

**Management report to Council**

**Agenda item 6.10**

**Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 2017–2021**

**Council**

**Presenter:** Kate Vinot, Director City Strategy and Place

**29 August 2017**

**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement for the updated Terms of Reference for the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee (Attachment 2).
2. The decision to establish the Advisory Committee was made by the Eco-city Committee in June 2009. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to advise the Council on a range of technical and community issues involved in sustainable management of the City of Melbourne's parks, gardens, urban landscapes and urban forest in the City of Melbourne.
3. The Advisory Committee consists of up to eight community representatives and up to eight invited external technical representatives. It is proposed that at least one community member position is appointed to an Aboriginal person. This recognises the importance of Aboriginal representation to advise Council on the views and interests of Aboriginal people in the municipality. The technical experts may also include expertise in indigenous perspectives or representation of traditional custodians.
4. The appointment of community members is made by the CEO in consultation with the Chair of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee.

**Key issues**

5. The term of the current community representatives is concluding and an expression of interest to appoint new community representatives will commence shortly. In November 2015, Council determined to change the community representative terms to appoint half for two years and half for four years, setting the framework for a rolling term of community member appointments. The current community representatives will be invited to reapply and up to four representatives will be considered through the process.
6. Under section 12 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* this opportunity to appoint an Aboriginal person has been considered as a special measure and therefore is designated to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicants on this occasion.
7. The Terms of Reference have been updated for the next four years. The changes include a new role to review applications for the Urban Forest Fund (following the Future Melbourne Committee Report 7 June 2016), and expanding the breadth of expertise of the technical representatives on the Advisory Committee to better reflect contemporary urban landscape management.

**Recommendation from management**

8. That Council endorses the updated Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 2017–2021.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (page 2 of 6)
2. Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 2017–2021 (page 3 of 6)

**Supporting Attachment**

**Legal**

1. There are no legal implications from this report.

**Finance**

2. The financial implications from this recommendation are met within operational budgets.

**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 direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

**Relation to Council policy**

4. The inclusion of an Aboriginal member aligns with Council's Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-18 and also with Council Plan 2017-21, Goal: A city with an Aboriginal focus.

**Sustainability**

5. The Advisory Committee contribute to sustainable land management through expert advice, discussion of challenges and opportunities, best practice and bringing a breadth of perspectives.

**CITY OF MELBOURNE  
PARKS AND GARDENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
2017 – 2021**

The City of Melbourne established its first Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee in 2009. Over eight years the Committee has assisted Council with advice on a range of issues involved in planning for and management of its urban landscapes.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The City believes it is best served by an Advisory Committee that comprises a mix of technical and community expertise due to the complexity and diversity of issues impacting on parks, gardens and urban landscapes now and into the future.

A number of external technical experts have been identified and appointed to the Committee. They include representatives with perspectives on:

- Parks Management, horticulture, recreation, health and wellbeing, landscape design and Indigenous representation;

And representatives from these organisations

- Parks Victoria;
- Melbourne Water and
- Royal Botanic Gardens.

To complement the proposed membership up to eight community members (City of Melbourne ratepayers or residents) will be selected to participate on the Committee. It is proposed that at least one community member position is appointed to an Aboriginal person.

Under section 12 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, a dedicated Aboriginal membership has been considered to support Aboriginal representation on the Committee. The special measure recognises the importance of Aboriginal representation to advise Council on the views and interests of Aboriginal people in the municipality.

In addition to the above positions a City of Melbourne Councillor, the Chair of the Environment Committee and an alternate chair will be on this Committee.

**1. Background**

Parks, gardens and urban landscapes in the City of Melbourne are fundamental to the City's liveability. Our parks and gardens are greatly loved and heavily used community assets attracting over 12 million visitors per year. Usage ranges from organised sport to major events such as Moomba or simple daily activities such as a walk in the park.

Our urban landscapes play a significant role in our response to climate change. To adapt our City to climate change we need to mitigate the urban heat island effect by bringing inner city temperatures down, create healthy ecosystems and become a water sensitive city.

