



Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

Endorsed by FMC on 30 November 2021

1. Purpose and objectives

- 1.1. The City of Melbourne established its first Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee in 2009. Over 12 years the Committee has assisted Council with advice on a range of issues involved in planning for and management of its urban landscapes.
- 1.2. The purpose of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee is to advise the City of Melbourne on a range of technical and community issues involved in sustainable management of the City of Melbourne's parks, gardens and urban landscapes. The Committee will work with the Council to address issues and assist with the identification of preferred solutions as part of Council's decision making process. The Committee role will be advisory.
- 1.3. The objectives of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee are to assist and advise Council on:
 - 1.3.1 the implementation of the City of Melbourne Open Space Strategy 2012, Urban Forest Strategy 2012 and Nature in the City Strategy 2017;
 - 1.3.2 the review of major parks and gardens master plans;
 - 1.3.3 the identification of sustainability opportunities including strategies and projects;
 - 1.3.4 the planning and design of new open spaces;
 - 1.3.5 the review of parks, gardens and recreation policies;
 - 1.3.6 methods and techniques to better inform and engage the community on parks, gardens and urban landscape issues, and
 - 1.3.7 the review of applications to the Urban Forest Fund.

2. Membership

- 2.1. The Advisory Committee will be comprised of representatives from the general City of Melbourne community (residents or ratepayers) and technical experts.
- 2.2. The Council will make appointments based on merit, skill, expertise and leadership qualities. The Advisory Committee will bring specialist experience and skills, relevant network connections, innovative thinking, enthusiasm and passion for the municipality's parks, gardens and urban landscapes.

3. Composition and membership

- 3.1. The City of Melbourne will seek members who are knowledgeable and prepared to engage in exploring issues and opportunities and provide advice to Council.
- 3.2. It is preferable to have members who work or reside in a range of geographical areas across the City of Melbourne and represent the diverse demographics, skills and expertise within the municipality. City of Melbourne will seek members that are representative of the diversity of the community with reference to disability, age, sexuality and gender identity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, cultural and linguistic background, socio-economic status.
- 3.3. The Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee will comprise of:
 - 3.3.1 up to eight (8) community members with broad representation of residents and ratepayers of the City of Melbourne including at least one Aboriginal person.

Under Section 12 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, a dedicated Aboriginal membership has been considered to support Aboriginal representation on the Committee.

- 3.3.2 up to eight (8) technical expert representatives with expertise in parks management, horticulture, recreation, health and wellbeing, urban ecology, landscape architecture, Aboriginal perspectives or representation of Traditional Custodians, including:
- one representative from Parks Victoria
 - one representative from Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
 - one representative from Melbourne Water
- 3.3.3 the portfolio lead for the City of Melbourne Environment Portfolio (or an delegated alternate chair).
- 3.3.4 All Councillors will have a standing invitation to attend meetings of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee.
- 3.4. Council officers will support the Advisory Committee and will consist of representatives from the following internal branches:
- 3.4.1 Parks and City Greening
- 3.4.2 Recreation and Waterways
- 3.4.3 City Design
- 3.4.4 Others as required
- 3.5. The Advisory Committee may invite relevant industry stakeholders with specific skills and expertise to participate in discussions from time to time. Other Councillors may participate in meetings and Council officers may attend in order to service the Committee.

Appointments and tenure

- 3.6. The term of Advisory Committee community members shall be a maximum of four (4) years. Community member appointments will be staggered with half of the committee being appointed every two (2) years to ensure continuity.
- 3.6.1 Members may seek reappointment for a further four year term through participation in a public Expression of Interest process.
- 3.6.2 The maximum tenure will be two full terms (up to eight years).
- 3.7. Appointment of community members shall be made by the City of Melbourne Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chair, by way of a publicly advertised Expression of Interest.
- 3.8. Technical expert representatives shall be invited by City of Melbourne management and there is no maximum term.
- 3.9. The Council shall appoint Councillor representatives as Chair and alternate Chair at the beginning of each Council term.

