CITY OF MELBOURNE

Homelessness Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference

Responsible Division: City and Community Services
Responsible Branch: Community Development
Authorised By: Council
Date of Adoption: 27 October 2026
Review Date: August 2026

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

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice on homelessness policy and practice issues to the administration and Council. This advice assists Council to implement homelessness responses in the city. This includes:

- Providing advice on issues relevant to the ongoing implementation of City of Melbourne's homelessness response and any strategies or plans that might be developed through the life of the Committee.
- Providing comment and feedback on other Council policies, strategies and initiatives relevant to homelessness.
- Providing recommendations on methods and techniques to better inform and engage the community on homelessness issues.
- Participating in consultations and discussions on homelessness and related issues across City of Melbourne's functions and services.

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

The Committee supports the following strategic priorities in the Council Plan 2025-29:

- Healthy, Safe, Clean and Connected Communities
- Building a City for People
- Governing for our Future

The Homelessness Advisory Committee supports implementation of the City of Melbourne Homelessness Strategy 2024-30 and the City of Melbourne Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan August 2024 to July 2027.

The Committee provides strategic advice that contributes to the Homelessness Strategy's vision of an inclusive city where every person has a home and support to break the cycle of homelessness. The Committee supports delivery of the strategy priority areas:

- A city where everyone has a home

- A city focused on ending homelessness through partnerships and collaboration
- A city united to end homelessness.

The Committee supports Council's commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and culturally safe responses to homelessness through the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. The Committee recognises the significant over-representation of Aboriginal people among those experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping in Melbourne and supports Aboriginal-led solutions, culturally responsive services and partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The Committee also supports Council's commitment to maintaining Aboriginal representation on Council-endorsed committees and ensuring Aboriginal voices inform decisions that impact Aboriginal communities.

2 Composition

The Committee shall comprise the following Committee members:

- A maximum of two (2) Councillors appointed by Council resolution, including the relevant Community, Health and City Services Portfolio Lead and Deputy Portfolio Lead.

A maximum of twelve (12) external representatives appointed by Council resolution comprising:

- Minimum of (3) persons with a lived experience of homelessness including a minimum of one (1) person of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.
- Specialist Homelessness Sector representatives, including a minimum of one (1) person of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent
- Youth representative(s)
- Victoria Police representative
- Subject matter experts from homelessness, housing, health and community sectors.

Council officers appointed by the General Manager City and Community Services including:

- Head of Homelessness
- Director Community Development
- Director Aboriginal Melbourne
- other relevant officers as determined by the General Manager City and Community Services.

The Advisory Committee may invite relevant industry stakeholders, with specific skills and expertise, to participate in discussions from time to time.

The Committee will be convened for a period of four (4) years.

External members will be appointed for a term of four (4) years.

External members may reapply at the conclusion of their term; however, continuous membership beyond two consecutive 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 General Manager City and Community Services notice in writing 48 hours before the meeting.

2.2 Role and selection of Council officers

The Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch, will be responsible for this Committee.

Officers will be nominated by the General Manager City and Community Services as required to provide strategic advice and administrative support to the Committee.

The Head of Homelessness will:

- Provide secretariat and governance support to the Committee
- Coordinate meeting schedules, agendas and minutes
- Oversee recruitment and appointment processes for external members
- Facilitate reporting to Council and relevant governance processes

- Coordinate responses to recommendations made by the Committee
- Ensure the Committee remains aligned to Council Plan priorities and the Homelessness Strategy 2024-30.

2.3 Role and selection of external members

The process of selecting and recommending appointments to the Committee will seek to achieve a composition reflective of the diversity of the community, including gender diversity and gender balance wherever practicable.

Eligible external representatives will have an interest in, good working knowledge of, professional expertise in, or lived and living experience of:

- Human rights, social inclusion, community participation and strengths-based approaches
- Homelessness, housing insecurity and related experiences, including family violence, discrimination, trauma and barriers to accessing support
- LGBTIQA+ inclusion and responses
- Housing, health, community services and systemic responses to homelessness and social disadvantage
- Leadership, collaboration, and coordination across service sectors
- Community development and neighbourhood connections
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Urban environment and public space
- Education, skills development and employment pathways
- Government, business, industry and commercial sectors

The role of an external representative is to:

- Provide informed strategic advice on homelessness issues
- Contribute lived experience, community and sector perspectives
- Identify emerging trends, issues and opportunities relevant to homelessness policy and practice
- Promote partnership and collaboration across sectors
- Support implementation of Council Plan priorities and the Homelessness Strategy 2024-30
- Provide advice on initiatives designed to improve outcomes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Specialist Homelessness Sector representatives

- Demonstrated leadership, expertise or professional experience within homelessness, housing, health, human services, Aboriginal affairs, youth services or related sectors.
- Strong sector knowledge and professional networks.
- Commitment to supporting improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.
- Understanding of Melbourne's homelessness service system and policy context.

