



Colac Otway
SHIRE

COUNCIL POLICY

Council Policy Title:	Community Reference Group Policy and Guidelines
Council Policy ref. no:	18.11
Responsible Department:	Corporate and Community Services
Date of adoption/review:	24 July 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

For certain projects, Community Reference Groups are required to be established to advise Council on the particular project.

For other projects it may be more appropriate to have a focus group made up of key stakeholders who have an extensive knowledge and background of the various issues to be considered as part of the project. The members of the Focus Group would be appointed by Council.

A Community Reference Group is a vital part of Council's efforts to engage the public in the process of having input.

A Community Reference Group is appropriate when there is a general rather than a special area of interest.

A Community Reference Group is appropriate where there are a range of broad community issues to consider rather than technical issues where specific expertise is required. In these cases a technical reference group would be appropriate.

2. POLICY

2.1 Community Reference Group – Terms of Reference

Prior to the formation of a Community Reference Group a Terms of Reference is to be developed and approved by Council.

A standard Terms of Reference is attached which is to be adapted to the particular project (Appendix 1).

2.2 Membership

The membership of the Community Reference Group will be made up of:

Category One

Three (3) members of the Colac Otway Shire Council including but not limited to:

1. A Councillor (appointed by Council) (this membership will automatically take on the Chairperson role);
2. The Mayor or an alternate Councillor if there is a Conflict of Interest or lack of availability; and
3. The General Manager responsible for the project or their nominee.

A Council officer will be nominated to act as secretariat (preparation of agendas and minute taking) for the Group, but will not be a Group member.

From time to time Council officers with specialist skills and knowledge will be invited to attend the Group's meeting to provide specific advice or information.

Category Two

Up to ten (10) members of the general community with appropriate skills and/or interest, obtained by way of a written Expression of Interest.

(a) Appointment of Community Members

Community members will be selected by Council based on nominations from interested members of the Colac Otway Shire community following advertisements seeking Expressions of Interest.

Following receipt of Expressions of Interest, the Council representatives on the Group will be involved in the selection of the appropriate community representatives for recommendation to Council.

In determining representation, the Council representatives will have regard to broad community representation relevant to the issues involved.

Where possible a geographic mix of representatives will be appointed to ensure a balanced prospective across the town or locality involved.

Councillors will be briefed on the selection of representatives in a confidential briefing prior to the preparation of a report.

A report to formalise the Community Reference Group members to be presented to Council following the selection process.

3 APPENDICES

Appendix A – A standard Terms of Reference which is to be adapted to the particular project.

Appendix B - A standard Expression of Interest as a community member form which is to be adapted to the particular project.

ADOPTED/AMENDMENT OF POLICY

Policy Review Date	Reason for Amendment
27 July 2011	Adopted by Council
24 July 2013	Review



..... **COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP (CRG)**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

TheReference Group is formed by the Colac Otway Shire Council.

Background to the project/reference group

2. Purpose

The aim of the Community Reference Group is to disseminate information and provide community input on issues of relevance and concern relating to.....

The CRG does not have the power to direct any Council officer to undertake any work.

3. Term of Reference Group

The term of the Reference Group will be determined by the length of the particular project.

4. Role of Community Members of CRG

The main function of the community members of theCRG is to identify and communicate issues and concerns with respect toand act as a conduit to local businesses and community for the dissemination of information raised at the CRG meetings.

The CRG is not a decision making group. The aim of the CRG is to represent a diversity of viewpoints and community views. It is not a requirement that consensus be reached among members on the issues discussed.

Other Responsibilities:

- Active and regular participation in CRG meetings
- Have an ability to look beyond personal interests
- Demonstrate ability to represent community interest and provide feedback to the community and networks
- Bring knowledge and experience
- Allow all CRG members to present their views
- Demonstrate respect and consideration of other members opinions.

5. GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 TheCRG shall consist of community members that have an interest inincluding resident interest groups and businesses etc.
- 5.2 Membership shall be by invitation based on an Expression of Interest.
- 5.3 Others may be considered to participate in the CRG subject to approval by the Colac Otway Shire and the CRG.

6. CRG MEMBERS

Members agree to the following principles which are important to the successful functioning of the CRG:

- respect the right and views of other members;
- participate in the forum;
- agree to bring to the CRG meetings and disseminate relevant information from the CRG meetings accurately and in good faith to the group they represent; and
- agree to maintain any reasonable confidentiality requirements as advised by Colac Otway Shire (eg. matters of a commercial in-confidence nature).

If a member believes he or she may have a conflict of interest in relation to a particular issue or item of discussion, the member should immediately make this clear to the other CRG members and the independent chairperson and may be excluded from the discussion on this issue.

7. MEDIA

If a member of the CRG is approached by the media, speak only on their own behalf and not discuss comments or opinions made by other members of the CRG without the other member's fore knowledge and consent; and all comments to the media being made on behalf of the CRG to be through a spokesperson, mutually agreed to by the CRG.

8. QUORUM

A quorum will be half the CRG members plus one.

9. CONVENOR/CHAIR

The CRG will be chaired by a Councillor representative and will ensure that the group operates in an effective manner within the Terms of Reference.

10. MEETING ADMINISTRATION

- The CRG agenda with attached items will be distributed at least one week prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- Items not on the agenda may be raised under 'Other Business'.
- Meeting records will be prepared by a Council officer and distributed within two weeks of meeting date.

11. CRG MEETINGS

11.1 The frequency and dates of meeting will be determined by the Council representatives in consultation with the CRG members.

11.2 Meeting location will normally be held at COPACC or other locations as determined in consultation between the Council representatives and CRG members.

12. BREACHES OF PROTOCOL

Should members of the CRG not comply with the CRG principles or continually disrupt meetings or disrespect the rights of the other members to participate, the CRG member may be asked by Council to resign from the CRG, or have their membership terminated.



Colac Otway
SHIRE

..... **COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP**

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
AS A COMMUNITY MEMBER**

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Business) _____

Facsimile: _____

Email: _____

Professional Qualifications: _____

Current Position: _____

Previous Positions: _____

1. Current or previous experience in

2. Please outline any specialist skills that you can offer the Project.

4. Organisations/local networks of which you are a member and positions held:

5. Other relevant information (please also attach any supporting information you may wish to submit).

Enquiries should be directed to..... on (03) 5232 9400 or
email.....

Expressions of Interest should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked 'Confidential
– Colac Otway Shire Community Reference Group and posted to:

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Colac Otway Shire Council
PO Box 283
COLAC VIC 3250

or deliver to the Colac Otway Shire Office no later than

DECLARATION:

The Colac Otway Shire Council collects personal information to provide a variety of community services. The information collected in this form is used only for the purposes contemplated by the form (primary purpose) and is not passed onto third parties. In some instances however, disclosure is required by law or is necessary for the protection of persons or property. Where this occurs, Council will take every reasonable step to ensure your privacy is protected in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic). Should you need to change or access your personal details or require further information about Council's Privacy Policy contact our Privacy Officer on 5232 9400.

I, (full name) agree to comply with all relevant Colac Otway Shire policies, procedures and guidelines that are adopted by Council, if appointed to the Reference Group.

Signed..... Date

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used when selecting a group member for the Colac Otway Shire Community Reference Group.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5