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# Community Access and Inclusion Advisory Group

## Terms of Reference

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### ***Purpose of the Group:***

The Community Access and Inclusion Advisory Group exists to help Sorell Council remove barriers to participation and ensure people who are often under-represented in decision-making can help shape local outcomes.

The group brings lived experience into Council planning and decision-making by asking:

- Who may be missing from this conversation?
- Who is most affected by this issue?
- What barriers exist to participation?
- What practical improvements would make the biggest difference locally?

The Advisory Group supports the strategic priorities of Sorell Council, including:

- Social Strategy priorities
- Health and Wellbeing outcomes
- Arts and Culture initiatives
- Community Engagement Strategy

Advice from the Advisory Group will help ensure these priorities are inclusive and accessible for all members of the community.

### ***Role of the Group:***

The Access and Inclusion Advisory Group's role is to provide advice and guidance to Sorell Council on matters related to improving access, inclusion, and participation for all community members with a particular focus on people with disabilities, older adults, and other marginalised or disadvantaged groups, including LGBTQIA+, Aboriginals and culturally and linguistically diverse community members.

The Group will support Council commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable community where all individuals can access services, facilities, and opportunities regardless of their ability.

- Advocate for and promote accessibility and inclusion in relevant community projects, programs, services, and events.
- Identify barriers and recommend solutions regarding access and inclusion.
- Provide feedback on Council policies, procedures, and infrastructure projects to ensure they align with best practices in accessibility and inclusion.



- Ensure lived experience perspectives inform Council planning, programs and infrastructure decisions at an early stage.
- Foster collaboration between Council, community members, and stakeholders to enhance community awareness and understanding of inclusion and accessibility.

### **Membership:**

To support inclusive decision-making across our community, Council will aim to achieve a balanced membership that reflects diverse community perspectives, including:

- People with lived experience of disability
- Carers and family members of people with disabilities
- Older residents
- Young people
- Culturally and linguistically diverse community members
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- LGBTQIA+ community members
- Residents from rural and outer areas of the municipality.

*The committee will be made up of the following:*

- Two Sorell Council Elected Members, one of whom will be chair
- Sorell Council Community Development Coordinator (and a proxy)
- Up to five representatives from the disability services sector
- Up to five community representatives

*Community members will be selected based on:*

- Lived experience or demonstrated expertise in access and inclusion.
- Knowledge of barriers affecting marginalised groups in the community.
- A commitment to fostering an inclusive community.

*Community Representatives Nomination Process:*

- Sorell Council will publicly advertise vacancies.
- Interested individuals must complete a nomination form, outlining their experience, skills, and reasons for applying.
- Nominations will be reviewed, by a selection panel comprising relevant Sorell Council elected member and officers and Mission Australia NDIS Partners in the Community representative.
- Sorell Council will appoint 50% of inaugural members for a two-year term and 50% will be appointed for a three-year term. Members may be re-appointed at the end of their terms for one extra two-year term.
- Members may renominate at the end of their term by providing notice to Advisory Group Chairperson.
- If a vacancy arises mid-term, Council may appoint a new member from previous applicants or reopen the nomination process.



## **Responsibilities:**

### *Elected Member/s*

- Chair meetings of the Advisory Group.
- Advocate for access and inclusion within Council deliberations.
- Provide updates on Council initiatives and decisions related to access and inclusion.

### *Community Development Coordinator (or Council proxy)*

- Provide administrative and technical support.
- Facilitate the implementation of recommendations where appropriate.
- Providing onboarding information for new members.
- Ensuring accessible meeting formats.
- Providing meeting materials in clear and accessible formats.
- Facilitating respectful discussion so all members can contribute.

### *Stakeholders and Community Representatives*

- Provide informed and constructive advice to Sorell Council.
- Attend and actively participate in meetings.
- Represent the views and experiences of their communities or sectors.
- Respect confidentiality and declare any conflicts of interest.

## **Meeting Operations:**

- Advisory Group meetings will be held four times per year or as often as necessary to perform the objectives of the Advisory Group.
- Minutes: Minutes in clear and plain language will be recorded and distributed to all members within four weeks of the meeting.
- Sorell Council will provide an appropriate and accessible venue for face-to-face advisory group meetings, with options of accessible virtual platforms, and give consideration of meeting times that enable participation.
- Advisory Group has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council.
- Strategic and policy recommendations of the Advisory Group will be reported to Council for decision.
- Note parameters for the establishment of a working group as a sub-group for a specific project.
- Applicants will be required to commit to a minimum two-year term.

## **How Advice Influences Council Decisions:**

Advice from the Advisory Group will inform Council planning and decision-making through:

- Recommendations provided to relevant Council officers.
- Inclusion of advisory group insights in reports to Council.
- Feedback into Council strategies, plans and projects.
- Consideration during development of the Annual Plan and Operational Plans.



- Council officers will provide updates to the Advisory Group on how its advice has informed decisions where appropriate.

### **Code of Conduct:**

All members must agree to:

- Treat others with respect and professionalism.
- Maintain confidentiality of discussions.
- Act in the best interests of the community.

### **Conflict Resolution:**

If a conflict arises within the Group, the following process will be followed:

*Addressing the Issue Informally:*

- Members involved in the conflict are encouraged to address the issue directly and respectfully with one another to seek an informal resolution.

*Facilitation by the Chairperson:*

- If the conflict cannot be resolved informally, the Chairperson will mediate discussions between the parties to find a mutually acceptable solution.
- The Chairperson will ensure the discussion is conducted respectfully, focusing on the group's objectives.

*Escalation to an external mediator:*

- In cases where the conflict cannot be resolved through internal mediation, the issue may be escalated to an external mediator.

### **Selection Panel**

- Council Staff
- Councillor
- Mission Australia NDIS Partners in the Community staff

### **Recording of Minutes:**

- Minutes and/or actions arising will be recorded at each meeting and stored in Council's ERDMS and distributed to the Advisory Group in an agreed upon way (e.g. via email).

### **Date next planned review:**

April 2028.