Lived Experience Representatives

Lived experience representatives should demonstrate:

- Direct lived or living experience of homelessness, rough sleeping, housing insecurity or barriers to accessing support services.
- Willingness to share insights and experiences to inform policy, planning and service improvement.
- An ability to identify opportunities to improve outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.
- A commitment to representing lived experience perspectives in a respectful and constructive manner.
- An understanding that their lived experience provides valuable expertise that supports Council decision-making.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representatives

Committee membership will include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representatives who can contribute community, cultural and strategic perspectives to the Committee's work.

Representatives should demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity and connection to community
- Understanding of Aboriginal self-determination principles
- Experience supporting Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity or related social issues
- Experience working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- Knowledge of culturally safe service design and delivery
- Understanding of Aboriginal housing and homelessness priorities

- Demonstrated Aboriginal community networks and relationships
- Ability to contribute Aboriginal community perspectives to discussions and recommendations.

Consistent with Action 2.1.4 of the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, the Committee will seek to maintain formal Aboriginal representation to ensure Aboriginal perspectives inform advice relating to homelessness, housing and community wellbeing.

The approach and method for appointing external representatives will include the following in consultation with the chair:

- An advertisement placed on Council's internet site or Participate Melbourne for application via an expression of interest process. The advertisement may be further distributed by Officers or councillors to any relevant networks.
- External members will be recommended for appointment by a panel comprising a minimum of two (2) Council officers from the Community Development Branch, including the Head of Homelessness.

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, sex, 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). If this Target is unable to be met, the selection panel must detail why in the Council report.

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 members will be appointed for a term of four (4) years.

- External members 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 members 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 by the Community Development Branch 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 of four (4) years.
- 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:

- In addition to performing the role of a Committee member, must 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.

The position of Chairperson in the first instance shall always be held by the Community, Health and City Services Portfolio Lead. In their absence, Community, Health and City Services Portfolio Deputy or a Council Officer, Head of Homelessness will be the Chairperson.

3 Meetings

3.1 Meeting schedule

Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis and an annual schedule of meetings 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.

Should any changes to the date, time or location of a scheduled meeting occur the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch must communicate this in writing or by telephone to all Committee members as soon as practicable.

Meetings may only be cancelled by the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch in the case of an emergency which would necessitate the postponement of a meeting. The Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch must communicate this in writing or by telephone to all Committee members as soon as practicable.

Additional meetings may be scheduled from time to time as needed. The details and agenda of any additional meetings at a minimum must be communicated to all Committee members seven (7) calendar days before the meeting date.

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 Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch 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 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 six (6) members.

At a minimum, there must always be one Council Officer present from 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 Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch 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

Councillors or Council Officers unable to attend a Committee meeting may nominate a proxy. This must be communicated to the Chairperson and the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch as soon as practicable..

External members that are unable to attend a Committee meeting, are not able to 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 may invite observers to meetings from time to time. This is at the discretion of the Chairperson and a request must be made in writing to the

Chairperson and the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch 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 Chairperson and a request must be made in writing to the Chairperson and the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch at least 48 hours 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 Chairperson during the meeting).

3.6 Agendas and minutes

An agenda will be electronically circulated by the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch to all Committee members not less than seven (7) calendar days prior to each meeting.

The agenda must include:

- The date, time and place of the meeting.
- An order of business.
- Reports or other materials being presented to the Committee for their consideration and discussion.

Minutes of the meetings must be taken by officers, be clearly expressed, be self-explanatory and include:

- The date, place, nature, commencement time and conclusion time of the meeting.
- The names of all persons in attendance (including the organisation they represent) and a record of their attendance during the whole meeting.
- The names of any Committee members who were an apology.
- A summary of any matter/report discussed with the Committee.
- Recommendations or matters raised by Committee members. Where a recommendation or matter cannot be agreed, the differing opinions should be clearly expressed in the minutes of the meeting.
- In the event of a formal motion, the names of the mover and seconder and the outcome of any vote or division.
- Next steps and/or actions.
- Arrivals and departures of Committee members.

- Any conflicts of interest or disclosable interests declared by Committee members, including when they departed and returned to the meeting following the conclusion of the matter in which they were conflicted.
- Any adjournment of the meeting and the time the meeting was adjourned and resumed.
- The date the minutes were endorsed by the Chairperson.

