



Sustainable Hepburn
Community Reference Group and Working Groups
- Terms of Reference – November 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Hepburn Shire Council is inviting community members to nominate via Expression of Interest, to join the Sustainable Hepburn Community Reference Group to assist in the development of a new environmental sustainability strategy for the Shire, *Sustainable Hepburn*.

The Hepburn community prides itself as a leader in environmental sustainability and understands its importance to the Shire's local identity as heard during the *Hepburn Together* community engagement process (2020-21). Environmental sustainability was the top priority reported by the community during community consultation on *Hepburn Together* (2020-21), closely followed by Liveability.

The local identity of the Shire was summed up as: "*The beautiful natural environment that supports forests, bushlands, and rich agricultural land that is supported by a sustainable conscious and committed community (45.80 percent).*" (*Hepburn Together* 2021).

BACKGROUND

There are three Hepburn Shire Council environmental sustainability strategies requiring updating during 2021 as below:

1. [Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014–21](#)
2. [Biodiversity Strategy 2018–21](#)
3. [Towards Zero Emissions Roadmap 2017-21](#)

In response to community sentiment during the Hepburn Together consultation process, Council will develop an integrated environmental sustainability Strategy, *Sustainable Hepburn*, providing an integrated approach to improve environmental sustainability across the Shire with four distinct themes:

- **A beyond zero emissions Shire:** Achieve and maintain beyond zero net emissions from council activities by installing and purchasing renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency, designing for local climates, offsetting where appropriate and providing options for low fossil fuel-based activities;
- **Natural environment and biodiversity:** Protect and enhance biodiversity values across the Shire through restoration of natural environmental values, appropriate land use, knowledge sharing, and improved capacity of Council;
- **A low waste Shire:** Reduce waste to landfill, increase and improve recycling and extend services across the Shire for reuse of materials and develop circular economy opportunities
- **A climate and water resilient Shire:** Council's infrastructure, services and the community can adapt to the impacts of a changing climate, know what actions to take in extreme weather, are more informed about climate risk and water is valued as a vital natural resource.

PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS

Hepburn Shire will seek community input and feedback via various channels during the *Sustainable Hepburn* strategy development. To ensure the Hepburn Shire community has the opportunity to provide input on the development of *Sustainable Hepburn*, Council will convene the Sustainable Hepburn Community Reference Group.

The Community Reference Group will comprise four technical Working Groups (aligned with the four themes presented above) to ensure each of the themes proposed for the strategy receive equal attention and input. The Community Reference Group will meet as a whole to ensure an integrated approach to environmental sustainability is fostered and opportunities for co-benefits are maximised, as well as breaking into separate technical working groups. Interested members are asked to nominate for the Working Group where they can demonstrate greatest knowledge, interest and experience. The purposes for each of the thematic Working Groups is provided below:

Overarching strategic outcome:

Improved capacity of council and community to understand integrated / holistic environmental sustainability and co-benefits of actions

Beyond zero net emissions

Provide expertise, input and co-create actions to transition Hepburn Shire Council operations to beyond zero net emissions and facilitate the strategic outcomes below:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Increased use of renewable energy
- Offsets to reduce emissions of council facilities to below zero net
- Council assets and systems are prepared for impacts of climate change.

Natural environment and biodiversity

Provide expertise, to review and co-create strategic actions to protect and enhance biodiversity values across the Shire, through appropriate land use, restoration of natural environmental values, knowledge sharing and improved capacity of Council and refine the strategic outcomes below:

- Biodiversity is protected and enhanced across the Shire
- Landowners are empowered and supported to restore the natural environment and biodiversity on their land
- Degraded natural areas are restored
- Council has the capacity to protect and enhance biodiversity values on council and private land.

Low waste

Provide expertise, input and co-create project ideas to reduce waste to landfill, increase percentage of waste reused and recycled and facilitate the strategic outcomes below:

- Reduced waste to landfill
- Increased percentage of waste reused and recycled
- Improved capacity of community to recycle correctly
- Local opportunities for a circular economy established

A climate and water resilient Shire

Provide expertise, input and co-create project ideas for Council and the community to better adapt to the impacts of a changing climate, know what actions to take in extreme weather, and value water as a vital natural resource and facilitate the strategic outcomes below;

- Reduced risk from climate change impacts to infrastructure, services and community

- Increased awareness of extreme weather events, impacts on health and lifestyle and knowledge of action to take to reduce impact
- Water resources are protected for the community and natural environment

AIMS OF THE COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

- To foster an integrated, collective representation of community input, to co-develop Hepburn Shire Council's new environmental sustainability strategy, *Sustainable Hepburn*.
- The CRG will not be a decision-making body; it will be a targeted group of the community that will advise and work with Council Officers to develop *Sustainable Hepburn*.
- Its primary function is to ensure that the development of the strategy adequately reflects the interest and sentiment of the greater community, taking into account global environmental challenges of the 21st century, the current climate emergency and the local context of Hepburn Shire.

