



Multicultural Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference

Responsible Division: Community and City Services

Responsible Branch: Community Development

Authorised By: Future Melbourne Committee

Date of Adoption: 4 August 2026

Review Date: 31 July 2027

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations. We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and objectives

Purpose

The purpose of the committee is to provide advice and community informed insights to Council on multicultural issues, ensuring that policies, services, communications, and community engagement processes reflect the needs, aspirations, and lived experiences of Melbourne's diverse multicultural communities.

Objectives

The committee will:

- Provide feedback on the aspirations, challenges, and emerging trends across multicultural Melbourne – assisting Council to better understand and respond to issues impacting multicultural communities.
- Provide feedback and advise on matters relating to intercultural connection.
- Advise on effective and inclusive communication approaches to engage diverse multicultural communities.
- Contribute feedback to policy, service, and program development to ensure they meet the needs of multicultural communities.
- Offer practical recommendations to strengthen community engagement on issues affecting multicultural communities.
- Ensure community voices – particularly those underrepresented – are meaningfully included in Council decision-making.

The committee acts in an advisory capacity only and has no delegated authority to make decisions, adopt binding policy, expend Council funds, commit Council to any arrangement, consider any matter outside its area of reference or direct Council officers in the performance of their duties. Advice and recommendations can only be implemented by Council, or a Council Officer who has the appropriate delegation.

1.2 Corporate framework

Melbourne 2050 Vision

This Committee supports the Council as it works towards achieving the M2050 vision: Liveable Melbourne, growing stronger together.

The community aspirations in the vision that the Committee aligns with are:

Building on our foundations: Our city is shaped by the custodianship of First Peoples, whose connection to Country spans more than 2000 generations. We celebrate the rich migrant stories of resilience, aspiration and contribution that have helped define Melbourne's identity.

Delivering for everyone: We design our city for equity, dignity and connection, to improve housing, health and wellbeing – no matter your life stage, cultural background, gender, ability, or financial position

Council Plan 2025–2029 Strategic Alignment

The strategic priorities that this committee supports are:

Governing for our future – We will make sure everyone in our community feels empowered to participate and share their voice. We'll make financial decisions that balance current and future needs, strengthen relationships with First Nations people, and continue to lead, advocate and partner on issues that matter to Melbourne's future.

Healthy, safe, clean and connected communities – We will help everyone in our community live active, healthy and socially connected lives. We'll make sure services are available when people need support, and that everyone who lives, works or visits here feels safe and experiences a strong sense of belonging.

2 Composition

The committee shall comprise the following committee members:

- A maximum of two Councillors appointed by Council resolution; The Portfolio Lead and Deputy Lead of the Community and City Services Portfolio.
- A maximum of twelve external representatives.

The committee will be convened for an initial period of one year. A review will be conducted after one year to assess impact, membership and relevance of the committee. External members will be appointed for a term of one year. External members are welcome to reapply at the end of their term if the committee continues beyond this period, however continuous membership for longer than two terms will not be considered.

2.1 Role and selection of Councillors

Council will appoint by resolution Councillor representation at a minimum every four years, following the election of a new Council. The role of Councillors appointed to the committee is to participate in the meetings and listen to stakeholder views.

Councillors appointed to Advisory Committees cannot exercise any power independently of other members or Council, not seek to direct other members in their contributions to matters before the Advisory Committee and not direct or attempt to direct, Council staff appointed to provide administrative support.

Unless otherwise appointed to the committee by Council, the Lord Mayor is, by virtue of the Office, an ex officio member of the committee. It is important that whilst the Lord Mayor may not Chair these meetings, appropriate recognition should be given to the presence of the Lord Mayor if in attendance.

Should any other councillor who has not been appointed to the committee wish to attend a meeting as an observer only, they must give Director of Community Development notice in writing 48 hours before the meeting.

2.2 Role and selection of Council officers

The Community Development Branch, specifically the Director Community Development, Manager Community Inclusion and Grants, and Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity will be responsible for this Committee and provide the secretariat function.

Officers will be nominated by the relevant Executive Leader as required, to provide advice and administrative support to the committee.

