

Terms of Reference

Accessibility Reference Group

2021 Draft

DRAFT

1. CONSTITUTION

- 1.1. The Benalla Rural City Council (“Council”) has established an Accessibility Reference Group (“Reference Group”) to assist the Council’s ongoing work towards improving access and inclusion for people of all ages and abilities who live, work and participate in the community. The main vehicle to guide the work of the Reference Group is the *Benalla Rural City Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2017* and subsequent iterations.
- 1.2. The *Benalla Rural City Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2015 – 2017* supports the following strategic objectives in accordance with the Council Plan 2013 – 2017:

Key strategic Area 1: *Our Community*

Section 1.1: Our community is dynamic, healthy, strong, socially integrated and active. People of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are engaged in their local communities.

Section 1.1.4: Develop, review and implement the Access and Inclusion Plan.

- 1.3. The Reference Group shall comprise representatives from:
 - (a) the Council
 - (b) community members with lived experience of disability or the role of carer and,
 - (c) representatives from disability services and support groups.
- 1.4. A member with a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest in a matter before the Reference Group must declare their interest prior to group discussion of the item.
- 1.5. Members of the Reference Group will be required to act in accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct.
- 1.6. The Council has set no limit on the duration of the establishment of the Reference Group. It shall remain in existence until such time as the Council resolves to revoke its appointment.

2. OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

- 2.1. Provide advice and recommendations to the Council in regard to strategic issues regarding disability access in the local community.
- 2.2. Support and facilitate communication between the Council and the local community on disability access issues.
- 2.3. Advocate for the community on access issues raised by the community with a focus on systems advocacy.
- 2.4. Work proactively with the Council in progressing strategies to address access issues in the Benalla municipality with the Community Access and Inclusion Plan as a framework.
- 2.5. Encourage broader ownership of the Council’s Community Access and Inclusion Plan through promotion of the plan within the local community.

- 2.6. Contribute to the review and revision of the Community Access and Inclusion Plan.

3. DELEGATION

- 3.1. The Accessibility Reference Group has no delegated powers to act on behalf of Benalla Rural City Council or commit the Council to any expenditure unless resolved explicitly by the Council.

4. ACCESSIBILITY REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1. The Reference Group shall comprise the following members:
- up to two Councillors
 - up to two Council Officers, including a representative from the Community Development team
 - up to nine (9) community members with lived experience of disability or the role of carer (volunteer role)
 - up to three (3) disability service representatives (volunteer role).
- 4.2. The Reference Group may seek the involvement of additional members with interest and expertise relevant to the specific requirements of the given issue at hand.

5. TERM OF APPOINTMENT

- 5.1. Appointments to the Accessibility Reference Group will be made as follows:
- (a) community members and Council staff on a two year basis
 - (b) disability service representatives and Councillor on a one year basis.
- 5.2. A member of the Reference Group may resign his/her position at any time.
- 5.3. The Reference Group will be flexible with regards to multiple non attendances by members acknowledging the health and support needs associated with active citizen participation. In this instance, members should lodge a prior apology.
- 5.4. If any member fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Accessibility Reference Group, without indicating absence, that member shall be deemed to have resigned their position on the Accessibility Reference Group. The Council shall arrange a replacement as soon as is practical.

6. NOMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1. The Council seeks valued input and nominations from community members to achieve a diverse mix of up to seven (volunteers broadly representative across age, locality, gender with lived experience of disability or the role of carer and up to three (3) disability service representatives.
- 6.2. Nominations for recruitment of Reference Group members shall be invited through public notices in local media, social media and Council publications, and from a broad variety of networks and sources to more accurately represent those in the Benalla Rural City community with lived disabilities and/or access issues.

- 6.3. Prospective Representatives will be required to complete an expression of interest and letter outlining how they meet the criteria for membership and selection will be determined with consideration to an established skills matrix.

7. OFFICE BEARERS AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE REFERENCE GROUP

- 7.1. The Reference Group Officer Bearers include a Chairperson and Secretary.
- 7.2. The role of the Chairperson is to:
- (c) chair all meetings of the Accessibility Reference Group;
 - (d) act as official spokesperson for the Accessibility Reference Group;
 - (e) act as the liaison person between the Accessibility Reference Group and the Council.
- 7.3. If the Chairperson is unable to attend a scheduled committee meeting for any reason the committee must appoint an acting Chairperson pro tem.
- 7.4. The Reference Group may elect any Sub-Committees that it considers necessary to carry out its functions and supplement membership of these groups with suitably qualified co-opted community members.

8. REPORTING

- 8.1. The Reference Group will regularly provide reports on its activities to the Council, other advisory committees, and the broader community.

9. INSURANCES

- 9.1. The Council shall arrange and maintain a portfolio of insurance to cover all possible risks for members of the Reference Group including a Personal Accident Policy, Voluntary Workers Policy and an Indemnity Policy.
- 9.2. Committee Members must complete a Benalla Rural City Council On-Line Volunteer Application and Induction: (<https://www.benalla.vic.gov.au/FORMS-ongoing/Volunteer-Application-Form>)

10. MEETINGS OF THE REFERENCE GROUP

- 10.1. The meetings of the Accessibility Reference Group shall be conducted in a focused and respectful manner to ensure an efficient, cohesive and effective committee congress.
- 10.2. The agenda for the Accessibility Reference Group Meeting will be distributed at least one week prior to each meeting and the information format will be adjusted to meet the specific communication needs of each member.
- 10.3. Minutes of each meeting will be distributed to all members and the information format will be adjusted to meet the specific communication needs of each member.
- 10.4. The quorum of the Accessibility Reference Group will be 50% of membership plus 1. Should a quorum not be available, the meeting may proceed with agreement by all, with any outcomes from that meeting being brought to the next meeting, in which there is a quorum, for discussion or ratification.

- 10.5. Meetings will be held monthly and will then move to bimonthly as Community Access and Inclusion Projects planning proceeds.
- 10.6. Meetings will normally last no longer than 90 minutes.
- 10.7. Members are encouraged to attend all meetings of the Accessibility Reference Group.

11. REVIEW

- 11.1. The Benalla Rural City Council may carry out a review of the Accessibility Reference Group's Terms of Reference at any time, either through internal review processes or at the request of the Accessibility Reference Group.
- 11.2. The Council shall consult with the Accessibility Reference Group prior to the adoption of amendments or alterations to the Terms of Reference of the Accessibility Reference Group.