

## **8.6. External Committees and Reference Groups**

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**ATTACHMENTS:** Nil

### **PURPOSE:**

This report provides the opportunity for Council to review the Reference and Working Groups (with external members) facilitated by Council and determine Councillor representation considered appropriate on these groups and on other external bodies. This report is in response to Mayoral Minute MM06: External Committees and Reference Groups, adopted by Council on 28 September 2020.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

At its meeting on 28 September 2020, Council considered Mayoral Minute MM06: External Committees and Reference Groups and resolved:

*1. THAT a report be presented to the next Council meeting summarising and reviewing all external committees and reference groups facilitated by North Sydney Council.*

Council holds positions on or participates in external groups or committees. This review or audit is primarily concerned with the Reference Groups and Working Groups (with external members) and their numbers of meetings held from 2018 (after the 2017 election), as indicator of demand/interest/participation, as well as the need to fill any current vacancies.

The following external bodies, not facilitated by Council, would still require Council to nominate representatives:

- Northern Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) - The Mayor, 1 Councillor representative and 2 alternates;
- Shorelink Committee (Library Network) - 1 Councillor representative and 1 alternate;
- North Sydney Innovation Network – 1 Councillor representative and 1 staff representative; and
- Sydney Coastal Councils Group - 2 Councillor representatives.

Reference and Working Groups (facilitated by Council) with external members that require the appointment of Chair are:

- Environment Reference Group;
- Sport and Recreation Reference Group;
- Sustainable Transport Reference Group; and
- Waverton Peninsula Working Group.

The following Reference Group and Working Group have not held any meetings since October/November 2014 and will not be recommended to be re-constituted:

- Community Services Reference Group; and
- Educational Institutions Working Group.

Statutory-related Committees or other bodies with external members (Audit Review and Improvement Committee-ARIC, the Traffic Committee and the Northern Sydney Legal Planning Panel) have their prescribed procedures for review and process for membership appointment. They are not subject to this report.

The Committees, Reference and Working Groups structure will be reviewed after the 2021 election, for the new term of Council. The Precincts Committee system is currently undergoing a review.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Nil.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. THAT** Council review its Committee, Reference and Working Group structure within the first year of the new term of Council, following the September election 2021.
- 2. THAT** Council's three Reference Groups, with the exception of the Community Services Reference Group, be confirmed until the end of the review following the September 2021 election.
- 3. THAT** Council's Working Group, with the exception of the Educational Institutions Working Group, be confirmed until the end of the review following the September 2021 election.
- 4. THAT** Council maintain existing citizen membership and external bodies membership of the confirmed Reference Groups and Working Group until the end of the review following the September 2021 election.
- 5. THAT** all elected Councillors remain ex officio members of the confirmed Reference Groups and Working Group.
- 6. THAT** Council determine the Chair of each of the confirmed Reference and Working Group.
- 7. THAT** Council agree that the Community Services Reference Group and the Educational Institutions Working Group will not be re-constituted, noting that they have

not been operational since late 2014 and also noting Council's online engagement programs could address such issues and engage the community in a different form, if required in the future.

**8. THAT** Council appoint representatives to the following external bodies:

- a. Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) – The Mayor, 1 Councillor representative and 2 Councillor alternates.
- b. Shorelink Committee (Library Network) – 1 Councillor representative and 1 Councillor alternate.
- c. North Sydney Innovation Network (NSIN) – 1 Councillor representative and 1 staff representative
- d. Sydney Coastal Councils Group – 2 Councillor representatives.

**9. THAT** Council write to the external bodies to inform them of Council's representatives for 2020/21.

## **LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

### **5. Our Civic Leadership**

#### **5.1 Council leads the strategic direction of North Sydney**

## **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting on 28 September 2020, Council considered Mayoral Minute MM06 - External Committees and Reference Groups and resolved:

- 1. THAT a report be presented to the next Council meeting summarising and reviewing all external committees and reference groups facilitated by North Sydney Council.*

After the 2017 elections, Council considered two reports at its first meeting on 9 October, to reconstitute the Council Committees and Reference Groups and appointment of Council representatives on external bodies.

Council facilitates a range of Reference and Working Groups involving Councillors and external representatives as part of its engagement strategy. These groups and their Charters (terms of reference) are established as part of Council's overall governance and engagement strategy at the beginning of each term of Council.

