



AGENDA

PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Partnership and Participation Strategic Reference Group will be held in the Guringai Room, Civic Centre, Dee Why on

WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020

Beginning at 6:00pm for the purpose of considering matters included in this agenda.

Committee Members

Cr Sue Heins (Chair)	
Mayor Michael Regan	
Cr Kylie Ferguson	
Cr Penny Philpott	
Ina Vukic	Northside Enterprise
Antony Biasi	
John Buggy	Belrose Open Space Corridor Association
Denice Smith	
Craig Susans	
Caroline Glass-Pattison	First Nations
Myriam Conrie	
Chris Fulton	
Hannah Jamieson	
Vacant	Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches Inc

Council Officer Contacts

Melanie Gurney	Executive Manager Library Services
Andrew Grocott	Manager Community Engagement
Tamara Lukic	Governance Officer

Quorum

A majority of members including the Chair or one of the elected Councillors.

**Agenda for Partnership and Participation
Strategic Reference Group Meeting
to be held on Wednesday 5 February 2020
in the Guringai Room, Civic Centre, Dee Why
Commencing at 6:00pm**

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NEXT MEETING Wednesday 6 May 2020

1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

As a sign of respect, Northern Beaches Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands on which we gather and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Note: Steve McInnes, Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches Inc resignation.

2.0 APOLOGIES

All members are expected to attend the meetings or otherwise tender their apologies to the Chair and Governance at councilmeetings@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

3.0 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Members should disclose any "**pecuniary**" or "**non-pecuniary**" interests in matters included in the agenda. The [Northern Beaches Council Code of Conduct](#) (the Code) provides guidance on managing conflicts of interests.

A **pecuniary interest** is defined in Section 4 of the Code as:

A pecuniary interest is an interest that you have in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to you or a person referred to in clause 4.3.

A **non-pecuniary conflict of interest** is defined in Section 5 of the Code as:

A non-pecuniary conflict of interest exists where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that you could be influenced by a private interest when carrying out your official functions in relation to a matter.

If you required further information or guidance about disclosing an interest please contact Governance at councilmeetings@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

4.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP MEETING HELD 23 OCTOBER 2019

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Partnership and Participation Strategic Reference Group meeting held 23 October 2019, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

5.0 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

MEETING DATE	ACTION	STATUS
23 Oct 2019	M Gurney to follow up on question about the existence of a litter bin policy and replacement of litter bins on Pittwater Road, Sturdee Parade and Oaks Avenue in Dee Why CBD.	To be address this meeting
23 Oct 2019	Members to email J Bennett if they are able to assist with Cultural mapping by providing information about creative venues, events or organisations in the Northern Beaches.	To be address this meeting
23 Oct 2019	Members to email feedback to N Silburn about ways to engage the community in the development of the DMP.	To be address this meeting
23 Oct 2019	A Grocott to include the item Community Engagement Journey in the agenda of a future meeting.	To be address this meeting
23 Oct 2019	That the agenda for the February meeting include an item review the Partnership and Participation SRG's purpose and contributions.	To be address this meeting
23 Oct 2019	M Gurney to follow up enquiry about footpath widening in Dee Why.	To be address this meeting

6.0 AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM 6.1	VOLUNTEER POLICY
REPORTING OFFICER	MANAGER SOCIAL PLANNING AND SERVICES
TRIM FILE REF	2019/551477
ATTACHMENTS	1 Download Volunteer Policy Development

PURPOSE

To provide an overview of the Integrated Volunteer Management Project and obtain key insights from the Community & Belonging Strategic Reference Group for inclusion in the development of the Volunteer Policy.

The Volunteer Policy intends to outline Council's philosophy and roles and responsibilities regarding volunteer involvement and the principles it will embody in its management of volunteers.

BACKGROUND

Current state of volunteering within Council

Council has over 900 volunteers working in 12 Council services across the Northern Beaches community.

