



CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

Terms of Reference

Environment Advisory Committee

AUTHORISATION & VERSION CONTROL

Terms of Reference (TOR) No	TOR-022
TOR Owner	Director Environment and Planning
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1. Purpose

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Establish a new Environment Advisory Committee to provide strategic advice to Council on environmental matters, including but not limited to sustainability, biodiversity, green/open space planning, natural resource management including riparian zones, and the overall delivery of relevant Council strategies and programs.
- Provide strategic advice to Council on environmental issues and sustainability initiatives in the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA).
- Provide feedback to Council in relation to environmental policies, programs, communication strategies, and service delivery.
- Promote coordination and collaboration among environmental groups, service providers, and community organisations working on environmental sustainability.
- Raise awareness of environmental challenges and advocate for environmental education, conservation and community engagement.

As part of all deliberations and decision-making processes, the Committee will actively consider the unique characteristics, needs, and priorities of communities within the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA). This includes, but is not limited to, recognising and respecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the population, addressing community sensitivities, and ensuring inclusive engagement. Where relevant, the Committee will also support and advocate for multilingual communication and culturally appropriate practices to enhance accessibility and equitable participation across all community groups.

2. Membership

Membership of the Cumberland Environment Advisory Committee will consist of:

- Up to ten (10) community members or representatives from local community environmental groups or organisations. Ideally, the community members will be from across the geographical area of Council and reflect a range of interests in environmental sustainability, conservation, climate action, or related areas.
- Two (2) Councillors.

Councillor appointments are resolved by Council (Ordinary Meeting of Council) within the first 12 months of a new Council term. Membership can be altered at any time by Council resolution.

All community representative nominations for appointment to the Committee are to be formally submitted in writing to Council, through an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process. Nominees must complete an Expression of Interest form and formally declare in writing to Council any potential conflicts of interest (such as being a member of other committees, professional affiliations, or advocacy roles) directly relating to the purpose of the Committee.

All nominations will be assessed by an internal panel of Council staff, with recommendations made to Council via a report.

Committee membership will be formalised by resolution of Council. Community membership of the Committee shall be for the period of the Council term. At the commencement of each Council term, Council will review its Committee structure and subsequently resolve the continuation or discontinuation of any particular committee. Following this, an EOI process for membership will be undertaken. Council staff will provide administrative support to the Committee.

3. Selection Criteria

To be eligible as a community representative, members must live, work, study, or have strong connections to the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA), and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience in environmental sustainability, conservation or related advocacy.
- Represent a relevant organisation or sector (e.g., environmental groups, education, waste and recycling, biodiversity, urban planning, sustainability-focused community organisations).
- Demonstrated understanding of environmental issues affecting diverse communities within the Cumberland LGA.
- Experience in interagency collaboration, environmental education, or community engagement on environmental matters.

4. Meeting Attendance

Committee Members are expected to attend all committee meetings where possible. If a member is unable to attend, an apology is to be provided to the meeting convenor prior to the meeting. A member who fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without submitting a satisfactory explanation will forfeit their place on the Committee.

Where a Councillor cannot attend a meeting of the Committee, another Councillor delegated by the Councillor may act as a Member of the Committee for that meeting. All other Councillors are able to attend Committee meetings.

5. Times and Places for Meetings

The Committee will generally meet quarterly at dates and times as determined. An extraordinary meeting may be called where circumstances warrant.

Meetings will normally be held at either the Council Administration Building at 16 Memorial Avenue, Merrylands, or at another accessible venue.

Subject to the Chairperson's discretion and technical capabilities, meetings may be held via Audio/Visual link or a combination of in person and Audio/Visual link.

6. Notification of Vacancies

The Committee is to notify the Council promptly of any vacancy occurring in its membership that affects the capacity of the Committee to function. Any Committee vacancies will be filled in accordance with the process outlined in point 2.

7. Chairperson

The Chairperson will be nominated by the Committee. In his/her absence, the Committee may elect another Chairperson. The Chairperson must be a Community Representative.

8. Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Committee will be one (1) appointed Councillor, or in the absence of an appointed Councillor, one (1) Councillor attending on behalf of an appointed Councillor, and 50% of Council appointed community representatives. If a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes after the appointed started time, the meeting will be adjourned to a time fixed by the Chairperson.

Where there is no quorum, the members present can hold an informal meeting to discuss matters. However, any recommendations made by the Committee are not recognised until a meeting, where a quorum is present, has considered and ratified them.

In the event that three (3) consecutive committee meetings do not proceed due to a lack of quorum, a report will be included in the agenda for the next Ordinary Council meeting seeking Council's determination as to the continuation of the Committee.

9. Conflict of Interest & Pecuniary Interest

Committee members must tell the Committee convenor of any conflicts of interest or pecuniary interest at the start of each meeting, or before discussion of a relevant agenda item or topic. Details of any conflicts of interest or pecuniary interest will be included in the meeting minutes.

If members or those invited to Committee meetings find they do have a real or perceived conflict of interest or pecuniary interest they are not allowed to be a part of Committee discussions on the issue.

10. Administration of the Committee

The Committee will be convened by a Council officer from Council's Environment and Planning Directorate. Other Council staff will attend meetings and provide advice to the Committee as required.

Council staff will provide the following administrative support to the Environment Advisory Committee, as required:

- All correspondence to members of the Committee.
- Notification of times of meetings, meeting agenda and meeting venue.
- Preparation and distribution of minutes.
- Background reports and other information as required.
- Reports to Council.

11. Meeting Notifications, Agenda and Minutes

Council will notify members of the time and place of each meeting at least one week in advance, together with a copy of the agenda and any reports. Minutes will be sent out after each meeting.

A report on the Committee's minutes and any other relevant information considered at the prior meeting will be reported every three (3) months to an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

12. Expenses of Committee Members

Council will not generally authorise payment or provide remuneration to Committee members.

13. Insurance

Committee members are covered by Council's public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

14. Media Contact

Committee members may not speak to the media on behalf of the Committee or Council without approval in advance from Council's Media and Communications Team.

15. Induction

Advisory Committees operate under Council's corporate governance framework, including the Code of Conduct. New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

16. Standard Operating Procedures

All other procedures are to be in accordance with Council's Standard Operating Procedures and Code of Meeting Practice.

17. Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Committee will be adopted for the duration of the Council term.

Any proposed changes other than those of a minor/administrative nature to the Terms of Reference will be required to be reported to Council and adopted by way of resolution at a Council meeting.