

# **The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)**

## **Terms of Reference**

**Reviewed March 2015**

### **Background**

Council is committed to promoting a community which all people have access and where all people feel welcome. Council established the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) as a formal Committee of Council in 2002. Community representatives have valuable knowledge and expertise and can contribute to Council's vision for the City of Maribyrnong.

### **Aims of the DAC**

- To consult people with disability and ensure community input and discussion.
- To provide Council with advice on all areas of access and inclusion at all levels of government.

### **Responsibilities of the DAC**

- (a) Advise Council on access to participation experienced by people with disability and their carers.
- (b) Provide advice on how Council policies, facilities and services can best reflect the needs of people with disability and their carers.
- (c) Work with Council on the development and implementation of policies and action plans which affect people with disability and their carers.
- (d) Raise matters for Council to consider in its advocacy role on behalf of the community.
- (e) Create opportunities to promote the DAC and positive images of disability.
- (f) Identify and undertake key projects that strengthen community and Council's commitment to community wellbeing.
- (g) Annually appoint a Vice Chairperson.

## **Principles of DAC**

The principles underpinning the DAC are based on the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) which was ratified by Australia in 2008.

The United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,
- Everyone is entitled to rights without discrimination,
- Human rights cannot be taken away, traded or disposed of, and
- Human rights are the foundation for freedom, justice, peace and respect.

## **Responsibilities of Council**

(a) Appoint a Councillor to be the Chairperson of the DAC.

(b) Provide secretarial support to the DAC through the Diversity Support Officer and project support through the Disability Planner.

(c) Provide an induction and orientation package for DAC members, outlining the role of the DAC and Council, an overview of how Maribyrnong City Council works, and providing relevant DAC documentation such as Terms of Reference, DAC brochure, recent minutes, and explanation of how meetings will be run. The induction and orientation to include an offer of a meet and greet meeting, either one on one or in a group, for new members.

(d) Provide assistance and support for DAC members to participate in DAC activities. These include transport, attendant care, respite care, visual aids, audio loop and interpreters.

(e) Communicate in easy English with the DAC.

(f) Actively recruit members to the DAC that reflect the diversity in the City of Maribyrnong.

## **6. Membership**

(a) There will be 10 members of the DAC. Nine will be community members who are reflective of the City of Maribyrnong and have voting rights. The nominated Councillor is a non-voting position.

(b) The DAC will aim to have a membership with equal representation of people with disability, carers of people with disability, people from disability organisations and an equal gender balance.

(c) Council staff who regularly attend DAC meetings (MetroAccess Officer, Disability Planner, Diversity Support Officer, Diversity Coordinator) do not have voting rights.

(d) The nine community DAC members shall not be members of another Council advisory or reference group during their DAC membership.

## **7. Period of Membership**

(a) Membership will be for a period of two years and no more than two consecutive terms, other than the Councillor.

(b) Vacancies will be advertised in local media and through local disability networks.

(c) DAC members whose membership has expired after two years can reapply through the public advertising process for one more term of membership.

(d) A panel will be established to recruit to the DAC comprising two members of the DAC and the Manager Aged & Diversity or delegated Officer.

(e) Casual vacancies which arise during the two year term of the DAC will be filled by application or at the recommendation and approval of the Manager Aged & Diversity.

## **8. Frequency of Meetings and Attendance**

(a) Meetings will occur on a six weekly basis.

(b) Any variation to this frequency will be determined by consultation with the DAC.

(c) The schedule of meetings will be developed and agreed to by DAC members.

(d) Additional meetings shall be convened at the discretion of the Chairperson and or Vice Chairperson.

(e) Members are required to attend all meetings. Notice of non-attendance must be given in advance.

(f) In the event of non-attendance of a maximum of four meetings the Diversity Coordinator will contact the member in writing to ask them to reaffirm his/her ongoing commitment to DAC membership.

(g) Members who are unable to attend meetings for a period of time may wish to apply for a Leave of Absence for up to six months, by submitting a request in writing to the Diversity Coordinator. At the end of a Leave of Absence, a DAC member will be deemed to have resigned if they do not attend the next DAC meeting. The Diversity Coordinator will confirm this in writing.

## **9. Disclosure of Interest**

It is the responsibility of DAC members to disclose any potential conflict of interest in the course of meetings.

## **10. Decision Making and Voting**

(a) A quorum will be five community DAC members.

(b) Wherever possible decision making will be by consensus.

(c) Where opinion is closely divided a vote is to be undertaken and the outcome determined by the majority.

(d) If a meeting does not have at least five community DAC members in attendance, the Chairperson will declare that the meeting does not have a quorum. Under normal circumstances, the meeting may proceed, however any matters requiring a decision by the DAC will be deferred to the following meeting. The minutes will record that the meeting did not have a quorum. DAC meetings may be cancelled if there is less than five DAC members in attendance.

## **11. Working Groups**

- (a) Working Groups will be established as needed and must be time limited and action oriented.
- (b) Their role will be to undertake specific work and make recommendations to the DAC.
- (c) Each working group will have a convenor who will be responsible for reporting to meetings.
- (d) A working group may second additional non DAC members to assist with specific issues if this is required.

## **12. Conflict Resolution**

- (a) All committee members will behave in a courteous and professional manner.
- (b) In the first instance any complaint of serious dispute should be brought to the Chairperson who will bring the parties together to seek a resolution. Where the dispute involves the Chairperson, the issues will be brought to the Manager Aged & Diversity.
- (c) If appropriate, and with the agreement of those involved, the matter may be presented to the DAC for consideration.
- (d) Mediation through an agreed mediator can be undertaken with the consent of all parties.
- (e) Council at its discretion will take appropriate action in the event of gross misconduct by a DAC member.

## **13. Reporting**

The Chairperson will provide a delegate's report at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council after each DAC meeting.

## **14. Review of Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years or as required. The next scheduled review date will be March 2017.