2.3 Role and selection of external representatives

Role

The role of an external representative is to:

- **Advise** – Provide feedback and advice to Council and Council officers on the aspirations, challenges and emerging trends impacting multicultural communities in Melbourne.
- **Input to policy and program development** – provide information and advice on the development of policies, services and programs that affect multicultural communities.
- **Communicate and engage** – contribute practical advice to strengthen communications and community engagement practices to ensure broad and meaningful participation of multicultural communities.
- **Advocate and represent** – support communities voices that are often underrepresented to inform decision making.
- **Strategic Guidance** – assist Council to understand community needs to inform responsive and effective decision making.

Selection

Preference will be given to representatives with a strong local knowledge and active community involvement.

External representatives will have:

- **Cultural awareness:** Demonstrates understanding of cultural diversity and respect for different lived experiences, perspectives, traditions and ways of interacting.
- **Community connection:** Maintains established, trusted relationships with community and can represent collective perspectives rather than individual views.
- **Collaborative approach:** The ability to work constructively in advisory or committee settings, supporting respectful dialogue and consensus-building.
- **Inclusive and equity-focused mindset:** Committed to reducing barriers to participation, advancing social justice, human rights, and advocating for underrepresented groups facing systemic barriers.
- **Strategic community insight:** Shows experience or interest in multicultural community issues, understands local context, and can consider long-term, system-level outcomes beyond immediate concerns.

The approach and method for appointing external representatives will include the following:

- An advertisement placed on Council's internet site or Participate Melbourne, and applicants must make an application via an expression of interest process. The advertisement may be further distributed by Officers or councillors to any relevant networks.

External representatives will be selected by a panel comprising at least 3 Council Officers

- The selection panel must have regard to the following when making their recommendation:
 - The expertise of applications relevant to the matter(s) being considered by the committee.
 - The diversity of our community with reference to lived experience, age, gender identity, sexuality, cultural and linguistic background, socio-economic status.
 - The target with respect to Action 2.1.4 of the City of Melbourne Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan August 2024 to July 2027 (that Council-

endorsed Committees have formal Aboriginal representation with at least one Aboriginal member).

- The selection panel will make a recommendation to Council via a report from Management. Council will appoint external members by resolution. Where the report and decision may comprise confidential information in accordance with section 3 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, consideration of the report and the decision may be made in a closed meeting of Council in accordance with section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. However, the resolution must include a reference to when Council's decision appointing the external member(s) will be made public.
- External representatives will be appointed for an initial term of one year.
- External representatives will be eligible to re-apply for appointment, however continuous membership for longer than two terms will not be considered.
- Casual vacancies which occur due to external representative being unable to complete the full term of their appointments may be filled by co-opting suitable candidates from a previous selection process. The selection panel will make a recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer, who having regard to the Delegations Policy, will have the authority to appoint the recommended candidate to the committee. A briefing paper must be circulated to all councillors as soon as practicable to notify them of the appointment.
- Where co-opting suitable candidates from a previous selection process to fill a casual vacancy is not possible, a fresh advertisement process to attract a suitable candidate may occur.
- A person appointed to fill a casual vacancy will commence a new, individual term for the remainder of the existing vacancy period.
- Members may be required to undergo Police and/or Working with Children Checks.
- The names of Advisory Committee members will be available on Council's website in accordance with the Public Transparency Policy.

2.4 Role and selection of the Chairperson

The role of the Chairperson is:

- To ensure Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference.
- To ensure each matter considered at a meeting is dealt with in an orderly and efficient manner.

In the first twelve months of the committee, the role of Chairperson will be held by the Councillor Portfolio Lead. In their absence, the Councillor Portfolio Deputy or a Council Officer will be the Chairperson.

If the committee continues beyond 12 months, it will be co-chaired by the Councillor Portfolio Lead and a community member of the committee.

If the nominated Chairperson cannot chair a meeting, City of Melbourne staff will chair the meeting.

Election of Co-Chairperson

The Co-Chairperson will be appointed through the voting process in Appendix 1.

3 Meetings

3.1 Meeting schedule

Meetings will be held four times a year and will be agreed upon at the first meeting of the committee in each year. Meetings may be held in person, virtually or a hybrid of both.

The group may meet outside of the regular meeting schedule when required – for example, for focus groups on specific topics. Taking part in these opportunities is optional and unpaid.

