



HUME CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY TASKFORCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Hume City Council has a vision to be an environmentally sustainable city.

The terms ‘environment’ and ‘environmental sustainability’ refer not only to the protection and enhancement of Hume’s precious natural environment – waterways, grasslands, woodlands, River Red Gums and the unique species of animals, birds, fish and insects they support but also people’s use of and interaction with the natural systems on which we depend. This includes our atmosphere and climate, use of resources, the generation of pollution and waste, our food, energy and transport systems. Sustainability implies all people being able to live quality lives now, without negatively impacting on the planet and the natural systems on which we depend – so that all people can enjoy quality lives in the future.

Hume City Council’s *Pathways to Sustainability Framework 2015-2019 (Pathways)* sets the strategic direction for organising Council efforts to enable the Hume community to realise its vision to achieve social, environmental and economic outcomes, connecting the community and celebrating diversity. Pathways is a key document that guides and informs Council planning, decision-making, actions and activities, strategies and policies across the whole organisation that impact on the environment.

A number of other environmental strategies and action plans sit under the *Pathways to Sustainability Framework* and identify targets, key performance indicators and actions. These include the Land and Biodiversity Plan, Integrated Water Management Plan, Greenhouse Action Plan, Climate Change Adaptation Plan and Live Green Plan. Other Council Plans and Strategies including the Council Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Open Space Strategy are also relevant to progressing environmental outcomes and sustainability across Hume City.

To help Council achieve its vision, participation by the Hume community is vital. Consultation with the community will ensure that Council moves in partnership with the community. The Hume Sustainability Taskforce (Taskforce) is an important link for Council to the community for consultation, feedback and action on environmental sustainability strategies and actions.

2. ROLES AND PURPOSE

The Taskforce provides a mechanism for the Hume community to have direct input into the implementation of Council's environmental frameworks. The Taskforce is also a forum for community members to have input to other key Council strategies, programs and activities that impact significantly on our environment and sustainability.

Objectives:

- To provide strategic guidance, input and advice to Council on environmental and sustainability issues including consultation in relation to relevant policies, strategies and programs.
- To provide communication with and direct community feedback to Council in relation to local environmental issues.
- To facilitate community action and to assist in strengthening links and partnerships between Council and the community in relation to environmental sustainability.
- To provide advice on Council's community environmental events.

Roles and Responsibilities of Taskforce members:

- Support Council in achieving its vision to create a sustainable Hume City.
- Assist Council to link to other programs in the Hume community and beyond to form effective partnerships and work collaboratively with the community.
- Assist Council to review the success of Pathways and other Council environmental and sustainability strategies and programs, and identify opportunities for improved outcomes.
- Attend/participate in Council coordinated environmental activities and events.
- Be advocates for a sustainable Hume through their actions and interactions with the community.
- Promote Council environment and sustainability programs to their networks within the Hume community.
- Contribute to the Taskforce meeting agendas.

3. TASKFORCE COMPOSITION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

a) Membership of the Taskforce will comprise of Councillor, Council staff and broad representation from the Hume community. Members will be appointed by Council and will consist of:

- Up to two Councillors (one as Chairperson)
- Two staff representatives
- Community representatives selected from – the Hume community (people who live, volunteer, work or study in Hume), environment groups, the rural sector, business and industry, developers, the education sector and social support / health and wellbeing sectors.

b) Council will be represented by:

- Councillor(s), as nominated
- Manager Sustainable Environment
- Sustainability Engagement Officer

- c) Community representatives will be sought via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process and be recommended to Council. The EOI process will include consideration of the applicant's:
 - Broad understanding of and commitment to environmental issues.
 - Commitment to regular participation.
 - Understanding of Council's role in progressing sustainability.
 - Community participation and networks
 - Representation of Hume's diverse community, geographical areas and a range of environmental interests will be sought. For continuity and knowledge sharing, current (or former) members of the Taskforce are encouraged to re-apply.
- d) Appointment to the Taskforce will be for a two year period. An annual membership renewal process will apply to half the positions on the Taskforce. This will ensure an ongoing combination of new and returning members.
- e) Members will be assessed by a selection panel consisting of a community member who is not reapplying for membership, the Manager, Sustainable Environment and a Councillor who sits on the Taskforce (nominated by Council). The panel will make recommendations for membership to Council for consideration and endorsement.
- f) Members remain on the Sustainability Taskforce at the discretion of Hume City Council. Council may change the focus, activities or intent of the Sustainability Taskforce and may alter any or all membership criteria, necessitating a change in members.
- g) Council will determine and appoint the Councillor Representative/s. Councillors are appointed for a four year term following the general election of Councillors.

4. EXPECTATIONS OF TASKFORCE MEMBERS

Members of the Taskforce are expected to agree to the following requirements:

- a) Advocate to Council and other decision makers on environmental issues.
- b) Act in a manner consistent with, and supportive of the roles, values and priorities of Hume City Council.
- c) Act in accordance with collectively agreed approaches.
- d) Advise the Taskforce in their areas of knowledge and expertise.
- e) Contribute to the Taskforce and the work of the Taskforce.
- f) Be able to meet the time and workload commitments of the Taskforce. In addition to attending meetings members are expected to read and compile input on meeting papers which may take one to two hours between meetings. Attending additional events, compiling more detailed feedback and research etc. is optional.
- g) Agree to having their email address and phone number provided on a contact list to be distributed to other Taskforce members for the purposes of advocacy and collective action. Taskforce members will not pass a member's contact details on to other parties without the consent of that member.
- h) Agree to having their photograph taken and distributed to promote the work of the Taskforce.