Environmental / Outdoors	
Bushcare (53 sites)	260
Aboriginal Heritage Office (various sites)	50
Friends of Cabbage Tree Bay	45
Community Nursery (2 sites)	20
Cemetery Gardening (2 sites)	25
Creative Space Gardening	10
Manly Environment Centre	5
Sub-total	415
Cultural / Visitor services	
Events (more than 6 per year)	150
Visitor Information Centre	30
Manly Art Gallery & Museum	20
Sub-total	200
Community Services	
Library (six libraries and Home Library Service)	230
Meals on Wheels	125
Sub-total	355
Grand total	970

Prior to 2019 all teams were using their own unique recruitment, induction, management and record keeping system, with no Volunteer Policy or overarching Framework or management.

Integrated Volunteer Management Framework

Council is developing an Integrated Volunteer Management Framework to ensure that Council volunteers are managed effectively and consistently across Council operations. The framework will align with best practice standards as outlined by Volunteering Australia in the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*.

The Integrated Volunteer Management Framework is scheduled for completion in 2020. It will consist of three key components:

1. Volunteer Policy

A Volunteer Policy is planned as a guiding document for the project. The *National Standards* identify a Volunteer Policy as an important feature to publicly declare the importance and purpose of volunteers across the organisation.

Consultation will include discussion with volunteer supervisors working party; Community & Belonging Strategic Reference Group; Partnerships & Participation Strategic Reference Group; public consultation and then proceed to Council for adoption.

2. Procedures for recruiting, inducting, managing and exiting volunteers

The procedures will be developed according to the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*, and in consultation with a working party consisting of staff volunteer supervisors. The procedures will be implemented by staff and are made up of four stages, each supported with tools to assist implementation and to ensure consistency.

1. Recruitment & Registration: role matching; position descriptions; forms; eligibility checks
2. Induction: volunteer handbook; onsite induction and checklist; role specific training and information
3. Ongoing Management and Retention: training; newsletters and information sessions; performance management; opportunities for feedback; surveys; grievance procedure; recognition and reward
4. Exiting volunteers: Exit feedback and surveys; referral to other roles if appropriate; exit letter.

3. Volunteer database software system

A centralised volunteer database will be implemented to improve data management, reporting, and access to information for effective recruitment, training and screening.

CONSULTATION

Council has formed a working group of volunteer supervisors across Council services to assist in informing the framework and Volunteer Policy. Further advice is sought from the Community & Belonging Strategic Reference Group to inform the direction of Volunteer Policy.

RECOMMENDATION OF MANAGER SOCIAL PLANNING AND SERVICES

Note the information provided and provide advice on key themes and inclusions for the Volunteer Policy.



Integrated Volunteer
Management Framework Project

Volunteer Policy Development



Volunteers within Council

Council currently has over 900 registered volunteers across 12 teams:

Service Type	No. of Volunteers
Environmental / Outdoors	415
Community Services	355
Cultural / Visitor Services	200
Total	970



Prior to 2019 all teams were using their own unique recruitment, induction, management and record keeping system, with no Volunteer Policy or overarching Framework or management.



Integrated Volunteer Management Framework – key components

An Integrated Volunteer Management Framework is under development:

1. Volunteer Policy
2. Procedures for recruiting, inducting, managing and exiting volunteers
3. Volunteer database software system



Integrated Volunteer Management Framework - Procedures

Procedures will be developed in accordance with the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* and in consultation with internal staff volunteer supervisors and staff. Procedures include 4 components:

1. Recruitment & Registration
2. Induction
3. Ongoing Management and Retention
4. Exiting volunteers



Drafting the Volunteer Policy

Policy Purpose:

The Volunteer Policy intends to outline Council's **philosophy** and **roles and responsibilities** regarding volunteer involvement and the **principles** it will embody in its management of volunteers.

What does the CSP say?

The Community Strategic Plan (Shape 2028) identifies volunteers as a key partner with council.

The vision of the Community Strategic Plan:

'A safe, inclusive and connected community that lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment.'



