Our Coastal Future Reference Group
Terms of Reference

1. Council Plan

Council is committed to collaboratively delivering its Council Plan by valuing and utilising the wealth of skills and knowledge in the community. It acknowledges that sound governance practice for local democracy is high quality, well informed, responsive, and accountable decision making in the best interests of the community.

One of Council's key strategic directions in its Council Plan is to foster an engaged and well governed City. To this end Council is committed to:

- Drawing on the expertise of the community.
- Meaningful dialogue with our constituents.
- Engaging with the community to maximise feedback to ensure open and inclusive decision making, and
- Using feedback from the community to inform Council decision making.

All decisions, made by Council or by officers under delegation, will be informed by an analysis of community views. The establishment of Reference Groups is integral to Council's Good Governance principles. Through Reference Groups Council recognises and encourages community leadership and seeks to maximise community feedback in its decision-making process.

2. Adding Value

To maximise the value of the contribution of Reference Groups, Council invites interest from residents who have:

- Passion and enthusiasm for the issues and challenges related to the purposes of the Reference Group.
- The ability to appreciate a range of interests and factors impacting on the matters under discussion.
- A demonstrated commitment to participative and consultative processes

In selecting community members Council will seek to:

- Achieve a mix of skills relevant to the purposes of the Reference Group.
- Ensure a broad representation of the Port Phillip community.
- Create a forum for full discussion of relevant matters.

3. Introduction

The City of Port Phillip Council is responsible as the Committee of Management (CoM) appointed by the Victorian State Government, for approximately 11km of marine and coastal Crown land and freehold public land bordering the length of its shoreline. Possessing a land area of 20.58 sq km, the Port Phillip municipality is highly urbanised, low lying and prone to the increasing severity of frequent flooding, with 68% of the area less than three metres above sea level. The study area for both plans span from Sandridge Beach in Port Melbourne to Elwood Beach in Elwood.

4. Project

'Our Coastal Future' program will see the introduction of an updated Foreshore Management Plan (FMP) and new Coastal Adaptation Plan (CAP). The FMP will focus on the entire length of Council's foreshore Crown land and adjacent public open space areas. The CAP will cover all land types across the entire municipality, incorporating both private freehold and Crown lands.

This current program seeks to review and update the 2012 FMP and introduce the first four of seven stages towards the development of a Coastal Adaptation Plan, with both projects to provide ongoing long-term management direction. Council is the delegated Committee of Management for the foreshore Crown land reserves and other assets across the municipality that will need to adapt to coastal climate impacts.

5. Purpose

The City of Port Phillip Council is committed as CoM to fulfil its delegated responsibilities and seeks to encourage community participation by establishing a Coastal Reference Group to represent the ideals and address the concerns of the community.

The purpose of the Our Coastal Future Reference Group is to assist Council by providing feedback in relation to the updated Foreshore Management Plan and new Coastal Adaptation Plan.

The Group will provide advice and feedback on:

- The principles and values for the management of the foreshore and coast.
- The development of management and adaptation plans for the foreshore and coast.

In providing input and advice, the Group will ensure:

- Council's desired outcomes and any limitations, including budget constraints, are ascertained, and documented.
- The views of each of the stakeholders are known and given full consideration.
- The views of the community, community groups and government agencies are expressed and considered during the development of the plans.
- The plan designs comply with the desired outcomes and limitations.
- The outcomes consider all relevant strategies and policies as illustrated below on page 6.
- The relationship of the Foreshore Management Plan and Coastal Adaptation Plan to other Council and State policies and strategies.

6. Group Structure

Council will establish and maintain the Our Coastal Future Reference Group for three (3) years or until such time as the Reference Group completes its work. The Reference Group will then disband at the completion of the FMP and CAP Stages 1-4, namely when the FMP is adopted by Council in 2027.

Council appreciates that the Reference Group may evolve and adapt to remain functional and relevant.

The Reference Group will comprise an appropriate membership to facilitate its functioning and the achievement of its purposes. The composition of the Group will be as follows:

- Delegates from Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Delegate from Parks Victoria
- Delegate from Melbourne Water
- Delegate from Life Saving Victoria
- Delegate from Department of Transport and Planning (VicRoads, VicPorts)
- Delegate from City of Bayside
- Delegate from City of Melbourne
- Delegate from Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Community members (3)
- Representatives (3) from foreshore related: community clubs and group; community environmental group and trader
- Council Officer as chair/convenor.

