

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## Community Reference Group

# Birregurra Structure Plan Review Project

January 2024

## 1. PURPOSE

The Community Reference Group (CRG) has been formed:

- to facilitate feedback and local knowledge from residents of Birregurra to help inform a review of the Birregurra Structure Plan.
- to promote awareness of the project within the broader Birregurra community

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

### 2.1 Introduction

In 2013 Council adopted the current Birregurra Structure Plan. This Plan is a critical planning document that outlines the long-term development framework for the township of Birregurra and its surrounding areas. It took into account the outcomes of a 2012 Neighbourhood Character Study and was the basis for a planning scheme amendment that introduced new planning controls across the township.

Since its adoption, various changes in the region's socio-economic, environmental, and demographic factors necessitate a comprehensive review to guide future development effectively. Council has therefore commenced a review of the 2013 Structure Plan ('the review').

### 2.2 Study Area

The Study Area for the project is focused on the Birregurra township as shown in Attachment 1. Attachment 1 shows the extent of the current settlement boundary of Birregurra. The Study Area will also include adjacent rural land surrounding the township. It will include all public land including road reserves, crown land, creeks and recreational areas within and surrounding the town.

### 2.3 Role of Structure Plans

A Structure Plan is a strategic planning document that aims to give effect to the policies and objectives set out for the use and development of land in the Planning Policy Framework in the Planning Scheme, including that land be kept available to supply the housing needs of an area for at least 15 years. It also seeks to provide effectively for changing community needs and aspirations. Structure plans provide the framework for the long-term development of a place by defining the preferred direction of future growth and by articulating how change will be managed.

Structure plans guide major changes to land use, built form, access and movement networks, and public spaces that together can achieve environmental, social and economic outcomes for a place.

A structure plan also provides the framework for statutory planning controls that can be implemented through the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

## **2.4 Birregurra and the Birregurra Structure Plan 2013**

Birregurra is a compact town and has a strong focus on its traditional main street which accommodates a range of small scale local commercial and community uses. Birregurra is a self-contained community in relation to local community facilities with a primary school, churches, public hall, recreation reserve, train station and other well-established community assets. The population is growing and mostly consisting of in-fill development in the town. Demand for housing has grown following the introduction of sewer. According to ABS data, the population of Birregurra at the 2021 census was 942 people (noting that the census district has been expanded at the recent census). At the same time, the town's demographic is also changing to include more younger families.

Birregurra has a community that values the qualities that the town presents and it is imperative that an appropriate fit exists between the existing character of the town and new development. A review of the 2013 structure Plan is timely, in order to ensure that it remains relevant, is responsive to community needs and to review the effectiveness of planning controls introduced through the 2013 structure plan.

Key elements of the 2013 structure plan for Birregurra were:

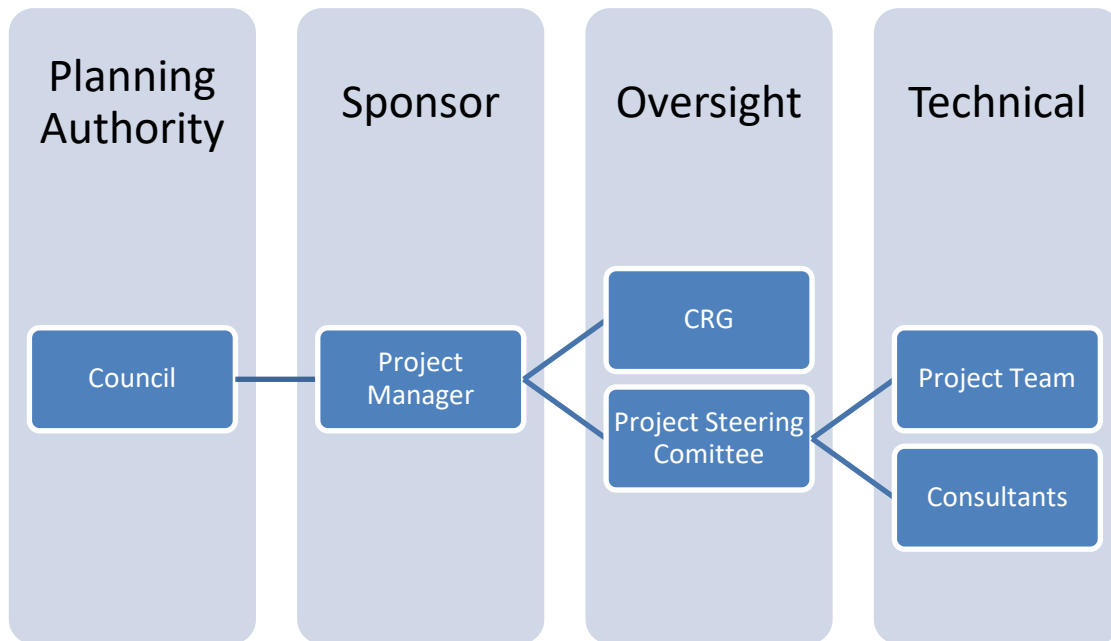
- Existing urban boundary of the town to be retained to maintain Birregurra as a compact rural town catering for modest growth relative to its size.
- Infill development within the boundaries of the existing Township Zone to be given priority and to be strongly encouraged, to make use of existing larger lots given that reticulated sewerage has been provided and to avoid the need for urban expansion (rezoning).
- No urban expansion onto 'greenfield' land to be contemplated as part of any future review of the structure plan, unless a review identifies that infill development is not occurring at a sufficient rate to accommodate the demand for new housing.
- The town centre to be consolidated and strengthened through opportunities to expand commercial uses within a contained retail area.
- Opportunity for an expanded community and health node provided for within the town centre, to cater for the growing and changing needs of the population.
- Existing industrial area to the north of town to be retained and recognised as the primary location for any industries that may seek to locate in Birregurra.