Group brainstorm activity (10 minutes)

What is Council's philosophy on volunteering?

Discussion Point:

What are the benefits of volunteering for the individual, Council and Northern Beaches community?



Group discussion (3 minutes)

What are Council's roles and responsibilities regarding volunteer involvement?

- To utilise volunteers to enhance the services delivered to the community
- To act as an advocate for volunteering in the broader community
- To ensure all volunteer relationships are inclusive and fulfilling
- To ensure volunteers are managed consistently across different teams

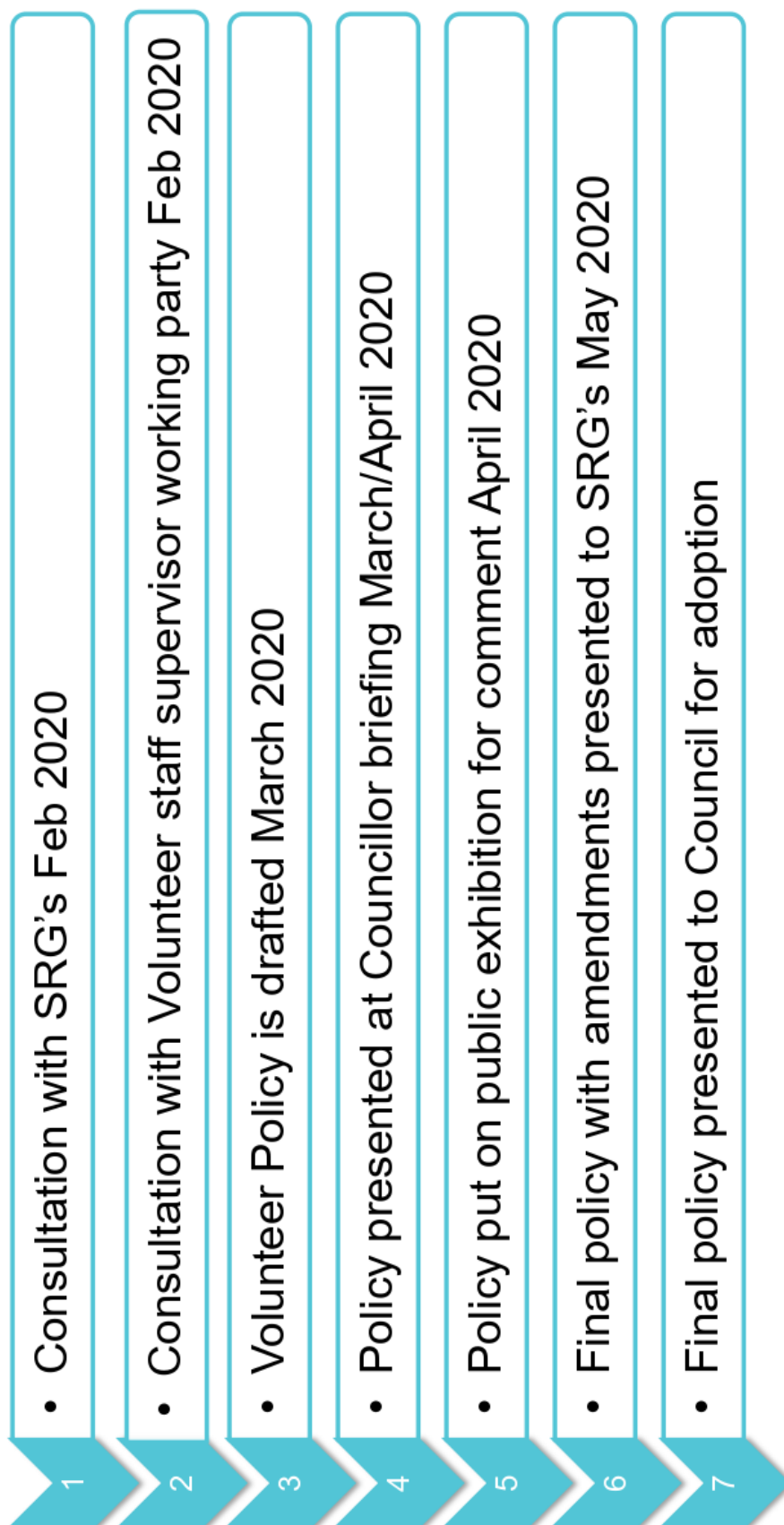


Group discussion (3 minutes)

What principles should Council embody in the management of volunteers?