Port Phillip Councillors and subject matter experts will be invited as guests to attend workshops or field tours.

In consultation with the Group Council may co-opt members to the Group, or any sub-group established by the Group in consultation with the Group.

7. Opportunities for New Members

If a member:

- Resigns from the Reference Group;
- Fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without providing apologies to the Chairperson, and accepted by the Group;
- Is removed from the Group by Council (after consultation with the Group) for not acting in accordance with the principles stated herein; or
- Was appointed to represent an external organisation but no longer represents that external organisation,

then a replacement Group member may be appointed.

During the life of the Reference Group, Council may choose to increase the membership of the Group.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

8. Meetings

The first meeting of the Reference Group will be convened by the Chairperson at the earliest opportunity. Meetings should be scheduled in advance and desirably recorded in a forward meeting program to give each member the best possible opportunity to participate.

It is anticipated that the Group will meet 2-3 times a year for the duration of the plans at St Kilda Town Hall, St Kilda, unless alternate locations are proposed (including online or on-site with field tours).

The quorum for a meeting will be half the number of members plus one.

9. Decision Making

All decisions, made by Council or by officers under delegation, will be informed by an analysis of community views. The establishment of Reference Groups is integral to Council's Good Governance principles. Through Reference Groups Council recognises and encourages community leadership and seeks to maximise community feedback in its decision-making process.

- For the Reference Group to pass recommendations, more than 50% of attending members must be in favour.
- Items of mixed views will be communicated to Council for consideration.
- The Reference Group have no Council delegated decision-making power.
- The Reference Group advice will be referred to Council for Councillor consideration.

10. Social Media and Communications

Members must not make any public comment or statement that would lead anyone to believe that they represent Council or expressing Councils views or policies.

Council will seek stakeholder and community feedback in variety of formats to ensure a range of stakeholder and public views contribute to inform the development of the strategic plans.

11. Conduct Principles

Group members are expected to:

- Actively participate in Group discussions and offer their opinions and views
- Treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, rights and responsibilities of others including but not limited to other members, Councillors and Council Officers
- Act with integrity
- Attend each meeting where practical, and
- Avoid conflicts of interest and the releasing of confidential information.

12. Group Operation

New Groups will be briefed on the expected range of work to be undertaken, including discussion of how the Group relates to the work of Council, the roles of all parties, and any relevant policy or legislative framework impacting on the work.

The Reference Group is to operate at all times in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The Group has no delegated powers but may provide advice in line with the Terms of Reference. Neither the Group, nor its members, may speak on behalf of Council.

13. Renumeration

Normally no remuneration will be paid to Reference Group members, however Council may decide to reimburse Group members for some out-of-pocket expenses.

14. Declaration of Interests

If a member believes they have a conflict of interest in a matter before the Reference Group, then that member must declare their interest and not partake in any discussion or decision on the matter. The declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. A person nominated or appointed by Council to a Reference Group may have a conflict of interest if they have a personal or private interest that might compromise their ability to act in the public interest.

15. Resourcing

City of Port Phillip staff nominated by management will support the Reference Group. Other Port Phillip staff will attend the meetings to assist the Group as required.

The nominated Council officer will prepare agenda papers for meetings (with the agreement of the Chairperson). Agendas and supporting material will be circulated three clear working days prior to meetings to ensure a reasonable opportunity to read the meeting papers. At all times, the nominated Council officer remains under the direction of their General Manager.

16. Feedback to Council

The business conducted at each meeting will be recorded in the minutes and copies of the minutes will be distributed to Reference Group members, Councillors, and the Council's executive team. Council may request a formal report from the Group.

17. Communication

Council officers are responsible for ensuring that Reference Group members are advised of:

- Progress or outcomes of any feedback provided by the Reference Group
- Dates of Council meetings considering matters relevant to the work of the Reference Group
- Any Council report or Council decision relevant to the Reference Group's work.

18. Terms of Reference Group

The Terms of Reference and membership of the Reference Group expire with the reporting of the finalised plans to Council for adoption.

