

Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)

Terms of Reference

Last updated: March 2025

Background

Hepburn Shire Council is committed to improve and monitor a range of community services and facilities in partnership with the community and other agencies to promote wellbeing, safety, social independence and inclusion in the community.

A Disability Access Plan (DAP) has been developed to improve access and inclusion for people with a disability in the Shire.

Purpose of the DAC

The DAC will collaborate with Council to ensure that there is a proactive two-way conversation about how to effectively implement the actions in the DAP and other Council plans, and address other access issues affecting people with disability, their family and carers.

Objectives of the DAC

To provide advice to Council on:

- future policies, plans or services that may impact people with disability
- helping to promote positive images of people with disability
- suggesting ways to advocate for better access and disability rights in the community
- supporting access to attractions and employment opportunities for people with disability

- advocating to organisations and governments for increased access for people with disability.

Roles and Responsibilities

DAC member's role is to:

- be an advocate and role model for the committee within the local community
- be willing to act as a representative and present a 'lived experience' view of people with disability to Council
- raise issues that affect people with disability within the Council
- discuss issues and concerns in a proactive manner and recommended ways forward
- attend induction and quarterly meetings and notify if unable to attend
- keep all sensitive, commercial or personal information confidential during and after their membership
- provide strategic advice, support and guidance to the committee.

Code of Conduct

DAC members agree to:

- behave in a courteous, respectful and professional manner at all times
- allow all members to speak uninterrupted
- never demonstrate any form of discrimination
- value different opinions
- disclose any potential conflicts of interest as soon as possible.

In support of the DAC, Council will:

- perform administration tasks for the committee (eg, schedule committee meetings, provide an accessible venue, arrange catering, take minutes and distribute to members)
- provide a Councillor representative to Chair the meetings, provide feedback to Council on minutes and speak to committee motions
- provide a facilitator who will invite guest speakers, draft and circulate meeting agendas and previous minutes (sent at least 7 days prior) and keep the database of members up to date
- manage the Disability Access Plan (DAP) and get progress updates from DAP 'responsible officers' twice per year
- alert DAC members of work to review (or develop new) Council policies or strategies, and invite their input
- provide supports to DAC members to attend meetings where necessary (eg, transport, sign interpreters, large print documents, hearing augmentation, carers)
- provide all written information in 'Simple English' and according to Vision Australia guidelines
- actively recruit and induct new DAC members when a vacancy occurs based on the Committee Member Criteria
- present an annual DAP progress report to Council
- formally receive motions from the DAC

Membership

The DAC will have up to 10 community representatives living or working in Hepburn Shire who have a lived experience of disability and are passionate about access, inclusion and advocacy for all people with disability.

Priority will be given to individual community members, however, up to 20% of members may be representatives of organisations supporting people with disability in Hepburn Shire.

Council will seek members by a public Expression Of Interest process. Applications will be reviewed by a panel of Council officers against the published Selection Criteria, and recommendations will be made to Council, for approval by Councillors.

Membership is for a term of 7 years.

Committee Member Criteria:

Appointment of Members to the Committee is based on the following attributes.

- Lived experience of disability.
- Knowledge, understanding and expertise in access, inclusion and advocacy for people with disability.
- Willingness and ability to fulfil the key committee roles and responsibilities.

At least one Councillor will be elected as an active Committee member.

Committee membership will be reviewed annually. If there is a vacancy mid-term, Council will seek applications by a public Expression of Interest process.

Rescinding Membership

Committee members are expected to act honestly, with respect for confidentiality, and with the best interests of the community at heart. Committee members who behave in a way that reflects poorly on the committee or Council will be removed from the committee.

The committee can recommend to Council that a membership be rescinded if that member has breached any of these terms of reference.

In extraordinary circumstances, Council may by written notice remove a member of the committee:

- for a serious breach of the Terms of Reference
- for engaging in conduct likely to bring the committee into disrepute
- because the member is unable for an extended period to contribute to the committee.

Working Group Formation

When a specific project or action arises from a Committee Meeting, committee members may form a smaller working group consisting of other community stakeholders who have a specific role to play in its delivery.

Committee members can organise these meetings at a time and location that suits all involved independently of Council, provided that the committee has granted its support.

Committee Meeting Details

Meetings

The Committee will meet at least four times per year, and more often if required.

The meeting venue will rotate across the major towns in the Shire – Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Trentham.

Meetings to be held on Mondays between 11:30am -2:30pm.

If the Councillor elected to Chair the meeting is unable to attend, then Council will provide an alternate Chair.

A quorum for meetings is 50% of current members, plus one.

The facilitator will call for agenda items 2 weeks before the scheduled meeting. Members may also raise issues under 'Other Business' if necessary and time permits, at the discretion of the Chair.

All decisions of the committee are made by consensus (i.e., all members in attendance at the meeting agree). If consensus cannot be reached, the decision is deferred until the next meeting to allow extra time for further research or discussion.

A guest speaker may be invited to each meeting, with members asked to suggest future speakers.

Agenda items to include:

- Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians
- Attendance list (members present and any apologies)
- Minutes of previous meeting
- Actions arising from previous meeting
- Guest speaker information and topic
- Individual DAC member reports
- DAP progress updates
- General Business
- Next meeting details

Public Communications

Any promotions or communications published by external providers must be approved by the Committee prior to engagement and publication.

Further Details

If a Committee member is not present at three consecutive meetings, their membership may be considered and reviewed by the committee.

If a committee member wishes to discontinue their membership, the member must notify Council in writing. No notice period is required, however the member must provide Council with a detailed update on current actions/priorities, and any supporting information of relevance.

If a conflict or dispute occurs between members, the involved parties and appropriate council officers will meet at a suitable time to resolve the issue.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

Next review is due by November 2025.