

MCC Sport and Recreation Reference Group

Background

MidCoast Council manages in excess of 3,000 hectares of parks and open space. Our community lists recreation opportunities as one of their priorities.

The Sport and Recreation Reference Group will provide a means to work together to promote and increase opportunities through better use of our Sport and Recreation assets.

Purpose

The Reference Group will provide strategic advice to Council on the planning, development and delivery of sport and recreational services in the MidCoast Council local government area.

Key tasks

The Sport and Recreation Reference Group will provide guidance to Council on the following key areas:

- Assets that are managed and used to meet the needs of the community and provide for current and future generations
- Quality community sports and recreational facilities that are well used and accessible
- Parks, playgrounds and reserves that meet community needs
- Funding and resource allocations through grant programs

Roles & responsibilities

Membership

The membership of the Reference Group shall comprise:

- up to two Councillors (plus alternate)
- up to one community representative that have an interest or expertise in Sport and Recreation from each of the following areas
 - Bulahdelah
 - Coomba Park/Smiths Lake/Pacific Palms
 - Cundletown/Lansdowne
 - Forster
 - Hallidays Point
 - Gloucester
 - Nahiack
 - Old Bar
 - Stroud
 - Taree
 - Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest
 - Tinonee
 - Tuncurry
 - Wingham

- from time to time, other people who have clearly defined interest in topics being discussed by the group
- staff representatives from Council's Community Spaces, Recreation and Trades team

A member's appointment may be ended on the basis of one of the following:

- resignation of a member
- regular non-attendance at meetings (note: members shall be considered to have vacated their position if they have been absent from three meetings without an apology)
- failure to respect the protocols and confidentiality requirements (set out below)

Chairperson

The Reference Group shall be chaired by the nominated Councillor. If the nominated Councillor is not available the replacement Chair shall be the alternate Councillor, or if unavailable, the members can determine the representative as required.

Members

The members will be appointed by Council following a publicly advertised process. Members shall be expected to bring diverse knowledge, skills, experience and the following criteria.

- Aged 18 years or over, or, if aged under 18 years old, have parent/guardian's permission to participate;
- Currently residing, working or volunteering within the MidCoast Council local government area (areas of interest listed above);
- Demonstrate a commitment to advancing Sport and Recreation across the MidCoast local government area;
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to actively participate in reference group activities for the required duration in a fair, constructive and unbiased manner for the benefit of the MidCoast community.

A nomination form must be completed by interested representatives and all nominations will be assessed against their stated knowledge, experience, skills and responses to the criteria relevant to the Sport and Recreation Reference Group.

Members may determine to work in sub groups (Working Groups) for specific projects. In this case Working Group chairs shall be appointed by the members.

Council support

To enable the Reference Group to operate effectively Council staff shall provide:

- any material and draft documents to undertake tasks / projects and an opportunity for discussion at meetings (as agenda items)
- regular updates
- expert advice from the different areas of Council, as required
- open and transparent communications on Sport and Recreation issues
- secretariat services and venues for meetings

Dissolution

Council may determine to dissolve the Group. This may be initiated for the following reasons:

- the Group has achieved its purpose for establishment
- the Group has become unproductive
- the Group can no longer maintain membership in line with its terms of reference
- Council has determined the Group no longer services the priorities and/or core business of Council
- Legislation has changed the roles and responsibilities of Council

Commitments

Confidentiality

From time to time, members may be required to review and comment on draft documentation that has not been formally considered by the Council's decision-making body. In these circumstances, it is crucial members understand the status of any documentation and the importance of maintaining confidentiality if they wish to have preliminary input. Discussion may also take place on matters subject to State or Federal Government protocols that need to be adhered to. Members may also be privy to financial, legal or personal information, which cannot be disclosed outside of the group. Each member is required to agree to the confidentiality requirements of the membership.

Meetings

The groups shall meet a minimum quarterly, at a time and location agreed by the members, for a maximum of 2 (two) hours, unless agreed by the group.

A quorum for attendance shall be a minimum of half of the membership plus one. A Council staff member should be present for each meeting.

The following meeting protocols shall apply:

- members shall respect the role of the Chair in the conduct of the meetings
- members shall respect the right of every members to speak and put forward their views
- members shall respect the Chair's decisions (if a consensus is not able to be reached) in relation to agenda items and timeframes
- meetings are generally run through consensus, however, should the need arise for a vote, only the Councillors and community members shall participate (ie Council staff are not to participate in any voting), having one vote each. Where there is an opposing view the members can choose to have their name recorded in the minutes stating their position.
- agenda and supporting documentation will be distributed electronically (by email) at least five working days prior to the meeting date
- minutes, providing an overview of discussions and actions to be progressed, shall be taken at each meeting and made available to members within two weeks of the meeting. Minutes will be maintained electronically and distributed to members via email. Minutes shall be made publicly available on Council's website, however, it is recognised that confidential items are not be made public.

Where possible, members shall be notified in advance of any confidential items.

Limitations

While the Sport and Recreation Reference Group may provide guidance to Council on key issues such as corporate policy and objectives, marketing strategy, resource allocation, and decisions, the Reference Group may not:

- on Council's behalf agree to any acquisitions of land
- incur expenditure by Council
- make any payment to members of the Reference Group
- accept public liability risk from another organisation
- make grant applications dependent on or committing Council to expenditure, either initial or ongoing
- bind Council
- become involved in the day to day operations of Council activities

Code of conduct & Conflict of interest

All members are required to comply with Council's Code of Conduct (copy attached to this document) and participate in Code of Conduct training and an induction provided by Council.

In accordance with the Code, a member of the Reference Group who has a financial, commercial or economic interest in any matter before the group must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting and must leave the meeting while the matter is being considered.

Contact with the media

Media enquiries relating to the work or operation of the group are to be referred to and managed by Council's Communications team. Media statements can not be made by members of the group.

Where a member considers that there needs to be a media comment in relation to any items discussed by the group, the member must bring the matter to the attention of the Council staff representative.

Review

An annual summary report which captures the actions of the group is to be provided each year for inclusion in Council's Annual Report. Additional reports to Council may also be necessary when key milestones are reached or to progress elements of a specific project or specific recommendations to Council.

The membership and these Terms of Reference are to be reviewed at the end of the Council term, within three months of the Council election.

Governance

Integrated planning & reporting requirements of Local Government

The scope of work for the Sport and Recreation Reference Group is focused on supporting our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities and our connected community.

The group supports achievement of Delivery Program and Operational Plan strategies, focus areas and actions associated with Sport and Recreation.

This aligns with the Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework (shown below and outlined in the Local Government Act). All of the activities of the group need to align with the outcomes in the Community Strategic Plan and subsequent endorsed Council strategies.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework



Attachments

MidCoast Council Code of Conduct