

Terms of Reference – Status of Women Advisory Group

1. Role

Central Coast Council has an adopted Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan that will shape all activities and projects over the next four years. Council's Advisory Groups are an important mechanism for consultation, advice and feedback to Council and staff on implementation and review of the Community Strategic Plan.

The primary role of the Status of Women Advisory Group is to provide advice to Council and staff on gender equality and the empowerment of women to improve the ways in which women on the Central Coast are able to participate and engage actively in all aspects of community and civic life. This is achieved by:

- Provide a discussion and advisory forum for women of the Central Coast Local Government Area.
- Where appropriate, advocate and provide advice to Council and staff, ensuring effective decision making on key issues impacting upon women across the Central Coast.
- Build the capacity of organisations and groups that represent local women to develop connections and networks.
- Encourage and support the community to conduct and participate in organised events and activities that provide a forum for women to voice concerns, promote local issues and solutions and celebrate achievements.
- Promote the role of women in leadership positions both within local government and in the broader community.

2. Responsibilities

The Status of Women Advisory Group will:

- Where appropriate, participate in and influence the Central Coast Council strategic planning processes to ensure objectives and actions reflect the issues affecting women.
- Identify and participate in events, activities and opportunities to bring women together both in formal and informal settings.
- Identify strategies to develop social, economic and personal leadership opportunities for women.
- Identify and promote mentoring opportunities and networks for women.
- Advocate on and raise community awareness about issues affecting women.
- Promote the important role and contributions of women in our community.
- The Advisory Group has no authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- The Advisory Group has no authority to direct Council staff.

Terms of Reference – Status of Women Advisory Group

Membership, Voting and Quorum.

Membership

Councillors:	Mayor Lisa Matthews (Chair)	Voting Member
	Councillor Chris Holstein	Voting Member
	Councillor Kyle MacGregor	Voting Member
	Councillor Doug Vincent	Voting Member
Community Members:	Sharryn Brownlee	Voting Member
	Margot Castles	Voting Member
	Danielle Habib	Voting Member
	Sally Jope	Voting Member
	Monique Tovo	Voting Member
	Sharon Walsh	Voting Member
Council Staff:	Director Community and Recreation Services or delegate	Voting Member

The term of membership will be the term of the Council.

Community members must be women who are representative of, but are not limited to, at least one of the following:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community
- Young people under the age of 25
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- People with a disability
- Local women's organisations and/ or groups

Community members will be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate on a merit basis, as a result of an Expression of Interest process.

The staff holding the following Central Coast Council positions may attend Advisory Group meetings:

- Director, Community and Recreation Services (or their delegate)
- Unit Manager, Community and Culture
- Section Manager, Community and Cultural Development
- Community Development Worker

Council officers will provide professional advice and administrative support. Employees of the Council are not subject to the direction of the Advisory Group or any members of it. Staff attendance is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Terms of Reference – Status of Women Advisory Group

Non-staff members are appointed to the Advisory Group for the remainder of the current Council term, although membership can be altered at any time by a resolution of Council.

Membership can be withdrawn by resolution of Council.

If a member misses three consecutive meetings without apology, their membership may be withdrawn and their position deemed vacant.

Casual Vacancy

Casual vacancies will be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate in accordance with the initial membership process.

Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Advisory Group will be a Councillor or a delegated staff member.

In the absence of the Chairperson, another Councillor Member of the Advisory Group, or a delegated Central Coast Council staff member shall Chair the meeting.

The Chairperson is to have precedence at the meeting and shall determine the order of proceedings, generally as set out in the Agenda.

Where the Mayor is appointed to be a delegate to an Advisory Group, it is not necessary that the Mayor be the Chairperson.

Convenor

An Advisory Group Facilitator shall be appointed by the Director Community and Recreation Services or their delegate.

The Advisory Group Facilitator shall be a staff member of Council and is responsible for co-ordinating the preparation of agendas, invitations and minutes of the Advisory Group. The Facilitator shall also be responsible for co-ordinating any presentations from guest speakers and for considering requests from members of the public to address the Committee in consultation with the Chairperson.

The Advisory Group Facilitator has the right to refuse a request from a member of the public to address the Advisory Group if it is deemed more appropriate for that person to address a formal Council meeting.

Voting

No formal voting rules apply.

As the Advisory Group has an advisory role, its recommendations are to be made by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, a vote may be taken at the request of the Chair. The vote will be carried by a majority of voting members. The meeting record will reflect this process.

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Council is the decision making body and the Advisory Group provides recommendations for consideration.

The Advisory Group may agree to allow participation in meetings through conference calls and other technology.

As no formal voting rules apply, there is no proxy voting. The Quorum for a meeting is half the non-Councillor representatives and at least two Councillors. However, the Chairperson shall use their discretion to determine if a meeting should be postponed due to insufficient members being able to attend.

3. Meetings

- Meetings are held quarterly
- The Chairperson has the authority to call additional meetings
- The agenda and meeting papers will be distributed to members at least three days prior to the meeting
- The Advisory Group shall meet at times and dates determined by consensus of the Group.
- The Advisory Group meetings will alternate between being held at the Central Coast Council Administration Building, Gosford and the Central Coast Council Civic Centre, Wyong or another venue agreed to by the Advisory Group members.
- Meetings will be recorded by the taking of minutes. The minutes are a record of agreed outcomes and do not record discussion.

4. Communications and reporting

The agendas and minutes of the Advisory Group will be stored as a permanent record of Council. All agendas and meeting records will be published on Council's website.

Where the Advisory Group recommends an action that is outside the delegation of staff to determine, a report will be provided to Council.

Staff will prepare the report that recommends that Council note the minutes of the Advisory Group. Reporting of Advisory Group recommendations to Council will be reported as Committee Recommendations without change. Staff will also provide professional commentary on the Advisory Group's recommendation where appropriate and provide a staff recommendation which may or may not align to that of the Group. The Council may, at its discretion, resolve to adopt some or all the Advisory Group's recommendations and advice.

Where the Advisory Group has not recommended an action, the minutes will be reported to Council as an Information Report only.

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5. Conduct

Members of the Advisory Group will be provided with Council's adopted Code of Conduct. Conduct of members is expected to be consistent with the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Members of the Advisory Group are not permitted to speak to the media or make representations on social media on behalf of the Advisory Group or Council unless approved by Council.

6. Cessation of Advisory Group

All member positions of the advisory group are declared vacant after every local government election.

Council may at its discretion by resolution of Council cease operation of the Advisory Group.