The City's parks, gardens and urban landscapes are places that support important values and functions ranging from heritage to biodiversity, passive to active recreation. They play an important role in the ecology of the city. They are important for the health and wellbeing of the community on many levels, both physical and mental, for all ages and abilities.

One of the other key challenges for the city is the anticipated significant increase in population. By 2020 the City of Melbourne's population is expected to grow from around 148,000 residents today to around 170,000. By 2030 residential population is anticipated to be over 233,000 and Greater Melbourne is expected to grow to beyond six million people.

Council has adopted an *Urban Forest Strategy* (2012) and *Open Space Strategy* (2012) which provide strategic direction to adapt our city to climate change and to respond to significant increases in population. Council recently adopted the *Nature in the City Strategy* (2017) which gives direction to create and maintain healthy ecosystems and thriving biodiversity within the city.

There is growing pressure on open space in the municipality from increasing and incompatible uses. Future uncertainty created by drought, and extreme weather all reinforce the need for a resilient landscape and sound management strategies. Creating a sustainable vision and ensuring our parks, gardens and urban landscapes can continue to be enjoyed by future generations and contribute to a healthy city are the long term focus.

## **2. Purpose:**

The purpose of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee is to advise the City of Melbourne on a range of technical and community issues involved in sustainable management of the City of Melbourne's parks, gardens and urban landscapes. The Committee will work with the Council to address issues, develop alternatives and assist with the identification of the preferred solutions as part of Council's decision making process. The Committee role will be advisory.

## **3. Objectives:**

The objectives of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee are to assist and advise Council on:

- the implementation of the City of Melbourne **Open Space Strategy** 2012, **Urban Forest Strategy** 2012 and **Nature in the City Strategy** 2017;
- the review of major parks and gardens **master plans**;
- the identification of **sustainability opportunities** including strategies and projects;
- the **planning and design** of new open spaces;
- the **review** of parks, gardens and recreation **policies**;
- methods and techniques to better **inform and engage the community** on parks, gardens and urban landscape issues, and
- the review of applications to the Urban Forest Fund.

## **4. The roles and responsibilities of the Community members are:**

- to be fully prepared for meetings;
- to agree to participate in a collaborative meeting format;
- to bring local knowledge and broad community experience to the table;
- to consider and raise issues, proposals and ideas; and
- to provide informed advice and guidance.

## **5. The roles and responsibilities of the technical representatives are:**

- to be fully prepared for meetings;
- to agree to participate in a collaborative meeting format;
- to bring technical and evidence based research and experience to the table;

- to consider and raise issues, proposals and ideas; and
- to provide expert advice and guidance.

**6. The roles and responsibilities of the Council are:**

- to Chair the committee (Chair of Environment Committee or an alternate chair);
- to coordinate meetings and provide the Secretariat;
- to 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 inform Council on the progress and outcomes of Committee work; and
- to co-opt additional support and/or sub committees as required.

**7. Membership**

The membership of the Committee will be made up of:

- up to five experts with technical expertise in parks management, horticulture, recreation, health and wellbeing, landscape architecture, Indigenous perspectives or representation of traditional custodians
- one representative from Parks Victoria;
- one representative from Royal Botanic Gardens;
- one representative from Melbourne Water;
- up to eight community members who comprise broad representation of residents and ratepayers of the City of Melbourne including at least one Aboriginal person, selected via an expression of interest process; and
- the Chair of the City of Melbourne Environment Committee, (or an delegated alternate chair).

All Councillors will have a standing invitation to attend meetings of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee.

**8. Appointment**

Community members will be appointed through an Expression of Interest process.

The existing Committee will be invited to reapply for a two year appointment with up to four members being appointed. At least four new members will be appointed for four years. This will set the framework for a rolling four year term for all community membership appointments, with new members every two years.

**9. Meetings of the Committee**

The Committee will meet four times per year, with provision for additional meetings (including site visits) if required.

Meetings will be held at the Town Hall in Swanston Street between 5.30pm – 7.30pm on a week night. Supper will be provided.

**10. Council support for committee members**

The committee will operate on a voluntary basis.

Resources, including printed materials will be provided by Council.