

Hume Interfaith Network (HIN) Terms of Reference

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Gunung-Willam-Balluk of the Wurundjeri as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal living culture as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk and to Elders past and present.

1. Background

Hume City is home to a highly diverse community who come from more than 160 different countries, speak over 153 different languages and represent over 25 different faiths. Religious and cultural diversity is very important in Hume City as it is this diversity that characterises Hume as a great place to live and work.

Hume's faith leaders established a local network in 2001, with members belonging to a range of different faith and traditions. The aim of Hume Interfaith Network is to further develop understanding and harmony across the many faiths and cultures represented in Hume City.

Over the past 21 years Hume Interfaith Network has worked with Council and shared their knowledge and experiences in strengthening social justice, deepening mutual respect and promoting community participation and wellbeing.

In 2012 an Executive committee was established in order to provide direction to the Network and the activities it undertakes.

2. Objectives of the Hume Interfaith Network (HIN)

The Objectives of the HIN are to:

- Develop harmonious relationships between all people who live, work or practice faith in the City of Hume
- Creating peace, understanding and respect with one another's beliefs, cultures and traditions
- Foster social harmony, inclusivity and dialogue rather than promoting one religion over another or debating religious beliefs
- Provide a space to celebrate our similarities and share our differences to foster peace and goodwill

3. HIN Values

- 3.1 **Openness:** Be open to the wishes and needs of all groups of people within Hume's multicultural and multifaith community,

- 3.2. **Integrity and honesty:** Operate in a visible and transparent manner.
- 3.3. **Reliability:** Deliver action and outcomes by being structured and focused in its operations and accountable for its performance.
- 3.4. **Partnership:** Seek genuine partnership with Council and other relevant bodies to achieve outcomes for Hume

4. HIN Membership

Advisory Committee membership will consist of one Councillor and up to 13 members (excluding Council Officers as required) including:

- Up to 5 Faith leaders from different faiths;
- Up to 5 Community Leaders representing different faith or ethnic Groups;
- 2 Youth members representing different faiths
- 1 Victoria Police Representative;
- Councillor, as nominated
- One Council officer and other Council staff as required (non-voting)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Role of Advisory Committee members:

- Act in a manner consistent with the roles, values and priorities of the HIN and Hume City Council;
- Contribute to agendas and meeting topics;
- Prepare for, attend and actively participate in meetings;
- Communicate and advocate on behalf of the multifaith community;
- Respond to requests for input into and/or feedback on Council initiatives, policies and reports;
- Assist Council in applying a cultural lens to highlight potential barriers to access for community members of diverse faith;
- Notify the meeting organiser prior if unable to attend a meeting;
- Build a collaborative relationship with Council;
- Facilitate Council's engagement with the multifaith community;
- Abide by the HIN Code of Conduct (below)

5.2. Role of Councillor(s):

- Attend and participate in meetings
- To act as the liaison between the HIN and Council.

5.3. Role of Chair:

- Chair and convene meetings;
- Set agendas in collaboration with the Secretary (Council Officer)
- Guide the meeting according to the agenda and time available;

- Facilitate productive discussions;
- Act as the visible voice of the community for media enquiries and at community events;
- Assist members to abide by the roles of the HIN and code of conduct including by taking action in the case of any breaches;

5.4. Role of Secretariat

- A Hume City Council Community Development Officer will take responsibility for providing executive support to the Committee including the provision of meeting agendas and minutes;
- 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 HIN regarding the status of input and advice previously provided by HIN members. This will usually occur in written format via the minutes or a document outlining the status of HIN input and recommendations.

6. Selection process:

- Appointment to the HIN will be through an expression of interest process. Expressions of Interest (EOI) for membership will be advertised for a minimum of 14 days, through appropriate promotion in local newspapers, on Council's website and communication to places of worship and faith based community organisations and faith based community public email listings where deemed appropriate.
- A selection panel of three members comprising a faith leader, along with two Council Representatives, will consider the nominations for the Committee. The committee will assess the nominations against the selection criteria below. Where required, the committee may also conduct interviews with candidates.
- The selection panel will aim for committee members to be reflective of the diversity of the local faith communities, and to have equal gender representation.
- The Chair of the HIN will be determined by the group and may be shared between community members and a City of Hume Councillor.
- Council will determine and appoint its Councillor Representative. The Councillor will be appointed for a 12 month period.

