

Mackay Regional Council's Inclusive Communities Reference Group (ICRG)

Terms of Reference

Background

Mackay Regional Council (Council) has long been committed to strengthening and maintaining an inclusive community, where people of all abilities, ages, genders, cultures, and backgrounds can connect, participate in, and thrive together. This Inclusive Communities Reference Group (ICRG) will follow the previous Access and Inclusion Reference Group (AIRG) in providing strategic advice to the Council about improving accessibility and inclusion for the Mackay community.

1. Scope

The Scope of the Inclusive Communities Reference Group is to advocate, inform, and consult, within the context of the Inclusive Communities Action Plan 2023-2027.

2. Role of the reference Group

The Inclusive Communities Reference Group will guide the Council on the following key areas:

- Represent the access and inclusion needs of the Mackay region.
- Advise the Council on ways to actively contribute to the development of best practice policy, procedures, planning, and programming to increase community inclusion outcomes.
- Identify actions that the Council can take to improve access and inclusion of our services, facilities, and programs.
- Identify gaps, issues, and challenges relating to access and inclusion that the Council can advocate for collaboration with businesses, services and organisations to address.
- Advocate for access and inclusion through providing education and information to improve community awareness of the needs and rights of those with access and inclusion issues, through positive and proactive media, social marketing, community events, festivals, forums, and other initiatives.
- Keep the Council informed on industry developments, standards, and legislation that can improve access and inclusion to Council's services, facilities, and programs.
- Collaborate on the implementation of Council's, Inclusive Communities Action Plan 2023-2027.

3. Responsibilities of the Reference Group

The responsibilities of the Inclusive Communities Reference Group are to:

1. Ensure representation on the Reference Group is inclusive within its membership by targeting people with disabilities, Older people, Young people (aged 15 - 24 yrs), Family members, carers, and guardians of people with disability and older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Australian South Sea Islander people, members who identify as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community, and culturally and linguistically diverse community members Therefore representatives of the diverse needs and issues relating to the Mackay community.
2. Support the implementation of Council's Inclusive Communities Action Plan 2023-2027
3. Serve as an information link between community members/groups/ business sector and Council
4. Provide advice to Council departments during policy or project development and other relevant Council activities e.g. upgrading facilities and open space planning.
5. Raise advocacy issues for Council to consider on behalf of the community
6. Attend meetings regularly,
7. Identify and participate in key projects that strengthen the community and Council's commitment to inclusion and access. [OBJ]

4. Frequency of Meetings

The Inclusive Communities Reference Group will meet twice per year at a date and time that is suitable for members.

If the Reference Group is unable to meet at the scheduled time, the meeting will be rescheduled to a date as close as possible to the original date.

Additional meetings may be required and scheduled as projects, and planning consultations arise through Council or other government collaboration requests. Conversations via email or Microsoft Teams are also options to be considered if needed.

5. Membership

The membership of the Inclusive Communities Reference Group shall comprise of:

- Up to eight (8) community representatives that have an interest or expertise in community inclusion including:
 - People with disability
 - Older people
 - Young people (aged 15 - 24 yrs);
 - Family members, carers, and guardians of people with disability and older people

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - Australian South Sea Islander people
 - LGBTQIA+
 - Culturally and linguistically diverse
- up to five (5) representatives from relevant government and non-government agencies that have a role in providing community inclusion services, and/or support.
 - staff representatives, primarily from the Mackay Regional Council's Community Services team.

The Reference Group membership will be renewed every 12-18 months to provide the opportunity for other interested members of the community to join.

A member's appointment may be ended based on 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); or
- failure to respect the protocols and confidentiality requirements (set out below).

6. Quorum

The Reference Group does not require a quorum to hold a meeting. The Councils supporting Community Development Officer shall use their discretion to determine if any item on the agenda should be deferred to a future meeting if it is considered there are insufficient members at the meeting

7. Voting

The Reference Group has an advisory role only. Its recommendations are made by consensus, and no recommendation is deemed to be a decision of the Council.

8. 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.

9. Agenda

The agenda shall be set by the Council Community Development Officer supporting the Inclusive Communities Reference Group and include enough detail to enable matters to be considered at the meeting.

It shall be distributed at least five days before the meeting.

10. Minutes and Reporting

- Minutes will be taken for all meetings of the Reference Group and distributed to all members.
- Minutes of the meeting shall be recorded in the Council information management database. [OBJ]

11. Related Policies & Documents

- a) Mackay Regional Councils Inclusive Community Action Plan 2023-2027
- b) Human Rights Act
- c) Expression of Interest
- d) Disability Discrimination Act 1991