The Charter for each Committee, Reference Group or Working Group is available from Council's website.

All Committees (including Council's internal standing committees of Governance and Finance and Legal and Planning), Streetscapes Committees, Reference and Working Groups, their Charters and whether they continue to meet their purpose are reviewed after each election, for the new term of Council. The Precincts Committee system is currently undergoing a review.

Aside from the statutory-related Committees and other bodies with external members (ARIC, Traffic Committee and the Northern Sydney Legal Planning Panel), which have their prescribed procedures for review and appointment, it is timely to review those other groups with external members and facilitated by Council, namely, the Reference and Working Groups, to ensure their number and operations remain to meet their purpose.

This review addresses Council resolution and Mayoral Minute (MM06) with regard to external Committees, Reference Groups and Working Groups facilitated by North Sydney Council, with an audit of the numbers of meetings held from 2018 after the

2017 election (as an indicator of demand/interest/participation), as well as the need to fill any vacancies.

## **CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Community engagement is not required.

## **DETAIL**

The Charter for each Reference Group or Working Group is available from Council's website.

### **Reference Groups**

Reference Groups are an important part of Council's community engagement framework. Four Reference Groups have been established to assist in the conduct of Council business. Citizen members may join Reference Groups. Membership is comprised of individuals and representatives of community groups and organisations operating in North Sydney.

Reference Groups are reconstituted in September each year according to their Charter. They do not have powers to bind Council.

#### *1. Community Services Reference Group:*

Deals with community and cultural service issues in Centres, childcare, Stanton Library, and arts/historical services/collections.

From the Charter:

#### *Aims*

- To consider all matters relating to community development, services and facilities in the North Sydney local government area with a view to identifying and monitoring community need and advising Council as to fair and equitable distribution of resources aimed at meeting that need with particular emphasis on disadvantaged groups.
- To engage citizen members in contributing local values and perspectives on social development programs and social capital objectives.
- To enable Council to meet its objectives under its various policies and plans including the Community Strategic Plan.

*Scope - the functions shall include but not be limited to:*

- Aged care;

- Arts and cultural services;
- Childcare services;
- Community centres;
- Community housing;
- Community information;
- Community services;
- Community transport;
- Historical services and collections;
- Library services;
- Social Planning; and
- Young people.

## *2. Environment Reference Group:*

Deals with a range of environmental sustainability issues.

From the Charter:

### *Aims*

- To provide a better environment for those who live, work, study and visit the North Sydney local government area, through the development of effective, sustainable environmental policies and programs.
- To enable Council to meet its objectives under its various policies and plans including the Community Strategic Plan and Local Environment Plans.

### *Scope - the functions shall include but not be limited to:*

- Providing a recognised forum to achieve better co-ordination, integration and implementation of Council's policies with a sustainability focus;
- Improving awareness and information sharing across Council departments and the community regarding sustainability issues;
- Identifying policy initiatives and actions and to include these in Council's Management Plans, with particular reference to the Reference Group; and
- Monitoring the implementation of the Council's Companion Animals Management Plan.

## *3. Sport and Recreation Reference Group*

Assists Council to provide sporting and recreational facilities.

From the Charter:

### *Aims*

- To give residents, representatives from sporting clubs/associations, schools, personal trainers and industry experts the opportunity to provide advice and feedback to Council on matters relevant to sport and recreation in the North

Sydney local government area.

- To assist Council to provide sporting and recreational facilities, infrastructure and services which best meet the sometimes varying and often competing needs of users, both now and in the future.

*Scope - the functions shall include but not be limited to:*

- sport and recreation planning and policy development;
- strategic program reviews;
- facilitation of partnerships, community and user participation programs; and
- provision of support to specific project working groups established by Council from time to time.

#### *4. Sustainable Transport Reference Group*

To improve sustainable transport options, and pedestrian and cyclist safety.

From the Charter:

*Aims*

- To promote public, active and alternative transport modes to reduce the reliance on private vehicle use in and through the North Sydney local government area.
- To consider sustainable transport options in the context of North Sydney's status as a key access point to the Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- To provide a forum to consider alternative sustainable transport options.
- To work with the Police, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), public transport authorities, local stakeholder groups (including but not limited to pedestrian and bicycle groups) and Council, to facilitate a collaborative approach to improving sustainable transport facilities and promoting sustainable transport options at a community/local level.
- To assist with the development of sustainable transport strategies that encourages the use of public and alternative modes of transport.