7. Selection criteria:

Advisory Committee members will be able to demonstrate:

Essential Criteria:

- Knowledge and understanding of the needs and issues affecting faith communities (local and broader);

- An interest and involvement in local and/or broader faith based community affairs, advocacy and networks; and
- Direct links to a faith community and/or organisations.

Desirable Criteria:

- Experience and/or understanding of the role of an advisory committee; and
- An interest and/or understanding of Local Government services and programs from a faith based community perspective.

8. Terms of Appointment

- It is expected that each member attend a minimum of 60% of all meetings for each year. If a member does not attend at least 60% of meetings in a 12-month period their appointment may be terminated, unless the member has sought and obtained an approved leave of absence from the committee.
- Membership of the Committee will be for a two-year term with an opportunity for reappointment subject to recommendation by the selection panel.
- Members can serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- Members are free to resign from the HIN at any time. Previous nominations may be considered to fill the vacancy. An EOI process will be undertaken if there are no previous nominations that meet the selection criteria.

9. Relationship to existing Multicultural committees, networks and forums

- A representative from the HIN has a place on the Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG) facilitated by the Community Development Officer in Council. The MAG meets every two months and is responsible for monitoring Hume City Council's Multicultural Framework outputs.

10. Relationship to Council

- The HIN may make recommendations to Council in an advisory capacity. For the purposes of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the HIN is an Advisory Committee of Council, established to inform Council of the key issues, concerns and priorities of faith community members and to provide advice, input and feedback on Council's policies, plans and services that aim to support participation in services and programs relevant to local faith based communities.

11. Meeting Frequency and Duration

- The HIN will determine the meeting schedule. It is anticipated that meetings will be bimonthly.

12. Code of Conduct

Members will:

- Act honestly and treat others with respect;

- Exercise reasonable care and diligence;
- Where there is a requirement for confidentiality, this is to be noted in the minutes if the matter arises during a meeting, and addressed accordingly;
- Members must declare a conflict of interest in relation to any matter the working group is concerned with, which must be recorded in the minutes;
- Members **may not speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of the HIN or Council**, unless the member is a Councillor. In that case, any engagement with the media will be in accordance with Council's standard media and communications policy.
- Members are authorised to disclose general information such as objectives of the working group, membership procedures, list of activities and information in regard to any issues that have already been previously dealt with and approved in the Committee's discussions;
- Members must ensure that new issues raised by the public or community are brought back to the working group for consideration before any public information or response is provided publicly in relation to the issue;
- A quorum shall consist of 50% working group members eligible to vote, plus one, being a majority of eligible voting members. Meetings can be held without a quorum present, however a quorum will be required should any matter necessitate a vote.

13. Monitoring and reporting:

- Committee agendas will be forwarded to HIN members by email no later than one week (five working days) before a scheduled meeting.
- Minutes will be provided to members no later than two weeks (ten working days) after a scheduled meeting, including details of proceedings and clearly expressed resolutions (where applicable), and including relevant documentation as attachments where necessary.

14. Evaluation and Review:

- The operations of the HIN will be evaluated annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.
- The HIN Terms of Reference and membership will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis or as required for any significant changes.

15. Recommendations to Council and Extent of Authority:

15.1. The HIN will provide advice to Council but will not act as a Special Committee under Section 86 of the Local Government Act, and has not been delegated any powers from Council.

15.2.1 When at least one Councillor and Council Officer attends a meeting, the group will be considered an Assembly of Councillors under the Local Government Act and will be required to report to Council.

15.2.1 Where a meeting of the HIN 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*.

15.2.1 Where the minutes of the Taskforce make a recommendation to Council as described in Section 9 Relationship to Council, then the Community Development 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.

15.3. Where the Committee makes recommendations to Council, a consensus of all members present will be sought. In the absence of such consensus, and provided there is a quorum of at least half of the members (apart from other Council staff present at the meeting), the recommendation will be put to a vote with the majority recommendation being endorsed as the Committee's. In the event of a tie, the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

16. Absences and Proxy

If an Executive member has been absent for 3 consecutive meeting without notice or justifiable reason, the committee will look to review their membership.

If an Executive member is unable to attend a meeting in person they may appoint a representative from their faith or community to whom they are comfortable delegating their vote as their proxy..

17. Public Liabilities:

The HIN meetings, events and activities are covered under Hume City Council Public Liability Insurance.

Contact:

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