The draft minutes must be:

- Submitted to the Chairperson for confirmation within fourteen (14) calendar days of the meeting.
- 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 Budget and resources

The Advisory Committee has budgetary allocation for the following:

- Transport assistance
- Plain English materials
- Catering
- Venue costs
- Community participation support
- Reimbursement of approved participation expenses including childcare, carers fees.
- Lived experience committee members are eligible for a $200 sitting payment for each meeting they attend.

If an external member is absent from a meeting, they will not be paid a meeting attendance fee.

For Councillors, expense reimbursements are to be made in accordance with the Council Expenses Policy.

Any additional budgetary allocation is at the absolute discretion of the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch who is responsible for the Committee.

3.8 Support for diverse membership

The City of Melbourne will remove or reasonably reduce any barriers to participating in Committee meetings. In particular, the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch 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.

3.9 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.

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 Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch 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 Chairperson of the Committee, supported by the Head of Homelessness where required.

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.

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 – 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.

4.2 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 General Manager City and Community Services and the Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch 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 Head of Homelessness, Community Development Branch to the Director Governance and Legal, who will maintain a register of disclosures.

4.3 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.

4.4 External communications

Committee members must respect that the Lord Mayor is the spokesperson of Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Councillor Protocol further details the role of a Portfolio Lead with respect to community engagement and media protocols.

As such, unless the Councillor Protocol or other Council policy allows for it, 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 in the during the course of participating in the operations of the Advisory Committee.

4.5 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.

4.6 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 the external member is an organisational member, then said organisation will be asked to send an alternate representative.

If the Council proposes to remove a member or an organisation from the Advisory Committee, it must give written notice to the member or the organisation 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 every four years, following the election of a new Council and the adoption of a new Council Plan in accordance with section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020.* This is to ensure the Committee can adequately support and advise on matters which align to the strategic direction of Council as detailed in the Council Plan.

6 Council contact

All enquiries regarding this Committee should be directed to:

Head of Homelessness
Community Development Branch
City and Community Services
City of Melbourne

Homelessness Advisory Committee Code of Conduct

November 2021

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 Eastern Kulin and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection the Wurundjeri, Bunurong, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wadawurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin have to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.

We are committed to our reconciliation journey, because at its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, for the benefit of all Victorians.

Foreword

At the City of Melbourne we set and uphold high ethical standards. As an organisation, we think not just about what we do but also how we do it through our people, the way we work and our customers' experience.

The rules and guidelines in this handbook give examples of how all Committee members are expected to behave, and provide the boundaries within which we must operate.

Council's vision is that Melbourne will be bold, inspirational and sustainable. It is therefore critical that we have a shared understanding of how we collectively work. The code works in close harmony with our values and culture, and provides instructions and advice as we work to make the difference for Melbourne and its people.

A constructive culture is critical to realising our vision. Everyone plays a part in creating our culture at the City of Melbourne. The code cannot describe every requirement or present all the details of our policies. Committee members must use their own judgement in applying these rules and guidelines. It is up to individual Committee members to seek information if unclear on any area of conduct.

What do you need to do?

1. Read it: please read this code and make sure you understand it. If there is anything you don't understand it is your responsibility to ask.
2. Agree to it: you must agree to abide by the code by signing and returning this document to Council.
3. Live it: we expect you to always work and behave in accordance with the code.

We encourage you to speak up if you see a potential breach of the code or if there is an opportunity to improve the ways we work.

Breaches of the code are a serious matter and can result in sanctions up to and removal from the Committee.

Together, we can uphold and protect the high ethical standards we have set for ourselves and our organisation and achieve our vision of a leading organisation for a leading city.

Section 1: Understanding and using the Code

Why do we need a code of conduct?

The City of Melbourne serves the community and Council and aims to be a leading organisation for a leading city. That's why it's important we provide the best possible service.

Committee members should also respect and promote the human rights set out in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. This includes making recommendations consistent with human rights, and actively implementing, promoting and supporting human rights.

Committee members should adhere to the code and not breach its principles.

The CEO will exercise judgement and action where an appointed member may need to be removed from the committee due to poor conduct.

Disclosable Interest Protocol

The Disclosable Interest Protocol and Declaration applies to all Council's Advisory Bodies. In addition to this code, all committee members will comply with the Disclosable Interest Protocol and Declaration.

Section 2: Commitment to our people

Fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion

The City of Melbourne promotes inclusivity, diversity, fairness and equity. This means the differences between the ideas, aspirations and needs of people are considered and valued equally.

What do we mean by 'diversity'?

Diversity consists of all visible characteristics such as age, cultural diversity, ability, gender (as well as gender identity and gender expression), sexual orientation and language. It also includes characteristics such as education, caring responsibilities, socio-economic background, life experiences, opinions and working styles. Diversity recognises the characteristics of the whole person and treats all individuals, customers and the communities in which we operate – with fairness and respect.

