

# CITY OF BELMONT

## Advisory Group Guidelines

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*Creating opportunities*



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### **Alternative Formats**

This document is available on the City of Belmont website and can be requested in alternative formats including electronic format by email, in hardcopy both in large and standard print. For further information, please contact the Community Development team on (08) 9477 7219. For language assistance please contact TIS (Translating and Interpreting Service) on 131 450.

## 1. Definitions

**Council** means the Council of the local government

**local government** means the City of Belmont

## 2. Membership

**2.1** Individuals who would like to become a member of an advisory group are required to complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) form and send the form to the local government via email or post.

**2.2** The Expression of Interest should demonstrate:

- A connection to the local government community;
- An ability to add value to discussions, advice and recommendations through relevant experience, knowledge or skills; and
- An interest in the aims and objectives of the advisory group/panel.

**2.3** Members can resign from the group/panel at any time. Members are requested to submit their intention to resign in writing via email or letter.

**2.4** Ex-Officio members have the right to relinquish their role at a time to be mutually agreed by both parties.

## 3. Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of members will be:

- Understand the group's/panel's purpose, aims and objectives.
- Give due consideration to all matters contained in the business papers presently before the meeting.
- Participation in working groups of the group/panel when required as directed by the Chairperson.
- Contribute to the groups/panels deliberations in a professional manner.
- To act on behalf of the group/panel and the people of Belmont and set aside any personal views.

The Chair will have the following duties and responsibilities in addition to those for members:

- Effective chairing of the Advisory Group meetings, ensuring recommendations reached are consensual and the views of lay and expert members are fully taken into account when providing advice.
- Drawing out member views and ensuring a balanced, fair and reasoned conclusion, with clear ability to balance different views.
- Developing effective and ongoing relationships with key stakeholders, where relevant.
- Serving as a communication liaison between the City and the Advisory Group.

#### **4. Meeting Documentation**

- 4.1** Agendas will be distributed to members of the group/panel at least one (1) week prior to a scheduled meeting. Any member may request to add an item to the agenda prior to this time.
- 4.2** The Notes of each meeting will aim to be circulated no later than two (2) weeks after the meeting to members of the group/panel with any relevant documentation as discussed and agreed at the meeting.
- 4.3** Any additional items for discussion raised at the meeting will be discussed under "Other Business" at the discretion of the Chairperson.

#### **5. Guest Speakers**

- 5.1** Individuals, other local government staff and organisations can be invited to attend a meeting to present on any relevant issues and discussions associated with the aims and objectives of the Group/Panel.
- 5.2** The Chairperson must be advised in advance of additional members attending meetings.
- 5.3** Meetings are not a public forum.
- 5.4** Elected Members who are not a Member of the Advisory Group may attend as Guests only to observe, unless otherwise approved by the Chairperson.

#### **6. Proxy Members**

- 6.1** Proxy Members only attend in the absence of the Advisory Group member.
- 6.2** Proxy Members can speak, ask questions and vote, if required.

#### **7. Cancellation or additional meetings**

- 7.1** Members will be given appropriate notice if a meeting is cancelled or postponed.
- 7.2** Additional meetings can be called by members as business dictates, in which case members will be given appropriate notice.

#### **8. Attendance**

- 8.1** Members are required to contact the local government and advise the relevant local government Administration Officer in the event they cannot attend a meeting.
- 8.2** If a member is absent for three (3) meetings consecutively without an apology or other contact made with the local government, their membership of the group will be terminated and they will be informed in writing of the termination of membership.

## 9. Support

Community members that require support to attend meetings can contact the relevant Officer at the local government to discuss options.

## 10. Media

All media requests must be forwarded to the local government's Manager Marketing and Communications for review and appropriate processing.

## 11. Code of Conduct

Members of the Advisory Group who are not elected members or Officers of the City are expected to act in a professional and responsible manner and comply with the Code of Conduct as set out in the City of Belmont Volunteer Handbook and below:

- Abide by the policies, procedures and values of the City of Belmont.
- Follow the directions of the City of Belmont's staff.
- Perform your duties impartially and in the best interests of the City of Belmont.
- Maintain confidentiality and not disclose or discuss client information or issues with anyone other than the City of Belmont staff.
- Not take illegal drugs or consume alcohol whilst on duty.
- No gifts whatsoever to be accepted.
- Act in good faith (i.e. honestly, for the proper purpose, and without exceeding their powers) in the interests of the City of Belmont and the community.
- Refrain from any conduct, in the performance of the voluntary duties, which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment.

Above all, Members are expected to observe high standards of honesty and integrity, avoid conduct which may suggest any departure from these standards and at all times represent and promote the interests of the City of Belmont.

## 12. Conflicts of Interest

Members are to ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict or incompatibility between the impartial fulfilment of their duties and personal interest and those interests of immediate family members, business partners or close associates and must declare any such conflict of interest in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* and associated Regulations.

A disclosure of interest form is to be completed and submitted to the Chairperson as soon as the member is aware of a conflict of interest.

## **12.1 Impartiality Interests**

Impartiality is a matter of personal responsibility and integrity and the onus for disclosure is placed on the Advisory Group member.

An impartiality conflict of interest exists if:

- For any reason a member is unable to objectively assess or objectively represent the Advisory Group for the public interest in any matter before the Advisory Group; or
- A member has an interest based on the fact that a party involved in a matter of concern to the Advisory Group is a member of his or her immediate family.

If during the course of a meeting, a member becomes aware that s/he has a conflict of interest, the member shall immediately advise the Chairperson of the meeting. The Member is to state if the conflict of interest will or will not affect their impartiality. If the member declares that it will not affect their impartiality then they are entitled to either stay or depart for that item of the meeting. Should the Member determine that it will affect their impartiality, then they are to leave the meeting whilst the matter of conflict is being considered. The minutes of the meeting shall record the Members declaration and whether they took part in discussion or decision making.

## **12.2 Financial Interests**

Disclosure of a Financial Interest is a matter of personal responsibility and integrity. The onus for disclosure is placed on the Advisory Group member.

A conflict of interest - Financial exists if a member has a direct or indirect financial interest in any matter before the Advisory Group.

Members shall at all times refrain from any attempt to influence the decision making of the matter in question. If during the course of a meeting, a member becomes aware that s/he has a conflict of interest, the member shall immediately advise the Chairperson of the meeting and withdraw from the meeting room. The minutes of the meeting shall record that the member withdrew from the meeting and that the member took no part in the discussion or decision making.

If the Chairperson becomes aware that a member has failed to declare a possible conflict of interest, it is the responsibility of the Chairperson to ensure that the member understands their obligations to disclose interests.

## **13. Confidentiality**

Members will treat all meetings and associated meeting documentation as confidential and will not disclose or permit the same to be disclosed to a third party, other than Council and local government Officers.