*Scope - the functions shall include but not be limited to:*

- Input into Council's strategic plans, specifically with respect to sustainable transport;
- Consideration and discussion of improvements to facilities and networks for a variety of sustainable transport options; and
- Input into the design of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and networks.

From their respective Charters, the four Reference Groups have the following in common:

*Quorum*

- The quorum is four participants - including at least three citizen members.

- The designated Councillor as elected by the Council will chair the Reference Group. In the absence of the elected Councillor, another Councillor will chair the Reference Group. In the absence of a Councillor the senior Council officer present shall take the chair.

#### *Membership*

- All elected Councillors shall be ex officio members of all Reference Groups.
- There is no limit to the number of Citizen Members. Citizen Member eligibility includes:
  - a) individuals - North Sydney residents; and
  - b) representatives from community organisations/groups working with the community in North Sydney, with a maximum of two representatives from any one group.
- All members shall have equal voting rights.

Sustainable Transport Reference Group has the additional membership of:

- Representatives from the NSW Police Service, the RMS and the local State Member of Parliament (for the location of the issue to be voted upon) shall be members of the Reference Group.

## **Working Groups**

In addition to its various Committees and Reference Groups, Council also has two Working Groups, set up for specific purposes to address Council and community matters. Recommendations are put to the next available Council meeting. They meet on an as-needed basis.

Working Groups are not a committee constituted under the *Local Government Act 1993*, and they exercise no delegated functions of Council, have no decision making functions, public duties or powers.

Working Groups are reconstituted in September each year according to their Charter.

### *1. The Educational Institutions Working Group:*

To discuss the impacts of increasing population densities and large infrastructure projects on schools and educational institutions within the North Sydney Local Government area.

From the Charter:

#### *Aims*

- To foster greater communication and cooperation between North Sydney Council and educational institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary - both public and private) in the North Sydney local government area.
- To enable Council to meet its objectives under its various policies and



plans, including the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan.

*Scope - The functions shall include but not be limited to:*

- establish voluntary communication protocols for any works or development undertaken under the SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007 by the educational institutions;
- explore opportunities for the use of land owned by each of the parties for educational purposes and for community uses after hours; and
- address transport and pedestrian issues around educational institutions.

*Quorum*

- The quorum is four (4) participants - including at least three (3) citizen members.
- The designated Councillor as elected by the Council will chair the Working Group. In the absence of the elected Councillor, another Councillor will chair the Working Group. In the absence of a Councillor the senior Council Officer present shall take the chair.

*Membership*

- All elected Councillors of Council shall be ex-officio members of all Working Groups.
- Participation is open to representatives (i.e. citizen members) from both public and private primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions in the North Sydney local government area.
- Citizen Members - Up to three citizen members per school/institution, consisting of:
  - a) One staff/professional representative;
  - b) One parents or citizen representative; and
  - c) One student representative from years 11 or 12.
- All Working Group members shall have equal voting rights.
- Citizen members will be determined by advertising, calling for expressions of interest for the positions in the local media and on Council's website. Representatives will be selected on the basis of their stated experiences/skills/interest of relevance to the Working Group.

## *2. The Waverton Peninsula Working Group*

To consult with key stakeholders and to make recommendations pertaining to the ex-industrial sites on the Waverton Peninsula including sites managed by North Sydney Council and the State Government.

Membership of the Waverton Peninsula Working Group is by invitation only and meetings are not open to the public.

From the Charter:

*Aim*

- To consult with key stakeholders to make recommendations pertaining to public sites on the Waverton Peninsula managed by North Sydney Council and the State Government.

*Scope* - include but not be limited to consideration and discussion of public sites on the Waverton Peninsula managed by North Sydney Council and the State Government. The objective is to assist with achieving a collaborative and coordinated approach in guiding quality planning outcomes for the Waverton Peninsula through:

- Providing an opportunity for consultation, coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders in delivering appropriate planning proposals for the Peninsula; and
- Monitoring progress of development against agreed strategies, planning controls and principles.

*Quorum*

- The quorum is five (5) participants.
- The Mayor will chair the Working Group or, in the absence of the Mayor, another Councillor. In the absence of a Councillor the senior Council Officer present shall take the Chair.