## **2.5 Timeline**

It is anticipated that the review will commence in February 2024 with an Inception Meeting with the Project Steering Group. It is expected that the project will be complete by March 2025.

## **3. OVERARCHING PROJECT GOVERNANCE**

The Community Reference Group sits within a broader project governance structure as described in the following diagram.



#### 4. MEMBERSHIP

Membership will include individuals who reflect the diversity of the Birregurra resident population defined by the demographic profile categories of age, gender, and place of residence.

The Community Reference Group will include eight to ten residents of Birregurra and should generally represent people who have their primary place of residence in Birregurra or the surrounding area.

The Community Reference Group will be recruited using an Expression of Interest process, and the membership will be endorsed by Colac Otway Shire Council.

#### 5. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the Community Reference Group is to:

- Provide feedback or commentary about matters related to the Birregurra Structure Plan review project.
- Promote awareness of the Birregurra Structure Plan review project within the broader Birregurra community.

Members of the Community Reference Group are responsible for:

- Ensuring active participation in meetings by all members through attendance and contributing to discussions.
- Reviewing relevant information or documents.
- Adhering to the Ground Rules for Behaviour, as noted below.
- Managing and reporting individual member's conflicts of interest.
- Maintaining confidentiality where required.
- Meeting as requested by the Chair, generally in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

#### Ground Rules for Community Reference Group Behaviour:

The Community Reference Group agree to the following ground rules for behaviour at all Community Reference Group meetings and workshops:

- Respect each other's right to speak without interruption.
- Be constructive when providing feedback.
- Be aware of how long and how often we speak so that all have time to contribute to a discussion.
- Make every effort to listen to each other so that we understand the various perspectives we have.
- Speak for ourselves (for example, 'I think' and 'I feel', rather than 'everyone knows' or 'you should').
- Not use personal attacks or put downs or expletives.
- Use inclusive language (that is, not racist, sexist, ageist etc).
- If appropriate, discuss whether any aspect raises a question of confidentiality.
- Arrive on time and stay to the end or negotiate special arrangements.
- Avoid interruptions from mobile phones, etc. (or agree on what level of use is acceptable).
- Expect that the facilitator (Council officer or representative) will encourage everyone to follow the guidelines.

## **6. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Prospective members of the Community Reference Group must declare any property interests within the study area, or any property interests relatives or close associates may have in the study area as part of the Expression of Interest process to recruit Community Reference Group members.

As an on-going project governance practice, Community Reference Group members must declare any conflicts of interest prior to the discussion of issues or at any time a conflict of interest, or potential conflict of interest arises. A conflict of interest may be real, potential, or perceived in nature and may refer to situations in which personal, occupational or financial consideration may affect or appear to affect the objectivity or fairness of decisions related to the defined activities. Individuals must declare potential conflicts to the Community Reference Group Chairperson and must either absent themselves from the discussion or put the decision to the collective on whether they should absent themselves.

## **7. CHAIRPERSON**

The Community Reference Group meetings will be facilitated by the Colac Otway Shire Officer and/or their consultant representative.

## **8. MEETINGS**

Four or five meetings will be on required at various milestones during the project. Meetings including dates, times and venue arrangements will be determined on the basis of what suits the Community Reference Group the best.

The purpose of the meetings will be to:

- Facilitate understanding of planning requirements and processes to inform the group's discussion
- Facilitate group discussion about the project and specific issues
- Facilitate understanding of different perspectives within the group

- Provide an opportunity to contribute ideas and feedback to inform the review of the structure plan.

Members are required to attend all meetings, or to advise the chairperson in writing that they are unable to attend the meeting at least five hours prior to the meeting occurring.

If a community member is absent from more than three meetings, their membership from the group shall be suspended.

## **9. TERM OF THE COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP**

The CRG shall operate from the time of appointment of community members by Council until the project reaches the Public Exhibition milestone, or as otherwise determined by Colac Otway Shire Council.

## **10. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTING**

The Agenda and Minutes will be kept and distributed by the Colac Otway Shire Strategic Planning Officer. The preferred method of disseminating information is by email.

## **11. CONFIDENTIALITY**

In order to ensure open and transparent communication, it is essential that all matters discussed in the Community Reference Group are considered confidential unless approved for broader release by Council.

## **12. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS**

While a purpose of the Community Reference Group is to promote the project more broadly in the Birregurra community, primary media and communications for the project shall be coordinated through Council. Community Reference Group members may not address the media directly. However, they may post material related to the project on social media that does not breach any confidentiality requirements of the project. Members should report any media requests or social media activities to the Community Reference Group.

## **13. DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Disputes arising between members of the Community Reference Group will be facilitated by the Chairperson of the Community Reference Group. If matters remain unresolved, then a separate meeting may be convened and chaired by a nominated General Manager at Colac Otway Shire Council.

## **14. OTHER ITEMS**

Where clear direction is not provided within the Terms of Reference, clarification or guidance on issues, disputes or directions will be sought from the Project Steering Committee (PCG).

**Attachment 1 – Birregurra Aerial Image showing the current Settlement Boundary**