Disqualification of a member

- 3.10. If the Council proposes to remove a member from the Advisory Committee, it must give written notice to the member of its intention to do so and provide that member with the opportunity to be heard if that member so requests.
- 3.11. If a member misses two consecutive advisory committee meetings without an accepted approval of absence, they will have disqualified themselves from membership.
- 3.12. Any vacancies will be filled by reviewing previous applicants or by placing a public advertisement as soon as possible.
- 3.13. Members may be required to undergo Police and/or Working with Children checks.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1. The duties of the Advisory Committee members is to:
- 4.1.1 Bring local knowledge and broad community experience or technical and evidence based research and experience (as relevant) to the table;
 - 4.1.2 Attend and participate in a compulsory induction workshop, if required, on the Advisory Committee;
 - 4.1.3 Understand the role and responsibility of members and Council;
 - 4.1.4 Abide by the Council's Code of Conduct and other related policies and protocols;
 - 4.1.5 Attend and participate in meetings of the Advisory Committee (including planning sessions and relevant training);
 - 4.1.6 Work co-operatively with other members in achieving the aims of the Advisory Committee;
 - 4.1.7 Contribute ideas and suggestions relating to items on the agenda;
 - 4.1.8 Provide advice and recommendations to Council on items
 - 4.1.9 Action and follow up tasks established by the Advisory Committee and resolved by Council;
 - 4.1.10 Where required, report back to existing networks within the communities about any decisions relating to the Advisory Committee; and
 - 4.1.11 Use existing networks to remain informed regarding the views and interests of the particular community they represent.
- 4.2. The role of the Chair is to:
- 4.2.1 Chair meetings in accordance with the Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and meeting agenda;
 - 4.2.2 Liaise with the Council Officer Convening the Advisory Committee to determine the Agenda for each meeting;
 - 4.2.3 Facilitate the discussion of items on the agenda in a timely manner;
 - 4.2.4 Facilitate the moving of recommendations and voting by Committee members; and
 - 4.2.5 Ensure all committee members have the opportunity to participate
- 4.1. Executive Support:
- 4.2.6 The Senior Open Space Planner will provide executive support to the Advisory Committee.

5. Media

- 5.1. The Chair of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee is the media spokesperson for the Advisory Committee.

6. Meetings

Conduct of meetings

- 6.1. The Chief Executive Officer or delegate will:

- 6.1.1 Provide the support required to enable the meetings of the Advisory Committee and invite members of staff or others to attend meetings to provide pertinent information as necessary;
- 6.1.2 Coordinate meetings, agendas and minutes;
- 6.1.3 Provide policy and secretarial support to the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee;
- 6.1.4 Supply interpreters, cab vouchers or any other requirements in order to support members to attend and participate in meetings; and
- 6.1.5 Facilitate a collaborative meeting format.

Attendance and quorum

- 6.2. All Advisory Committee members are expected to attend each meeting
- 6.3. In the absence of the Chair from a meeting, the meeting shall appoint an acting Chair from the members present.

Meeting frequency

- 6.4. The Advisory Committee meetings will take place at a minimum four times per year, with provision for additional meetings (including site visits) if required.

Meeting papers

- 6.5. Documents will be sent to members with a minimum of five (5) business days, in advance of the Advisory Committee meeting. This will include:
 - 6.5.1 Agenda for the upcoming meeting;
 - 6.5.2 Minutes of the previous meeting; and
 - 6.5.3 Any other documents/information/attachments to be considered at the meeting.

Conflicts of interest

- 6.6. In the event of a conflict of interest arising from any member of the Advisory Committee, the matter must be immediately tabled and the member must abstain from any dialogue in relation to that matter.

Confidential and sensitive information

- 6.7. Members are expected to comply with the confidential information provisions contained in sections 3(1) and 125 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- 6.8. Members must treat information they receive as confidential unless otherwise advised. The documents presented to the Advisory Committee will often be in draft format and not ready for wider community distribution.
- 6.9. Members must not use confidential information other than for the purpose of performing their function as a member of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee.
- 6.10. Draft documents cannot be referred to or used in any grant applications, presentations or in the private working roles of members.

7. Reimbursement of expenses

- 7.1. For Advisory Committee members, reimbursement of reasonable expenses associated with attendance may be made, subject to prior agreement and approval. Such reimbursement may include transport, child care or interpreting services.

- 7.2. For Councillors, expense reimbursements are to be made in accordance with Council's Expenses Policy.

8. Reporting

- 8.1. The City of Melbourne Administration will report to the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee on activities and issues as they arise. The Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee will provide strategic advice to the City of Melbourne through the Chair. The Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee will report to Council through the portfolio lead on matters of importance or priority.

9. Review

- 9.1. The Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee will be reviewed after the current term. Next review date will be August 2025.