- i) Respect confidentiality. Some details of issues discussed in Taskforce meetings may not be appropriate for general community discussion if they are part of work in progress of Council operations.
- j) Declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the term of the Taskforce for a member or their family member/s. Members are expected to declare their conflicts of interest and remove themselves from voting on issues involving conflict.

5. CHAIRPERSON

The Taskforce will be chaired by the nominated Councillor. The role of the Chairperson is to:

- a) Liaise with the Manager Sustainable Environment to establish the meeting agenda.
- b) Chair meetings.
- c) In the instance that the Chairperson is unable to attend the meeting the other Councillor member or the Manager Sustainable Environment will assume the role of Chairperson for that meeting.

6. PUBLIC VOICE OF THE TASKFORCE

The Chairperson/Councillor representative is the person authorised to speak on behalf of the Taskforce. Such representations shall be based upon the agreed position of the Taskforce.

7. QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of not less than 50% of Taskforce members eligible to vote. Meetings can be held without a quorum present, however a quorum will be required should any matter necessitate a vote.

8. MEETINGS

- Six formal Taskforce meetings per year will be organised by Council staff, with meeting dates established at the first meeting of the calendar year.
- Meetings will be convened by the Sustainability Engagement Officer and the Chairperson.
- An agenda and minutes of the previous meeting will be forwarded to the Taskforce members at the address appearing in the register of membership at least 7 days prior to the meeting. Where possible, email will be the preferred method of distribution.
- Accidental omission of a notice or the non-receipt of a notice of a meeting shall not invalidate any meeting.
- Where voting on an issue or decision takes place, Hume City Council officers will not participate in the vote.
- Officers have responsibility to report back to the Taskforce re the status of input and advice previously provided by Taskforce members. This will usually occur in written format via the minutes or a document outlining the status of Taskforce input and recommendations.
- The holding of six formal meetings per year does not preclude additional gatherings such as working groups organised by Taskforce members (which may not be supported by Council officers) for the purposes of conducting research or making recommendations on specific topics.

9. RELATIONSHIP TO COUNCIL

The Taskforce may make recommendations to Council in an advisory capacity. For the purposes of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the Taskforce is an Advisory Committee of Council, established to provide strategic guidance, input and advice on Council's environmental framework and activities. Depending on matters to be discussed, a meeting of the Taskforce may also be an Assembly of Councillors.

10. INDUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The Sustainability Engagement Officer shall ensure that new members are provided with an induction that includes:

- The Terms of Reference
- *Pathways to Sustainability Framework 2015-2019*
- Hume Horizons 2040, the Council Plan
- Live Green and Resource newsletters (most recent editions)
- Other relevant documents

11. RESIGNATIONS

Resignations from the Taskforce shall be tendered in writing to the Chairperson through the Sustainability Engagement Officer. The vacant position will be filled in accordance with Section 3.

12. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Members may apply for leave of absence, which will be considered for approval by the Chairperson and Manager Sustainable Environment.

In the case of any member missing three meetings within any 12 month period, without leave of absence, a Council Officer will contact the member to determine their participation. If the member does not attend the next meeting following, they shall be deemed to have resigned. Confirmation of the decision will be provided in writing through the Manager Sustainable Environment.

A written apology for any meeting will serve as a request for a leave of absence.

13. PROCEDURE

- a) The Sustainability Engagement Officer will act as secretariat to the Taskforce and will take and distribute minutes to members.
- b) Following preparation of the Taskforce meeting minutes they will be made available to councillors and to the public (via the Council website).
- c) Taskforce members can list items for consideration on the agenda by contacting the Sustainability Engagement Officer.

14. REPORTING

Where a meeting of the Taskforce is an Assembly of Councillors, a written record of the meeting will be reported to the next available ordinary meeting of Council as required by Section 80A of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Where the minutes of the Taskforce make a recommendation to Council as described in Section 9 Relationship to Council , then the Sustainable Environment Officer will include the recommendation and officer commentary within the 'Receipt of Council and Community Committee Minutes and Recommendations to Council be adopted' section of the ordinary Council meetings.

At the final meeting of each calendar year a summary document and discussion of the Taskforce's achievements for the year will be presented to the group by the Sustainability Engagement Officer or Manager Sustainable Environment. An annual report will be presented to Council summarising the Taskforce's achievements over the 12 month period.

15. REVIEW

A review into the functions and Terms of Reference of the Taskforce will occur every two years, in consultation with Taskforce members.

Proposed changes to the Terms of Reference of the Taskforce will be considered by Council for approval.

Enquiries: email Sustainability Engagement Officer, email environment@hume.vic.gov.au or phone 9205 2845