

## Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.5

### Disability Advisory Committee Terms of Reference Review and appointment of four new members

5 March 2024

**Presenter:** Rushda Halith General Manager Community and City Services

#### Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to request the Future Melbourne Committee approve updates to the City of Melbourne Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) Terms of Reference 2023-2026 (TOR) and notes the appointment of four new members.

#### Key issues

2. The review of the TOR was undertaken in September and October 2023 and included a desktop review of the terms of reference of like committees of other local governments. It also included a survey of Council staff who have presented at the DAC, and individual meetings with DAC members to seek feedback on the strengths and suggested improvements. Key findings included:
  - 2.1. Overall, members stated that the DAC meets its objective of being a consultative forum that provides strategic and meaningful advice on policy and projects.
  - 2.2. Members felt valued for their expertise and input, and appreciated the support they received to participate in meetings. The diversity of members on the DAC was appreciated and it was suggested that it would add value to have more young people on the committee. For staff, the feedback and input received from the DAC was impactful.
  - 2.3. There were suggestions to improve the format of meetings, such as limiting the number of agenda items, better utilising pre-reading materials, and extending the time of the meeting. Members were also keen to explore how they can be better engaged in between meetings and on projects that require more time and dedicated input. There was also a suggestion to establish a process to 'close the loop' and report back on how feedback is incorporated upon projects and initiatives that are presented at the DAC.
  - 2.4. That the sitting fee be increased to \$300 per meeting in line with best practice.
3. Based on the key findings, there are minor changes proposed to the TOR. These are underlined in Attachment 2 and are: extending the meeting time by half an hour, to be from 2.30–5.00pm (page 6), increasing the sitting fee to \$300 (page 7), and to update the next review date to November 2026 (page 7). The other suggestions for improvements and changes sit outside the TOR and will be implemented in 2024.
4. In November 2023 there were four vacancies on the DAC. To fill these, an Expression of Interest process was undertaken via Participate Melbourne and was open from 3 – 30 November 2023. There was widespread promotion through networks and paid social media.
5. Thirty one high calibre submissions were received and reviewed by an internal panel of Council staff.
6. The internal panel recommended four community members to fill the vacancies and for them to commence on the DAC in March 2024 for a three year period. These recommendations were based on meeting current representation gaps, an assessment of skills and lived experience.
7. The Chief Executive Officer has endorsed these new committee members in accordance with a Council resolution of 29 September 2009.

#### Recommendation from management

8. That the Future Melbourne Committee:

- 8.1. Approves the changes to the City of Melbourne Disability Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 2023 – 2026 including the increase in sitting fees.
- 8.2. Notes the appointment of four new Disability Advisory Committee members by the Chief Executive Officer under delegation.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 13)
2. Proposed DAC Terms of Reference (Page 4 of 13)

## **Supporting Attachment**

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### **Legal**

1. There are no direct legal issues arising from the recommendation from management.

### **Finance**

2. The proposed increase of sitting fees for the DAC members will require an additional \$4,800 per year which will be accommodated within the current and future Community Development branch operational budget.

### **Conflict of interest**

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

### **Health and Safety**

4. The input and advice from the DAC improves the physical, mental and psychological health and safety of people with disability across the municipality.

### **Stakeholder consultation**

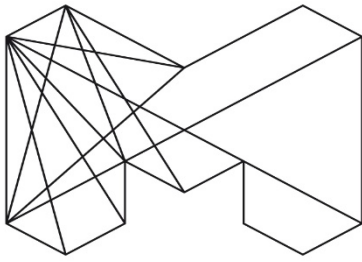
5. Current DAC members were consulted with via one-on-one interviews for the TOR Review.

### **Relation to Council policy**

6. The DAC TOR support the City of Melbourne's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024 (Major Initiative 39).

### **Environmental sustainability**

7. Environmental sustainability was not relevant for this report.



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# **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**CITY OF MELBOURNE**

**Disability Advisory Committee**

**2023 - 2026**

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## **Purpose**

The City of Melbourne's Disability Advisory Committee (the Committee) is a consultative forum that provides strategic advice on policy and practice issues to the administration and Council. This advice assists Council in responding to the needs and aspirations of people of all abilities who live, work, study or visit our city.

## **Background**

The *Local Government Act 2020* stipulates that a Council must abide by certain principles, including that priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community and that the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and decision making. In addition, under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* the function of a Council is to seek to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing.

The Disability Advisory Committee supports these functions and principles. In 1999 the City of Melbourne demonstrated its commitment to being a welcoming, engaging and inclusive city by establishing a Committee to advise Council on the needs, views and aspirations of people of all abilities.

## **Role**

The Committee provides an ongoing civic engagement process where people with a disability can advocate to Council on barriers and access issues that impact on their life opportunities and experiences within the City of Melbourne and more broadly within society.

## **Objectives**

The Committee will:

- Represent issues that impact on the life opportunities of people of all abilities;
- Advise on 'best practice' in universal access planning and co-design engagement; and

- Participate in the development of Council's Disability Action Plan.

## **Membership**

### **Advisory Committee Members**

There will be twelve (12) community members comprising individuals with personal and/or professional experience, expertise and commitment to improving equity of access in all aspects of life in the city

Of these, nine (9) members will have direct personal experience of disability. Three (3) members will be appointed as professionals from academia, tourism and the business sector, with a commitment to universal access and that can influence equity of participation of people with disability.