What do we mean by 'inclusion'?

Inclusion is the way our organisational culture, values and behaviours make a person feel welcomed, respected, valued and included. An inclusive environment draws on the unique differences of its people; where all people are treated fairly and respectfully with equal access to opportunities and resources. There are anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws that support fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion. These laws apply to how we treat each other. It is your responsibility to be aware of the relevant laws and comply with them.

The principles

At the City of Melbourne, we recognise and embrace the diversity each person brings. Our aim is to create an environment of trust, mutual respect and appreciation where everyone is treated fairly and with respect, and has the opportunity to realise their full potential.

Committee members are encouraged to feel confident that the diversity of their experiences will be valued and supported, regardless of their gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, ability, religious belief, sexual orientation or identification, working style, educational level, work and life experiences, socio-economic background, opinions, job function, geographical location, marital status and family responsibilities.

Your responsibility

Value and consider diversity in recommendations, program and policy advocacy.

Speak up if you see or hear anything not in the spirit of our commitment to fairness, equity and inclusivity or if you are concerned about discriminatory behaviours.

Know the policies that guide behaviour, address gender inequality and challenge attitudes and behaviours around issues such as violence against women.

Workplace diversity and inclusion ensures everyone enjoys the opportunity for full participation. City of Melbourne supports the development and achievement of well-informed and culturally-appropriate business outcomes. It also involves managing and recognising the value of individual differences in the workplace.

Diversity and inclusion are important because we value and embrace all contributions. Everyone is able to

bring something unique due to different backgrounds, varying work and life experiences, and multiple perspectives. Collectively this makes us a better organisation.

Ask yourself

Am I being fair and respectful?

Are my personal feelings, prejudices or preferences influencing my decisions?

Am I using inclusive language?

How will I respond if I witness behaviour that is not respectful?

Section 3: Harassment and bullying

Harassment occurs when someone engages in conduct that would make a reasonable person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated because of their age, race, religion, gender or gender expression, sexual orientation or some other attribute specified under anti-discrimination legislation.

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an individual or group of individuals that creates a risk to health and safety. There is no place for harassment or bullying at the City of Melbourne. Not only does it go against our values, it is unlawful and breaches our policies. It is fundamental that we recognise and value the diversity of others, and ensure that City of Melbourne is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

What is bullying?

Bullying occurs when a person or group of people repeatedly act unreasonably towards an individual or a group.

Unreasonable behaviour includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening. Whether the behaviour would be considered as unreasonable is based on whether a reasonable person might see the behaviour as unreasonable in the circumstances. Bullying behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

The Principles

The City of Melbourne does not tolerate bullying or harassment.

We do not tolerate any action, conduct or behaviour that is humiliating, intimidating or hostile.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination may lead to removal from the Committee.

Your responsibility

1. Speak up and tell the person if you're upset by their actions or behaviour. Explain why and ask them to stop.
2. Report inappropriate behaviour.
3. We all have a responsibility to create a positive, safe environment which is free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.

Ask yourself

- Have I behaved in an intimidating or threatening manner?
- Have I made inappropriate jokes or comments?
- Have I distributed or displayed potentially offensive material? If I'm witnessing behaviour that goes against our values, do I need to step in and say something?
- Am I supporting a culture of inclusion?

Examples of bullying include:

- behaving aggressively
- teasing or practical jokes
- pressuring someone to behave inappropriately
- excluding someone from work-related events
- unreasonable work demands.

Section 4: Drug and alcohol use and a smoke-free workplace

We're committed to ensuring that you're able to safely perform the requirements of the role as a Committee member.

The Principles

If you are affected by alcohol or drugs, you should not attend a committee meeting.

The possession or use of illegal drugs at any City of Melbourne location is strictly prohibited in line with the law.

Exposure to other people's smoke is a hazard. That's why it's important that City of Melbourne premises are smoke-free.

Your responsibility

1. Do not smoke or use an e-cigarette within any of our premises or vehicles, or within five metres of any entry point to our premises and vehicles.
2. Be aware of the impacts of your smoke drift on other people's health. Exposure to high levels of environmental tobacco smoke can increase the risk of heart disease by 50 to 60 per cent, as well as increasing the risk of stroke and nose and sinus cancer among non-smokers.
3. Do not litter. Protect our buildings and equipment through keeping them clean and discarding of cigarette butts appropriately.

Thank you for reading the Homelessness Advisory Committee Code of Conduct. It provides you with acceptable standards of behaviour for the way we work. As a member of a City of Melbourne committee you are required to adhere to and uphold these standards.

For further information about City of Melbourne's Code of Conduct, go to Code of Conduct and Protocol