- Volunteers should be involved in decision making
- Volunteers should be asked for feedback and given opportunities to suggest improvements related to their role
- Volunteers should receive rewards and recognition
- Volunteer behaviour should be managed similarly to staff

Next steps for the Volunteer Policy?



ITEM 6.2	SUGGESTED REVIEW OF PURPOSE AND PRACTICE
REPORTING OFFICER	JOHN BUGGY
TRIM FILE REF	2020/045295
ATTACHMENTS	1 ↓ Suggested Review of Purpose and Practice - Partnership & Participation SRG

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

Address and consider methods that might assist the group to make a strong contribution in its role “to work with the Council to shape policy” and in continuing to provide advice that benefits the community in line with the Council’s Strategic.

REPORT

The following topics will be addressed in presentation and workshopped:

- Community Engagement and the Scope of Participation.
- Role of SRG Members and the SRG Agenda.
- Presentations and Information.
- Issue Resolution and Follow-up.

RECOMMENDATION

That the group:

1. Note the presentation.
2. Discuss and address issues and concerns raised.
3. Propose next steps.
4. Agree on timeframe for next steps.

Partnership and Participation Strategic Reference Group

Suggested Review of Purpose and Practice

Following two years of meetings of our reference group I suggested that we should devote some time at our first meeting in 2020 to reviewing what we have done and to look at what improvements we might make to ensure that we are effective. At our last meeting I offered to provide some points that might stimulate that discussion. I note that the Council has since put out a brief survey to SRG members individually. In presenting my thoughts and suggestions below I wish to make it clear that I am implying no criticism of any individuals when making comments about practices or processes that I consider could be improved.

From the outset, the Chair expressed that the direction that this group might take would need to be clarified as it progressed. Although this was not formally addressed again, we moved into a way of operating that seemed to be in line with the two goals of Council, namely Goals 21 and 22. Our particular reference group, as I understand it, is set up to support the Council in achieving these goals under its expressed objective: "We aspire to achieve better outcomes for the community through genuine engagement and collaboration."

Community Engagement and the Scope of Participation

Goal 21 states "Our community is actively engaged in decision making processes"

There are many ways that individuals and groups can provide input into projects that the council has set up under the Community Engagement Policy and Matrix. This is an obligation on Council under the EP&A Act. Therefore, it relates to planning rather than the many other areas where the community should have a say in decision-making or in initiating action. The model could be described as "we initiate and speak to you, please respond".

Should we also be giving thought to a model that could be described as "you initiate and request and we respond"? Should the initiation of the engagement be largely one way? How can the SRG members help the Council to build community so that more groups of community members can actually engage in the processes of participation more effectively? In other words, with our experience and knowledge, how might we assist in the understanding of how strong community groups are formed to enable greater self-sufficiency? Are other SRGs addressing this aspect? If not, should it be within the ambit of our SRG?

We began our SRG by discussing what we mean by "community" then we dropped it. Should we not look at this again? Unless we have criteria regarding what constitutes a community group the Council will run the risk of ignoring genuine requests or responding inappropriately to "squeaky wheels" through political pressure or other influences.

Goal 22 states "Our Council builds and maintains strong partnerships and advocates effectively on behalf of the community".

Up to this point we have not dealt with any issues that, to my knowledge, have demanded that we look at the strategies under this goal. However, defining legitimate sub-sets of a community is important, especially if Council takes on advocacy on their behalf.

Role of SRG Members and the SRG Agenda

My understanding is that members of SRGs are chosen because they represent identified community groups or because they have particular skills that can assist with public policy and administration.