Membership will be representative of the diversity of our community with reference to:

- ability
- age
- sex and sexual identification
- Indigenous and aboriginal
- cultural and linguistic background
- socio-economic status.

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

The City of Melbourne is committed to fostering a deeper culture of public participation and have developed a policy, as part of the Local Government Act 2020 that commits to deliberative engagement practices.

## **Member expertise**

The Committee membership will be sought on the basis of achieving a representation of a diverse range of people with mobility, sensory, cognitive, intellectual and/or cognitive disabilities

Members will have expertise and/or experience in one or more of the following areas:

- expertise in advocacy on disability access issues
- first-hand experience of disability
- governance experience
- human rights, social inclusion, empowering people and building on people's strengths and knowledge
- an understanding of City of Melbourne's community and capital city roles
- demonstrated links to community and neighbourhood relationships
- operators of the business and tourism sectors within the City of Melbourne
- an academic with expertise in disability and equity of access.

Members will be recommended to Council for endorsement by the nominated Chairperson, by the Director or General Manager of Community and Services City Services.

## **Terms of Membership**

- Community members will be appointed following a formal expression of interest submission
- Members will be appointed as individuals for a period of three (3) years
- Members may seek re-appointment for a further three year term
- The maximum term will be for a period of six (6) years
- Any member who fails to advise of an absence of up to three (3) meetings, in a calendar year, will be deemed to have resigned
- Vacancies will be filled as soon as possible



- Committee members may be required to undergo a Police and/or Working with Children checks.

## **Committee structure**

Committee membership will comprise:

- a Councillor, will chair the meetings with a nominated member as co-chair
- people with expertise in identifying barriers and promoting equity of access for people with a variety of disabilities including mobility, sensory, cognitive, psycho-social and/or intellectual
- Director of applicable branch
- at least one senior officer from a relevant branch of Council.

Support functions will be performed by a Council officer within the Community and City Services Division

### **Appointment**

The Committee will be appointed for three years through a public expression of interest process and proposed members will be referred to the Future Melbourne Committee for endorsement.

### **Meetings of the Committee**

The Committee will meet at least four times annually and on special issues as a working group as required.

Meetings will also be held at the Town Hall in Swanston Street between 2.30pm – 5.00pm on an agreed work day and available online. Light refreshments will be provided at face to face meetings.

## **Operation and working group meetings**

- All new members will participate in an induction process
- Members may nominate to attend and participate in working groups to explore identified issues and present recommendation/s for endorsement at the Disability Advisory Committee
- Members already receiving a remuneration fee for attendance at the Disability Advisory Committee meeting only.

## **Council support for committee members**

Resources, including printed materials will be provided (if required) by Council.

Council will provide interpreters, carers, cab vouchers, car parking vouchers and any other requirements (as advised) to support members to attend and participate in committee meetings

A remuneration fee of \$300 will be paid to all members, excluding Council staff and Councillor Portfolio holders for attendance at meetings.

## **Review**

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years. Next review due November 2026.

## **Media**

The Chair of the Disability Advisory Committee is the media spokesperson for the Advisory Committee.

## **Reporting**

The Committee will provide strategic advice to the City of Melbourne through the Chairperson and will report to Council through the Chair of Future Melbourne (People City) Committee on matters of importance or priority.

## **4. Protocols**

As an appointed advisory committee of Council, the Committee will be chaired by the Chair of Council's Future Melbourne Committee (People City) or another nominated Councillor.

### **The roles and responsibilities of the Council:**

- to Chair the Committee (Chair of Council's Future Melbourne (People City) Committee or another nominated Councillor)
- to support the active engagement of all members
- facilitate a collaborative meeting format
- to support Committee members to fully engage in the issues on the table by providing information and research findings in a timely and accessible manner
- to co-opt additional support and/or sub committees as required
- to provide policy and secretariat support to the Committee
- to coordinate meetings, agenda and minutes.

Meetings will include management representatives from the City of Melbourne who have significant responsibility for planning, decision making, service delivery and implementation of policy and programs in relation to disability access and inclusion.

### **The roles and responsibilities of committee members:**

- to be fully prepared for meetings
- to agree to participate in a collaborative meeting format

- to bring personal, professional knowledge and broad community experience to the table
- to consider and raise relevant issues, proposals and ideas
- to provide informed advice and guidance

## **Code of Conduct and interest provisions**

In performing the role of a member, a committee member must:

- Act honestly
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence
- Not make improper use of their position
- Not make improper use of the information acquired because of their position
- Adhere to City of Melbourne Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>

Where the member of the committee has an interest or conflict of interest in relation to a matter in which the committee is concerned, or is likely to be considered or discussed, the member must disclose the interest to the committee before the matter is considered or discussed at the meeting. Disclosure must include the nature of the relevant interest and be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## **Confidential and sensitive information**

- Members are expected to comply with the confidential information provisions contained in Sections 77 and 89 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
- Members must treat information they receive as confidential unless otherwise advised. The documents presented to the Disability Advisory Committee will often be in draft format and not ready for wider community distribution.
- Members must not use confidential information other than for the purpose of performing their function as a member of the advisory committee.

- Draft documents cannot be referred to or used in any grant applications, presentations or in the private or working roles of members.