:		REVIEW SCHEDULE:	Annually
RELATED PROCEDURES:			
RELATED FORMS:			
RELATED DELEGATIONS:			
RELATED POLICIES:			
LEGISLATION:			
DOCUMENT CONTROL			
DATE REVIEWED:	REVIEWED BY:	CHANGES (IF ANY):	ENDORSED BY COUNCIL:
23/08/2022	Council	Nil	FC7/8/22
25/06/2024	Council	Nil	OCM 04/06/24

EME025 Reference Groups

OBJECTIVES

To identify parameters for the establishment and operation of Reference Groups.

POLICY STATEMENT/S

Notes

From time to time the Council may wish to establish groups made up of stakeholders or community members to provide information and advice to assist Council decision-making.

This mechanism may be used as a general consultation tool, or it may relate to a particular issue or matter. It is important that the role of any such group is clearly understood by the wider community, that any potential members are aware of and understand their role, the process for establishment is open and transparent and that there is a regular process for review.

This policy sets out the principles to be applied, the process for establishment, the general way in which groups should operate and the mechanism for review.

Principles

Reference groups:

- Are not committees established under s5.8 of the Local Government Act 1995.
- Provide a valuable mechanism for Council to gain information which may be of use in decision-making.
- Cannot hold delegated Council powers
- May, depending on their individual Terms of Reference, make recommendations to the Council on a relevant matter.

Establishment





Reference Groups may only be established by resolution of Council, on receiving a report from the CEO which sets out the reasons for establishing the Group and provides a draft Terms of Reference.

A Reference Group may be established to:

- a. Facilitate stakeholder and/or community input and involvement activities,
- b. Provide advice, and
- c. Support the Shire regarding strategic, program or project activities

The Terms of Reference must provide for the following:

- a. A statement of objectives and the scope of activity to be undertaken
- b. An outline of membership/stakeholder representation
- c. The operational and administrative framework by which activities are to occur

There will always be a Shire of Carnarvon Elected Member appointed to a Reference Group, who will conduct themselves according to the relevant Policies and the Shire Code of Conduct for Elected Members, Committee Members and Candidates.

Membership

Membership of a Reference Group is to be determined by the Council based on relevance to the purpose for which the group has been established.

Where the Reference Group includes representatives to stakeholder organisations, the Council shall seek written nominations from the organisations.

Where Reference Group membership includes representatives to be drawn from the community, the Council shall publicly advertise and call for nominations received within a defined period. Members are to be appointed by the Council based on demonstrated knowledge, skills and/or understanding relevant to the purpose for which the Group was established.

The term of membership is to align with the local government election cycle, with membership expiring at the next ordinary local government election. If a Group's operations are likely to conclude within a period that does not exceed 12 months following the next ordinary local government elections the existing membership shall continue for that period. However, the Council's delegate shall be reappointed following the ordinary local government election.

Should a position on the Reference Group fall vacant, any new membership will be approved via Council resolution after, where relevant, calling for nominations.

Tenure of Appointment

The Reference Group membership is normally for a period of two years.

Membership of a Reference Group terminates when an Ordinary Local Government election occurs every two years in October.



Members may subsequently be re-appointed (i.e., There is no maximum period of membership).

If a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings his or her membership will be automatically terminated, unless Leave of Absence has been approved by the Reference Group.

The Council may terminate the appointment of any member prior to the expiry of his or her term, if:

- a. Any member is found to be in breach of the principles of the Shire's Code of Conduct.
- b. A member's conduct, action or comments brings the Shire of Carnarvon into disrepute.

Operation

A Reference Group will only consider matters as set out in its Terms of Reference or referred to it from time to time by the Council.

A Reference Group has no decision-making powers and does not have any authority to act on behalf of the Shire. A Group cannot direct Shire employees, call tenders, award contracts, expend monies, direct volunteers, or do anything which is the responsibility of employees of the Shire.

The principles of the Council Members Code of Conduct shall apply to the conduct of members of any Reference Group as it relates to the matters dealt with by the Reference Group.

Reference Group members, either collectively or individually, are not authorised to speak on behalf of Council, or to provide comment to the media or other persons in respect of any item under consideration.

A Chair shall be identified by the Council at time of approving a Group's establishment. The Chair shall manage the meetings and liaise where necessary with Shire of Carnarvon employees and the Council.

Reference Group meetings will be conducted in an informal manner providing opportunity for ideas to be raised and for general discussion. Members of the Group must disclose any conflicts of interest in relation to any matter under discussion.

Records of meetings are to be kept and all records retained in the Shire's record keeping systems.

The Group will approve by a resolution, any advice to be provided to the Council. The advice will be conveyed to the Council via a report to the Council by the CEO. The Chair of the Group, or a nominee, will have the ability to speak to the advice to Council at the relevant Council Meeting and to answer any questions raised. They will not participate in debate or discussion.

Reference Group Support

A senior manager will be appointed to liaise with the Group and in particular the Chair. The manager will attend meetings and will ensure the provision of secretarial support for the meetings (recording of minutes, organisation of venues and meeting notices).

Review Process

As a minimum requirement, the Council will review all Reference Groups on a two-year cycle, within three months of an ordinary local government election, to determine whether they should continue



and if so, whether the Terms of Reference should be modified. A report will be prepared for Council, including recommendations in relation to the future direction of any Group.

Notes

This policy applies to all groups Council may establish to provide information advice or input to Council projects, programs, and activities.