The Executive Officer Councillor Liaison is responsible for ensuring all Committee meetings (including any changes) are included in the Corporate Calendar and distributed to all Councillor Committee members.

The Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity is responsible for liaising with Council Officers and external members regarding the meeting schedule and any changes.

3.2 Meeting procedure

Meetings will follow standard meeting procedure protocols, which are in summary:

- Commence on time and conclude by the stated completion time.
- Be scheduled and confirmed in advance (not less than seven (7) calendar days prior to each meeting) with all relevant papers distributed (as appropriate) to each member.
- Encourage fair and reasonable discussion, participation and respect for each other's views.
- Focus on the relevant issues at hand; and
- Provide advice to Council as far as possible on a consensus basis. As this is an advisory committee, voting on issues is not required. Any recommendations will generally be developed through consensus. Where a matter cannot be agreed

the differing opinions should be clearly expressed in the minutes of the meeting or in the event of a formal motion, the names of the mover and seconder and the outcome of any vote or division.

Acknowledging that Advisory Committees are convened for members to share diverse views, actively listen to contrary arguments and be open to different positions, the Chairperson:

- must not accept any comment which may reasonably be considered to be defamatory, derogatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, objectionable in language or is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor, a member of Council staff, a member of the committee or a member of the community.
- Must call to order any person who is disruptive or unruly during any meeting.
- May request the removal of any person who disrupts the meeting or fails to comply with a direction from the Chairperson.
- May adjourn the meeting to a later time on the same day, or a later day and time, if they are of the opinion that the meeting is disorderly.

3.3 Quorum

All Committee members are expected to attend each meeting.

Quorum for the committee will be seven members. A quorum will be a majority of appointed members (50% plus one), being at least seven members. Where Councillor membership is appointed, at least one Councillor should be present to constitute a quorum; however, in exceptional circumstances, a meeting may proceed without Councillor attendance provided quorum is otherwise met.

At a minimum, there must always be one Council Officer present from the Community Development branch.

Meetings will lapse if quorum cannot be achieved after 30 minutes of the scheduled meeting commencement time, or if there is an inability to maintain quorum during the meeting.

If quorum cannot be achieved or maintained, the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity must reschedule the meeting, communicate this in writing or by telephone to all Committee members and distribute the agenda for the rescheduled meeting as soon as practicable.

3.4 Proxy attendance at meetings

Council Officers unable to attend a committee meeting may nominate a proxy. This must be communicated to the Chairperson and the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity as soon as practicable.

External members that are unable to attend a committee meeting, cannot nominate a proxy.

3.5 Public attendance at meetings

The committee is not required to give public notice of its meetings, and its meetings are not open to the general public.

The committee and Community Development branch may invite observers to meetings from time to time. This is at the discretion of the Community Development Director, and a request must be made in writing to the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity and Community Development Director at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Guests may also be invited to attend and participate at meetings, which will generally be for a specific purpose and/or specified period of time. This is at the discretion of the Community Development Director, and a request must be made in writing to the Community Development Director and the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Observers and guests have no active role and cannot take part in discussions with the committee, unless they have specifically been invited to engage with the committee (either by invitation prior to the meeting, or at the discretion of the Community Development Director during the meeting).

3.6 Agendas and minutes

An agenda will be electronically circulated by the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity to all Committee members not less than seven (7) calendar days prior to each meeting.

The draft minutes must be:

- Submitted to the Chairperson for confirmation within fourteen (14) calendar days of the meeting.
- The Chairperson must provide confirmation of the minutes within five business days.
- Following confirmation from the Chairperson, distributed to all Committee members within five (5) business days; and
- Submitted to the next meeting of the committee for information.

Agendas and minutes from meetings will only be made public if required by law, Council resolution or Council's Public Transparency Policy.

3.7 Support for diverse membership

The City of Melbourne will remove or reasonably reduce any barriers to participating in Committee meetings. In particular, the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity shall ensure meeting arrangements and membership selection complies with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*.

This could include providing a plain English version of this Terms of Reference or other written material distributed to the committee for consideration, flexible meeting schedules and participation for members, use of accessible venues, support for languages other than English, Auslan interpreters, taking regular breaks, sensory accommodations or help with transport to/from meetings.