*Membership*

- All elected Councillors shall be ex-officio members of all Working Groups.
- Participation is also open to Council staff, Roads and Maritime Services representatives, State Property Authority representatives, NSW Heritage Office representatives, local Members of Parliament, Waverton Precinct Committee representatives as well as other interested parties as invited.
- Working Group meetings are not open to the general public.
- All participants attending a Working Group meeting shall register their name on the attendance list provided at the meeting.

The following observations are noted with respect to some differences in the Charter for the Waverton Peninsula Working Group compared to the Charter for the other Working Group (and Reference Groups).

*Quorum:*

- 5 participants (the quorum for the other Group/s is 4 participants – with at least 3 citizen members).
- The Mayor to chair the Waverton Peninsula Working Group or in the absence of the Mayor, another Councillor. In the absence of a Councillor the senior Council Officer present shall take the Chair. (The other Group/s: The designated Councillor as elected by the Council will chair the Working

Group. In the absence of the elected Councillor, another Councillor will chair the Working Group. In the absence of a Councillor the senior Council Officer present shall take the chair.)

*Membership:*

- The meetings of the Waverton Peninsula Working Group are not open to the general public. (The other Charter/s do not have this precise provision. The other Charter/s also provide: All Working Group members shall have equal voting rights. The Waverton Peninsula Working Group's Charter is silent on the voting rights).
- Membership of the Waverton Peninsula Working Group is by invitation. (The other Group/s: Citizen members will be determined by advertising, calling for expressions of interest for the positions in the local media and on Council's website. Representatives will be selected on the basis of their stated experiences/skills/interest of relevance to the Working Group.)

### **Review - Audit of Reference Groups and Working Groups**

All Committees (including Council standing committees of Governance and Finance and Legal and Planning), Streetscapes Committees, and the statutory-related Committees (ARIC, Traffic Committee), are reviewed after each election, for the new term of Council.

This review outlines in Table 1 below, an audit of the numbers of meetings and attendances from 2018 (after the 2017 election year) as an indicator of demand/needs and level of interest/participation, of the Reference and Working Groups.

With the exception of the Community Services Reference Group and the Educational Institutions Working Group, the other Reference Groups and Working Group have held a number of meetings since 2018 (after the 2017 election).

Each of the Charter for the Reference Group provides for:

- Four meetings will be held per year.

Table 1 shows the three active Reference Groups have not met 4 times a year to date (from 2018), although a level of interest or commitment has been demonstrated by having a quorum at each of the meeting.

The following observations are noted:

- The Community Services Reference Group has not held a meeting since November 2014.
- The Educational Institutions Working Group has not held a meeting since October 2014.
- Waverton Peninsula Working Group did not hold any meeting in 2019 and has held

only one meeting recently, on 22 September this year.

- The Environment Reference Group did not hold any meeting this year due to the pandemic and its November meeting has also been cancelled.
- The Sustainable Transport Reference Group has not held a meeting this year due to the pandemic but it has a scheduled meeting on 16 November.

Council to, therefore, give consideration to the proposal that the Community Services Reference Group and the Educational Institutions Working Group are not required to be re-constituted since they are no longer in operation and have not provided a function since late 2014. There has not been a demonstrated need nor active community interest in these two Groups over the past 6 years.

Any issues or interests that emerge in the future relevant to the role of the former Community Services Reference Group or the Educational Institutions Working Group could be addressed through the innovative form of online community engagement programs such as the new online panels program or online information sessions, reported to Council at its meeting of 28 September 2020.

**Table 1:** Reference and Working Groups - Number of Meetings Held during 2018 to 2020

Reference Groups	2018	2019	2020	Meetings postponed without quorum	Comment
Community Services Reference Group	0	0	0		Last met November 2014
Environment Reference Group	2	2	No meetings COVID-19	-----	November 2020 meeting cancelled
Sport & Recreation Reference Group	2	3	1	-----	Meet 4 x a year, adopted by Council (24 June 2019). Next meeting 10 November 2020
Sustainable Transport Reference Group	1	2	No meeting COVID-19	-----	Next meeting 16 November 2020
Working Groups	2018	2019	2020		Comment
Educational Institutions Working Group	0	0	0		Last met October 2014
Waverton Peninsula Working Group	2	0	1		Meeting held 22 September 2020

The Charters for the Reference Groups all provide that:

- Citizen members will be determined annually by advertising, calling for expressions of interest for the positions in the local media and on Council's website.