Whatever the case, my assumption is that there is an expectation that we, as members, will be able to discuss matters strategically. If not, then how are we exercising a role any different from other members of the community? When members of the community provide input, they are not expected to take into account aspects beyond their particular concern (even though they may do so). The assumption is that most would be seeking to influence something that only affects them or a particular group. Is it not true that SRG members should be providing advice that benefits the community in line with the Council's Strategic Plan or attempt to influence/adjust that plan or actions under that plan if they believe it is not achieving its purpose in some way? For example, it is strategic to discuss the need, type and distribution of recreational facilities across the region in relation to population statistics, but would the issues relating to a particular playing field be a strategic issue?

Should we not agree on the approach we should be taking so that it is clear to everyone? Then, if necessary, we can question whether some discussion can be indicated as out of order without anyone feeling embarrassed about saying so? Although, to my knowledge, this has not occurred so far, I would question whether a matter that was raised even by an interest group that only affected them should be discussed in an SRG meeting. There are other avenues within Council where such matters can be taken up.

Depending on the discussion we have regarding the above, should we have any guidelines or understanding about the issues that are placed on the SRG agenda?

Presentations and Information

Various members of Council staff have made very well-prepared presentations of policies and approaches to key areas of their responsibility. Sometimes I feel that they are so well prepared that it seems there is little more that one could say as it appears that the policy or direction has already been determined. Do we get the impression that the expectation is more akin to just seeking our approval?

Much of the information we receive prior to the meeting is in the form of PowerPoint dot points which require more information in order to achieve an understanding that enables analysis or critique. The extra information is usually provided at the meeting. However, with the presentation taking up most of the time allocated to each topic, as a member I feel I am just getting it all together and have not had time to think it through. Realising that there are probably a host of reasons why a particular approach to an issue is being taken, I often feel at the time that anything I offer is probably insufficiently informed. Am I missing how this connects with a strategy? Does anyone else feel this way?

Assuming that our role in considering the matters before us is "to work with the Council to shape policy" (as stated on the website), could we consider a few things that might help us to make a stronger contribution in the time we have available, given that there are only four meetings per year.

1. Is it possible to shape background reading distributed before the meeting in such a way that it does not require repeating in the same way at the meeting? We have to be diligent in reading it beforehand and it would save some time.

2. Could we not request that presenters illustrate how they see the particular issue or initiative fitting into the Council's Strategic Plan? In attempting to make our contribution, could we not benefit from being told what issues Council officers have struggled with or debated in coming to the conclusions they have reached?
3. Along with pre-meeting reading, could we improve our contribution if particular questions were put to us to consider before we come to the meeting? In most cases we are not able to be up to the mark in the same way as Council staff who are across the issues all the time.
4. At the conclusion of each meeting would it be beneficial to come to a consensus regarding whether we have dealt with a particular matter satisfactorily? Would it not be possible to decide at that point whether more information or discussion time is required and/or that we should schedule something for the next or subsequent meeting?
5. Is there anything else we can suggest that would help us to feel that we are in a better position to make a significant contribution?

Issue Resolution and Follow-up

There have been a few matters we have dealt with during the two years where I am not certain that we achieved a satisfactory finish to our discussions. Before we meet on the 5th of February 2020 could we not go through the list of items in those eight meetings and see if we agree?

Perhaps as a group we need to be more diligent in assisting the minute-taker to record what advice we have provided.

Should we not be asking the presenters to provide feedback on anything substantial that we have contributed? Have our suggestions been incorporated in subsequent decisions? Will we be notified of the final outcome? Of course, we cannot expect this unless we help contribute to the recording of the minutes in order that the presenters know if we have any expectations of feedback from them.

How do we evaluate our contribution? Don't we need to agree on some way of indicating our effectiveness? Perhaps this does not need to be measured in statistical terms but I feel that we do need some indicators to show that the time we and others have spent has been used well.

John Buggy

17th January, 2020