External members may be paid a sitting fee of \$300 per meeting they attend, but acceptance of that fee is at the discretion of each external member.

3.8 Decision Making by Council or a Delegate

Decisions on recommendations made by the committee, may only be made by Council or a Council Officer under delegation. For more information see Appendix 2.

4 Compliance with legislation and Council policies

This part sets out conduct that Committee members agree will contribute to the good governance, integrity and responsible operation of the committee.

In performing their role, a committee member must:

- abide by the Advisory Committee Code of Conduct and other related policies and protocols.
- aim to work in an honest, respectful, collaborative and solution-focused manner.
- encourage fair and reasonable discussion.
- respect the confidentiality of documents before the committee and meeting.
- not make improper use of their position for personal or professional gain.

4.1 Conflicts of interest

Guidance on conflicts of interest can be found in Appendix 3.

4.2 Information management

Committee members acknowledge that they may at times have access to confidential or sensitive information, which may not always be marked as being 'confidential' or 'sensitive in nature'.

Committee members must:

- Treat all information they receive as confidential unless otherwise advised.
- Not intentionally or recklessly disclose information they know, or should reasonably know, is confidential information. This includes disclosing, recording, retaining, or reproducing confidential information; nor may they permit non-members to do so.

- Not use confidential information other than for the purpose of performing their function as a member of the committee.
- Not use or refer to any documents or information obtained during their role as a committee member in any grant applications, presentations or in their private or working roles.

4.3 External communications

Committee members must respect that the Lord Mayor is the spokesperson of Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Committee members are not to make public statements, social media statements, submissions or announcements to external stakeholders or the media on behalf of the committee or Council. Authorisation for any other Committee member to make a statement, submission or announcement, must be collectively approved in writing by the Lord Mayor, the Portfolio Lead and the Chief Executive Officer.

Members of Council Advisory Committees are still free to make individual submissions to Council or to third parties in their private capacity. In doing so, they must not describe themselves as a member of a Council Advisory Committee or, if they do so, make it expressly clear that they do not speak in this capacity. Members must also not disclose or draw on any confidential information or research provided to them during the course of participating in the operations of the Advisory Committee.

4.4 Elections - External members

If an external member nominates for election to Council, State Parliament or Federal Parliament they must seek leave of absence from their Advisory Committee position from the time of declaring they have nominated (or intend to nominate). Upon election, they are deemed to have resigned from the Advisory Committee.

4.5 Non-compliance – External Members

An external Committee member who:

- does not adhere to this Terms of Reference or any other Council policies which they are required to observe; and/or
- Is absent from two (2) consecutive meetings, without an approval of absence.

will be asked to retire from their position on the committee.

If 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 request.

5 Review and evaluation

Council can review this Terms of Reference and the committee's composition at any time.

However, at a minimum, Council will review this Terms of Reference and the committee's composition within the first year to assess the committee's effectiveness and provide recommendations on its ongoing establishment.

6 Council contact

All enquiries regarding this Committee should be directed to the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity.

7 Appendix 1 – Voting Process

- The Manager of Community Inclusion and Grants or Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity must facilitate the election of the Chairperson.
- The Manager of Community Inclusion and Grants or Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity will invite Committee members to verbally nominate themselves for the role of Chairperson. If there is only one (1) nomination, the nominee must be declared to be duly elected.
- If there is more than one (1) nomination and consensus cannot be reached, then voting will be carried out by a closed system of paper votes to be tallied by officers, using the process below.
- In the event of a candidate receiving an absolute majority of the votes, that candidate is declared to have been elected.
- In the event that no candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes, the candidate with the fewest number of votes must be declared to be a defeated candidate. Those present at the meeting must then vote for one of the remaining candidates.
- If one of the remaining candidates receives an absolute majority of the votes, they are duly elected. If none of the remaining candidates receives an absolute majority of the votes, the process of declaring the candidates with the fewest number of votes a defeated candidate and voting for the remaining candidates must be repeated until one (1) of the candidates receives an absolute majority of the votes. That candidate must then be declared to have been duly elected.
- In the event of two (2) or more candidates having an equality of votes and one of them having to be declared:
 - a defeated candidate; and
 - duly elected;
- the declaration will be determined by lot.
- If a lot is conducted, the Manager of Community Inclusion and Grants or Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity will have the conduct of the lot and the following provisions will apply:
 - each candidate will draw one (1) lot
 - the order of drawing lots will be determined by the alphabetical order of the surnames of the candidates who received an equal number of votes except that if two (2) or more such candidates surnames are identical, the order will be determined by the alphabetical order of the candidates first names; and
 - as many identical pieces of paper as there are candidates who received an equal number of votes must be placed in a receptacle
- If the lot is being conducted to determine who is a defeated candidate, the word "Defeated" shall be written on one of the pieces of paper, and the candidate who draws the paper with the word "Defeated" written on it must be declared the defeated candidate (in which event a further vote must be taken on the remaining candidates unless there is only one candidate remaining, in which case that candidate will be declared to have been duly elected)