Representatives will be selected on the basis of their stated experiences/skills/interest of relevance to the Reference Group.

Given the Reference Groups, Working Groups, and Committees will be reviewed for the new term after the September local government election in 2021, consideration be given by Council to retain the current citizen members and external members until after the review in 2021.

### **Council Determination of Chair for Reference and Working Groups**

This report proposes that both the Community Services Reference Group and the Educational Institutions Working Group are no longer required. They have not been in operation since 2014. New online engagement programs in community engagement and community information (as previously reported to Council) could be utilised if such interests or issues should emerge in the future in relation to community services or educational institutions.

Council determination of the Chair is required for the following remaining Reference and Working Groups to be confirmed (other than the Community Services Reference Group and the Educational Institutions Working Group).

Current appointments to Council Reference Groups and Working Groups are as follows.

**Table 2: Current Chair for Reference Groups and Working Groups**

<b>Reference Group</b>	<b>Current Chair</b>
1. Community Services Reference Group  <i>Current Proposal: not to re-constituted. This Group has not met since November 2014.</i>	Councillor Barbour
2. Environment Reference Group	Councillor Drummond
3. Sport and Recreation Reference Group	Councillor Brodie and Councillor Keen (Co-Chairs)
4. Sustainable Transport Reference Group	Councillor Baker
<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Current Chair</b>
1. Educational Institutions Working Group  <i>Current Proposal: not to be re-constituted. This Group has not met since October 2014.</i>	Councillor Keen
2. Waverton Peninsula Working Group	Councillor Baker

## **Councillor Appointments to External Bodies (not facilitated by Council)**

### **(1) Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC)**

The current Councillor delegates to the **Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC)** consist of the Mayor and one councillor to represent North Sydney Council (among a total of 8 member councils in the Northern Sydney region), with 2 other councillors as alternate delegates. NSROC assists member local councils to come together voluntarily to collaborate and advocate on key strategic, regional issues and projects to generate benefits for their communities and for the region as a whole.

### **(2) Shorelink Committee (Library Network)**

Representatives on the **Shorelink Committee (Library Network)** serve with Council's Director Community and Library Services.

### **(3) North Sydney Innovation Network (NSIN)**

NSIN was established by Trent Zimmerman, Federal Member for North Sydney in 2016. The NSIN has two 'levels' - 1) the Steering Committee, of which Councillor Gunning and the Director City Strategy were Council's appointed representatives'; and 2) the 'on-the-ground' information sharing, networking and events (known as 'meet ups') and projects. It seeks to involve in its activities, all North Sydney businesses that are in start-up/fast growth stage and/or focused on innovation/disruptions in their sector. Traditionally these businesses would be categorised as digital/online business or classed as Information and Communications technologies (ICT) organisations, however the NSIN supports all businesses that support the code values of innovation and accelerated growth in North Sydney.

### **(4) Sydney Coastal Councils Group**

**Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG)** was established in 1989 to promote collaboration between Member Councils on environmental issues relating to the sustainable management of the urban coastal and estuarine environment. The Group consists of 9 Councils adjacent to Sydney marine and estuarine environments and associated waterways and represents nearly 1.3 million Sydneysiders.

**Council endorsement of appointment is required for representation to the following 4 external bodies:**

#### **(1) Northern Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC):**

The Mayor, 1 Councillor representative and 2 Councillor alternates

#### **(2) Shorelink Committee (Library Network) :**

1 Councillor representative and 1 Councillor alternate

#### **(3) North Sydney Innovation Network (NSIN):**

1 Councillor representative and 1 staff representative

**(4) Sydney Coastal Councils Group:**  
2 Councillor representatives

**Table 3: Current Appointments to External Bodies**

External Body	Currently Appointed
Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC)	The Mayor and Councillor Brodie (representatives) Two Alternates: Councillors Barbour and Keen <i>Appointed 24 September 2018</i>
Shorelink Committee (Library Network)	Councillor Barbour (representative) <b>and 1 Councillor alternate (vacant)</b>
North Sydney Innovation Network (NSIN)	Councillor Gunning (1 Councillor representative) and Joseph Hill, Director City Strategy (1 Council staff representative)
Sydney Coastal Councils Group	Peter Massey, Council staff – Manager Environmental Services  <b>2 Councillor representatives (vacant)</b>