



murray river
council

Terms of Reference

Access and Inclusion
Advisory
Committee

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1. BACKGROUND

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 says that people with disability must be treated well and be included in our community. All local councils and NSW Government clusters have disability inclusion action plans which put the principles of the Disability Inclusion Plan into practice. The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025 provides a whole of government strategy. The plan has four focus areas that sets out how the NSW Government will improve the lives of people with disability.

The focus areas are:

1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

2. ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC) is to provide feedback, advice and guidance to Council on matters relevant to the needs of people with a disability, their carers and families. To provide ongoing assistance to Council to help ensure that disability rights are integrated into the core business of Council.

The AIAC, composed of Council staff and community members, will provide and assist council with lived experience advice on projects and future planning works. The AIAC will be informed about the progress of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and make recommendations as needed, to assist Council in delivering the Plan. The AIAC will bring to the attention of Council any issues, or concerns, or ideas for improved outcomes within the community.

The Committee has a purely advisory role.

3. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

The Committee will comprise of:

- ▶ A maximum of 4 Community members (preference for a representative from each ward, if possible)
- ▶ A maximum of 2 Council staff from different areas across Council
- ▶ 1 Councillor

3.1 Members

Members will be representatives from:

- ▶ local residents with lived experience of disability, or who work, or volunteer in the disability sector.
- ▶ council staff from different departments across Council who have volunteered
- ▶ councillor as resolved at council meeting

Each member or delegate is entitled to one (1) vote. There may be non-voting members of Council staff who may provide additional information or expertise as required.

These roles are voluntary roles and will receive no financial benefit or support.

3.2 Council Officer

The Council Officer (Grants Officer) will act as the secretariat for the Committee.

The Council Officer will not have voting rights.

The Secretariat will ensure the agenda for each meeting and supporting papers are circulated, at least one (1) week before the meeting, and ensure minutes of the meetings are prepared, distributed and

maintained.

4. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee has no executive powers and represent an advisory role to Council.

The responsibilities of the Committee may be revised or expanded by Council as required.

Members of the Committee are expected to:

- ▶ Advise Council on the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and suggest changes, or updates, as required.
- ▶ Recommend ways to make it easier to navigate Council owned buildings, infrastructure and services.
- ▶ Advise Council on ways its services, public programs and events can be made more inclusive and accessible and make recommendations where necessary.
- ▶ Advise Council on the accessibility of its communication activities (e.g. publications, website, social media etc) and make recommendations as necessary.
- ▶ Provide information to Council on issues relating to people with a disability.
- ▶ Give recommendations to Council that will benefit people with disabilities.
- ▶ Provide information and recommendations to Council on ways to improve universal access and inclusion for people with disability in the Murray River Council area.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Term

The Committee shall operate for the duration of the DIAP (2 years) until 2026.

5.2 Meetings

The Committee will meet bi-monthly.

5.3 Venue

The location will be at Murray River Council Chambers and time of the meetings will be determined by the Committee once formed.

5.4 Attendance at meetings and quorums

A quorum will consist of a majority of voting members.

Members may attend meetings in person, by telephone or by video conference.

Council will provide administrative assistance to the Committee through the Council Officer.

5.5 Agenda

The Council Officer is responsible for preparation and circulation of meeting agendas and minutes.

5.6 Minutes

Minutes of meetings will be recorded, prepared and circulated by the Council Officer or their delegate.

The minutes will be circulated to all members as a draft seeking comment /amendment within ten (10)

business days following the meeting.

5.7 Decision making

Members must follow Council's Code of Conduct Policy in their decision-making, including but not limited to, provisions concerning conflict of interests, gifts and benefits, and general conduct.

The Committee will strive for decisions based on agreement.

When agreement cannot be reached, a decision will be made by a majority vote. Where the vote is equal, the Council Officer will have the deciding vote. A decision supported by a majority of the votes at a meeting with a quorum of members, is a decision of the Committee.

5.8 Dissolution of the Committee

Council at its discretion may dissolve the Committee, including:

- ▶ At the completion of the DIAP term, or
- ▶ If in Council opinion, the Committee is not fulfilling the role and purpose for which it was established.
- ▶ If the Committee is dissolved, all records must be returned to Council immediately following the dissolution.

5.9 Financial Management

The AIAC is an advisory Committee of Council only and will not hold or manage funds.

5.10 Insurance

As members of a Committee of Council, all members when acting in their role as a member of the AIAC will be covered by Council's Public Liability/Professional Indemnity insurance cover.

This cover only applies to recognised and endorsed activities – i.e. Committee meetings.

5.11 Work Health and Safety

Council has an obligation under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Regulations 2017 to ensure that all personnel working for Council – in a paid or voluntary capacity are safe whilst undertaking their duties.

Council will endeavour to meet these obligations at all times, which includes providing an environment free from unreasonable behaviours (i.e., bullying and harassment)

5.12 Conflict of interests

Committee member, invitees and advisors must comply with the applicable provisions of Council's Code of Conduct policy in carrying out the functions as members of the Committee. It is the personal responsibility of Members to comply with the standards in the Code of Conduct policy and regularly review their personal circumstances with this in mind.

Committee members must declare any conflict of interests at the start of each meeting or before discussion of a relevant agenda item or topic. Details of any conflict of interests should be appropriately recorded.

Where members or invitees at Committee meetings are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest, it may be appropriate they be excused from Committee deliberations on the issue where the conflict of interest may exist. The final arbiter of such a decision is the chairperson of the Committee.

Council may revoke Committee membership if a member fails to disclose any conflict of Interest in any matter with which the Committee is concerned and takes part in the consideration, discussion or votes on any question relating to the matter.

5.12 Confidentiality

Members of the Committee are required to maintain the integrity and security of confidential information in their possession or for which they are responsible.

6. LEGISLATION, ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

Legislation:

- ▶ Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- ▶ Local Government Act 1993
- ▶ Local Government Regulations 200
- ▶ Work Health & Safety Act 2011
- ▶ Work Health & Safety Regulations 2017
- ▶ Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994

Associated Documents:

- ▶ MRC - Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- ▶ MRC Policy – Code of Conduct Policy
- ▶ MRC Policy – Code of Meeting Practice Policy

Definitions:

Term	Definition
Council Officer	Council employee in charge of driving and reporting on the DIAP