

Environment and Sustainability Community Reference Group

Terms of Reference

Approval Body:	Environment and Sustainability Community Reference Group
Council Plan Reference:	Strategic Outcome 3: Sustainable Environment
Compulsory Review Cycle:	4 Years
Review Date:	October 2029 It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.
Responsible Department:	Sustainability and Waste
Relevant Legislation:	Local Government Act 2020 Planning and Environment Act 1987
Relevant Council Documents:	• Greening Casey • Climate Resilient Casey Plan • Casey Coastal Framework • Casey Climate Action Plan • Casey Biodiversity Strategy
Breaches:	Breaches will be dealt with under the provisions of the following: • Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Definitions

Key term	Definition
Council	means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 2020
Council officer	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
CRG	means the Environment and Sustainability Community Reference Group

1. Purpose

The Environment and Sustainability Community Reference Group (CRG) is a volunteer based group that will provide Council with guidance on environmental and sustainability matters. Drawing on the diverse perspectives of local community members, service organisations, and research institutions, the CRG will support the development and delivery of Council initiatives that promote ecological resilience and sustainable practices aligned with the following adopted strategies:

- Greening Casey 2024 - A plan for building our climate resilience and creating places people love
- Climate Resilient Casey Plan 2024
- Casey Coastal Framework 2024
- Casey Climate Action Plan 2023
- Casey Biodiversity Strategy

2. Objectives

The objectives of CRG is to:

- Provide a forum for Council, community members, experts, and stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the strategies listed in section 1.0;
- Advise Council on opportunities, risks and barriers related to implementation of the adopted environment strategies; and
- Foster community awareness and participation in environmental programs.

3. Responsibilities

The role of CRG is to:

- Review strategy update reports provided by Council to enable meaningful participation in meetings to discuss the progress of the various strategies;
- Advise on effective community engagement methods and help shape communication strategies;
- Identify emerging environmental issues or trends relevant to the local area;
- Provide local knowledge and lived experience to inform Council's decision making; and
- Support continuous improvement by suggesting innovative and practical solutions.

The role of Council is to:

- Provide timely updates on the various environment strategies;
- Share data, reports, and other relevant information to the CRG at least a week prior to scheduled meetings;
- Seek and consider advice and feedback from the CRG in decision-making; and
- Ensure transparent communication and meaningful engagement with the CRG.

4. Membership and Term of Appointment

Participation in the CRG is open to individuals who demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability. Prerequisites for involvement include relevant experience or expertise in environmental science, community engagement, sustainability policy, and/or related fields. Members are expected to actively contribute to discussions, attend scheduled meetings, and collaborate respectfully with fellow volunteers and Council representatives.

Membership shall be as follows:

- Relevant Council officers
- Up to 15 Representatives from the Casey Community and subject matter experts from relevant organisations and academic institutions.

Additional subject matter experts will be invited to provide specialist information and advice to the CRG as required. Council officers will make efforts to ensure CRG members can access, understand, and contribute feedback in a way that is appropriate, productive and respectful.

CRG members will be appointed for an initial term of 12 months. Any member may resign at any time by advising their resignation to Council in writing. Council will be responsible for appointing any person to fill such a casual vacancy for the remainder of term for the CRG.

5. Community Member Selection Process

Community representatives will be selected through an expression of interest process as advertised by Council. An assessment panel of Council officers will select community representatives to represent the CRG.

Community membership will be based on the following criteria. Members must:

- Live, work, study, or play in the City of Casey
- Have current involvement in the community and an understanding of environmental and sustainability matters
- Represent the interests of all rather than personal or narrow group/organisational interests
- Be able to exercise sound judgement and consider opposing perspectives respectfully
- Have a willingness to make an active contribution to discussion
- Have a capacity to commit to the CRG for the required duration
- Be able to work constructively as part of a team.

6. Chairperson

The position of Chairperson shall be filled by a Council officer.

7. Meetings

Unless otherwise determined the CRG shall meet on a quarterly basis with meetings of up to two hours in duration. In the circumstance that Council officers are required to call additional meetings, all members of the CRG will, where possible, be given two weeks' notice of the meeting.

Meetings of the Group are restricted to appointed members, unless otherwise determined and agreed by the Group for an appropriate reason.

8. Sub-committees and Working Groups

Membership of sub-committees and working groups is limited to members of the CRG. Sub-committee and working group meetings are not minuted. A representative of the Sub-committee or working will be required provide a report to the group at the next meeting.

9. Administration

All secretariat tasks for the Group will be undertaken by Council officers appointed by the relevant Department manager. Agendas and minutes of previous meetings will be forwarded to members at least five working days before the meeting.

10. Volunteers

All Committee members other than Council staff are volunteers.

Council's Code of Conduct for volunteers must also be complied with and a copy of the Code must be provided to all new members. Following appointment, committee members must sign a declaration that they will abide by any guidelines approved by the Chief Executive Officer to cover the conduct of volunteers, including the avoidance of conflicts of interest; and undertake training and skills development as required.

11. Conflicts of Interest

If a member has a General or Material conflict of interest (i.e. interest by close association, financial interest, conflicting duty, personal gain or loss, or future interest as stated in Section 127 and 128 of the Local Government Act 2020) regarding an item to be considered or discussed by the Group, the member must disclose this to the Chairperson if they are attending the meeting.

Once a declaration of either a direct or indirect conflict of interest has been made, the member must leave the room and remain outside until the conclusion of the relevant discussion. The time the member leaves the room and returns to the room must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

If a member of the Group nominates themselves for Council elections they must stand down from their Group position from the time of declaring the nomination until the result of the election is announced.

12. Limitations of Authority

The CRG has no authority to:

- Expend money on behalf of Council
- Commit Council to any arrangement
- Consider any matter outside these terms of reference
- Direct Council officers in the performance of their duties.

13. Publicity

All media enquiries seeking a formal position of Council should be referred to Council's Communications and Marketing Department for response at media@casey.vic.gov.au

14. Code of Conduct

All members and guests of the CRG are expected to act with integrity, objectivity, openness and honesty. In addition, members are requested to:

- agree to work within the CRG's Terms of Reference
- arrive on time and stay for the duration of meetings
- commit to attend all meetings or provide notice of non-attendance at least 2 days prior to the meeting
- respect the rights of other members to express their views, even if they are different from their own
- respect the confidentiality of items of business which the group may determine are confidential in nature
- agree to have their details published in materials relating to the CRG
- abide by the CRG's media and public speaking protocol; and
- abide by Council's Occupational Health and Safety policy

Council may terminate the membership of members who do not respect the format, scope or conduct of the Group meetings, miss more than 2 consecutive meetings or 3 meetings in a calendar year without explanation or renounce their membership.

15. Breaches

Any breaches of these terms of reference will be handled in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Staff Code of Conduct.

16. Relevant Forms

Title	Link
Community Reference Group – Member Declaration	N/A

Contact the City of Casey:

Web: casey.vic.gov.au
Email: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au
Phone: 03 9705 5200
Post: PO Box 1000, Narre Warren VIC 3805
NRS: 133 677 (for the deaf, hearing or speech impaired)

Customer Service Centres:

Narre Warren: Bunjil Place, Patrick Northeast Drive
Cranbourne: Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre
ABN: 43 320 295 742



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