8 Appendix 2 – Decision making by Council or Delegate.

Officers making decisions under delegation must comply with Council's Delegations Policy and the relevant Instrument of Delegation applicable to the position they hold (or are acting in) at the time of making the decision.

Where matters considered by the committee cannot be dealt with by an Officer under delegation, they must proceed to Council for a decision. The Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity is required to prepare a 'Report from Committee' to be presented to the next practicable Council meeting and circulated in accordance with the Governance Rules. The report must also include a copy of the relevant Committee meeting agenda and minutes relating to the matter the committee is seeking a Council decision about. Should Council wish to hear a presentation from the committee at the Council meeting, the presentation may be made by the Community Development Director or the Chairperson of the committee.

The outcome of any decision made by Council or a Council Officer under delegation which relates to a matter discussed or recommended by the committee, must be communicated via a report to all Committee members and appear in the next practicable Committee meeting agenda following the making of the decision. Should the decision include ongoing or long-term actions, an update on the progress of the actions must be provided to the committee at every meeting until those actions have been closed out.

9 Appendix 3 – Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest – Councillors and Council Officers

Councillors and Council Officers are required to disclose conflicts of interest in accordance with Part 6, Division 2 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Governance Rules and Council Officers are required to adhere to the Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures.

A Councillor or Council Officer who identifies with a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest in a matter before the committee, must declare their interest prior to the discussion of the item, exclude themselves from the discussion and must not take any action or further action relating to the issue giving rise to the conflict of interest.

The declaration and nature of the conflict of interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and the relevant disclosure form submitted by the Councillor or Council Officer to the Director Governance and Legal.

Disclosable interests – External Committee Members

As external Committee members are not subject to the conflict of interest provisions under the *Local Government Act 2020*, they will instead be required to declare any of the following disclosable interests:

- Where an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the external member's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty as a committee member.
- Where the external member may be involved in a relationship (affected person) or situation that could result in the external member or affected person, receiving a benefit or suffering a loss which is:
 - Direct or indirect: A direct benefit or loss includes where the external member or affected person is the immediate recipient or suffers the loss themselves. An indirect benefit or loss includes where the external member or affected person is affected because of the impact on another person or body, or as an indirect effect of a process.
 - Pecuniary: A benefit or loss is one that can be measured in money.
 - Non-pecuniary: A benefit or loss which is not measured in money.

An affected person includes:

- A family member of the external member.
- A body corporate of which the external member or their spouse or domestic partner is a Director or member of the governing body.
- An employer of the external member, unless the employer is a public body.
- A business partner of the external member.
- A person for who the external member is a consultant, contractor or agent.
- A beneficiary under a trust or an object of a discretionary trust of which the external member is a trustee.

- A person or body from which you have received one or more gifts in the past 5 years which individually or cumulatively equal \$500.00 or more.

An external member who identifies with a real, potential or perceived disclosable interest in a matter before the committee, must declare their interest prior to the discussion of the item, exclude themselves from the discussion and must not take any action or further action relating to the issue giving rise to the disclosable interest.

The declaration and nature of the disclosable interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The external member must also provide the Community Development Director and the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity with a declaration in writing which identifies the matter and explains the nature of the interest which has been disclosed. This disclosure must be provided by the Senior Policy Officer Inclusion and Diversity to the Director Governance and Legal, who will maintain a register of disclosures.