

Terms of Reference

Note: These Draft Terms of Reference will be deemed final when Appendix A (Cultural Protocols) has been completed and attached.

Georges River Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee

Georges River Council acknowledges the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters, and skies in the Georges River area. Council recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as an integral part of the Georges River community and values their social and cultural contributions. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live, work and meet on these lands.

Role of Advisory Committee

To provide a vital link between Georges River Council (Council) and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, respecting their right to self-determination and community empowerment.

It is envisaged that the Committee will include the voices of Bidjigal Traditional Custodians, Elders, young people, community workers and residents who will raise and provide guidance on issues important to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Georges River area.

The Committee will provide Council with direction and advice on a range of strategic matters, emerging opportunities, and projects undertaken by Council and other stakeholders.

Objectives

- To increase awareness of and respect for local cultural protocols that should be adhered to when developing and implementing Council initiatives.
- To provide advice and input on the development and implementation of Council's programs, policies, services and facilities that relate to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



- To provide a forum for raising issues of concern and recommendations to Council on the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at a local level in the Georges River area.
- To advance reconciliation between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Council, and the wider community.
- To enhance community awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, heritage and history.
- To drive better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including access, equity and the goals and priorities of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- To maintain and enhance positive working relationships between Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Membership

Membership shall consist of 6 to 12 voting members and 3 Council Staff who are non-voting members.

Membership is open to Bidjigal Traditional Custodians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Georges River, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have other connections to Georges River such as a historical connection or who work in the Georges River Council local government area (LGA). There will also be representation from Council on the Committee.

Membership shall be sought by Expression of Interest (EOI) which will request that applicants describe their community background, including any relevant experience living or working in the Georges River Council LGA. Applicants will also be required to outline why they wish to become a member and to identify any important issues they believe the Committee should seek to address.

Membership roles within the Committee shall include:

- Chairperson: An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person as nominated by members
- Deputy Chairperson: An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person as nominated by members
- Minute Taker: A Council Administration Assistant
- Bidjigal Traditional Custodians
- Georges River Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers/community workers
- An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth representative
- An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Elders representative
- A representative from Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy Working Group (management level)
- Council's Social Justice Project Officer



Period of membership

Members of the Committee will be appointed for a term of two years. Membership is voluntary and is limited to no more than two consecutive terms, at Council's discretion.

An EOI for membership will be sought every two years when the fixed term of the Committee comes to an end or at any time when a Committee position becomes vacant.

Responsibilities of members

- To attend and participate in an orientation workshop which will include information about the role of the Committee, the role and responsibilities of members and Council, Council's Code of Conduct and other related policies and protocols.
- To attend and contribute to the ideas and concerns related to the agenda at meetings of the Committee.
- To provide advice and recommendations to Council on meeting agenda items.
- To report back to their communities about the issues discussed and decisions made by the Committee and provide community feedback to the Committee.

If members are absent for 3 consecutive meetings without an apology and there has been no response from the member regarding their continued involvement in the Committee, the position will be declared vacant, and this will be recorded in the minutes of the corresponding meeting.

A Committee member may resign at any time by providing written notice to Council's Social Justice Project Officer.

Managing Conflicts of interest

There is the potential for a conflict of interest situation to arise if a member has a personal interest in a matter that is being discussed and decided upon at a Committee meeting. For example, if a Committee member could influence a decision that would in any way benefit them, their relative, friend, or an organisation they own, work for, or are on the Board of, then that member is in a potential conflict of interest situation. In that case, the member must:

- let the Committee know that they have a personal interest in the matter being discussed; and
- step away from the meeting while the matter is being discussed and voted upon.

It must be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting that a conflict was declared by that member and that the member was not present for discussion nor voting on the relevant matter.



Meeting procedures

Meetings will be held on a monthly basis with provision to review the meeting occurrence at the appropriate time.

- A quorum consists of a minimum 4 or half the voting membership plus one. Where there is no quorum, an informal meeting may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairperson for that meeting, however no actions or recommendations may be made at an informal meeting.
- If a quorum is lacking at a meeting and a prompt decision is required, a resolution can be achieved through a circular motion (group email). Nonetheless, it is crucial that, even with this alternative decision-making approach, a quorum continues to be a necessary condition.
- Members may send a delegate to attend in their place if they are unable to attend a meeting. As a courtesy, members should notify Council's Social Justice Project Officer and the Committee Chairperson of the name of their delegate at least one hour prior to the relevant meeting.
- The agenda and meeting documents will be circulated to the Committee at least one week prior to the meeting.
- A Council Administration Assistant will provide secretariat to the meeting, including minute taking.
- The recommendations of each meeting will be submitted to the Georges River Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group.
- Meetings may be held at any Georges River Council premises or venue, with the option to attend online.

Appendix A – Cultural Protocols

Note: The development of Cultural Protocols to be led by Bidjigal Traditional Owners.

Featured artwork

Community by Aunty Annette Webb.

Annette Webb is a proud Dughetti woman born in Sydney. Her artwork descends from her Ancestors overlooking the land, lakes and rivers to protect and honour the traditional way of life today.

