

GENERAL TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE BALLINA SHIRE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE



Preamble

The development of an Aboriginal Community Committee for the shire is in recognition of a desire for culturally sensitive protocols to engage Aboriginal people. This notion is advocated and supported by policies developed by agencies representing all three spheres of government – Federal, State and Local. Advocacy for establishing Aboriginal protocols stems from the globally recognised social justice principle that Indigenous/Aboriginal peoples/cultures have an inherent right to be recognised as having a unique place in the societies in which they exist, given they are Indigenous, or 'First' peoples.

This recognition is seen as being central to the wellbeing of Indigenous/Aboriginal societies and cultures. From this recognition stems the broadly accepted responsibility that governments, and other institutions, conduct their business in a manner that is inclusive of Indigenous/Aboriginal peoples, by ensuring mechanisms that encourage the participation of Indigenous people in community/democracy are culturally appropriate.

Purpose

The Ballina Shire Aboriginal Community Committee (BSACC) will provide constructive advice to Council on matters that involve, or potentially impact, the shire's Aboriginal residents, to assist the Council in its decision making function and/or delivery of services. The Committee will also work towards fostering a positive working relationship between the shire's Aboriginal community, the Council itself and Council staff, and within Council's existing resource capacity and strategic goals and policies.

Objectives of the BSACC

The BSACC will provide advice and/or recommendations to the Council on:

1. Relevant strategic plans and/or policies;
2. Informing Aboriginal community representatives about the role and function of Council;
3. Raising awareness of the shire's Aboriginal culture and heritage;
4. Management and promotion of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the shire;
5. Service delivery to Aboriginal community representatives; and
6. Partnership projects between the shire's Aboriginal community and Council.

Membership of the BSACC

Membership of the BSACC seeks to be representative of the broad profile of the shire's Aboriginal community. Members must reside within the Ballina Shire, be of a minimum age of 18 years, and be willing to work collaboratively and constructively with other BSACC representatives, Councillors and Council staff. Membership of the Committee and participation at Committee meetings is undertaken in an honorary capacity.

Aboriginal Community Representation

Membership of the Committee may include representatives of nominated Aboriginal community organisations, other interested groups or individuals identified through an Expression of Interest (Eoi) process. Following the determination of the Committee's organisation/group representation, each group (where relevant) will be asked to nominate two representatives, with one representative at any time attending Committee meetings as a voting representative. The second, an alternative delegate, is to be available to attend and participate in meetings when the first delegate is unable to attend. Alternative delegates may (and are encouraged to) attend meetings as observers to remain abreast of matters before the Committee.

Other Aboriginal community representatives may include young people, 18-25 years of age, and Elders.

All Aboriginal community representatives (not including those who are present at a meeting in an observer capacity) have the right to vote, where appropriate, within the committee forum. It is noted however that decisions by the Committee are more likely to be made through consensus, rather than voting.

Aboriginal Committee members will act on behalf of, and in the best interests of, the shire's Aboriginal organisations/groups and/or broader community members.

It is noted that the Committee does not have any authority to make decisions which commit Ballina Shire Council. The Committee's role is to provide guidance and advice to the Council concerning matters that are presented for its consideration, or raised by members. This role is consistent with all other Council advisory groups and committees.

Councillor representation

The Committee will also include the Mayor and two Councillors appointed by the Council.

Councillor representatives on the Committee do not have "voting rights" but are present at Committee meetings to participate in the discussion of agenda items and/or provide advice and clarification.

Composition of Ballina Shire Aboriginal Community Committee



Staff Support

Council staff, appointed by the General Manager, will serve a secretariat function and attend meetings to take Minutes and administer the operation of the Committee.

The attendance of other relevant Council staff to discuss and/or provide advice on agenda items of a specialised nature may also occur periodically.

Meetings and Administration

Meetings are proposed at two month intervals and will be held in the Council's Customer Service Centre. In the case where development applications or other matters require Aboriginal consultation and cannot be addressed in a timely manner at two month intervals, an extra meeting of the Committee to discuss these matters may be called at the discretion of the General Manager.

(Frequency of meetings may also be subject to revision by the Committee/Council following the establishment of the Committee).

Agendas and Minutes of the Committee will be prepared by Council; conduct at meetings will be in accordance with Council's adopted *Code of Meeting Practice and Code of Conduct* policies.

Minutes from BSACC meetings will be distributed by the Council's General Manager to action.

The Role of Chairperson

Committee meetings will be chaired by an Aboriginal Committee representative determined by the members.