FUNCTION

By participating in the Community Reference Group, all members are asked to:

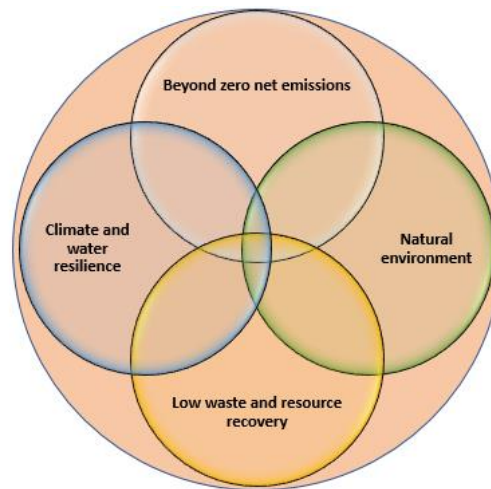
- Contribute the views of their local community;
- Collaborate with Community Reference Group members to explore options for the *Sustainable Hepburn* strategy;
- Support the dissemination of relevant, authorised project information within council and, where requested, community;
- Actively participate in discussions and idea generation in a manner conducive to constructive and positive discussion;
- Enable all members and guests to be heard equally, and listen and consider other points of view;
- Ensure a broad range of community perspectives are considered.

COMPOSITION

Sustainable Hepburn Community Reference Group will comprise up to 37 members including:

- Five (5) Hepburn Shire Council officers (two Sustainability Officers plus additional Officers providing background and context)
- Four (4) Hepburn Shire Councillors (one Councillor on each Technical Working Group)
- Up to twenty eight (28) community representatives selected through EOI process
 - Up to seven members on each of the four Technical Working Groups representing the geographic diversity and sustainability aspirations of the Hepburn community (at least one representative from each Municipal Ward in the Shire)
- An independent facilitator

Sustainable Hepburn CRG comprising four technical working groups



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Organisation	Key Responsibilities
Hepburn Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule and host Reference group meetings • Develop and present background information, relevant subject matter and discussion papers for consideration • Perform administration tasks for the Reference group • Take meeting minutes/notes and distribute to Reference group members • Perform any allocated actions or tasks that result from Reference group meetings
CRG members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic advice, support and guidance • Work with other Reference group members to identify strategy timelines, key actions, general ambition and areas of focus to input into strategy development • Perform any allocated actions or tasks that result from Reference group meetings • Make timely contributions to reports where applicable/required • Attend meetings and workshops • Provide advice on how to best share Sustainable Hepburn updates with the local community • Present findings of Community Reference Group to Councillor panel at conclusion of Community Reference Groups activities

OPERATION

Key operational details of the group include:

- An independent facilitator will facilitate group meetings/workshops. The role of the facilitator will be to chair the meetings and facilitate discussion and involvement with all members.

- The CRG will meet for a minimum of three times (and no more than ten times) once appointed and before the strategy finalisation.
- The meetings will be held either virtually or in person, subject to the current COVID-19 restrictions and depending on the preferences of participating members (members to provide proof of double vaccination for face to face meetings).
- The Council Officer will be responsible for administration associated with the CRG including the organisation of meetings and support activities such as the distribution of agendas, minutes, briefing papers.
- The CRG will operate for the duration of the development of *Sustainable Hepburn*.
- The project team will seek input on and circulate the meeting agenda and any supporting documents to the group at least three days prior to a meeting.
- A standing meeting agenda will be developed, with additional agenda items for the next scheduled meeting to be nominated and agreed at meeting close of the previous meeting.
- The facilitator will determine matters to be dealt with in accordance with the Terms of Reference and for ensuring the proper and professional conduct of the group.

PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

What	When
Expressions of Interest opens	9 November 2021
Assessment of nominations against criteria	6 - 21 December 2021
Council resolution on membership (Council meeting)	21 December 2021
Community Reference Group notified	23 December 2021

Workshop 1: CRG meets as large group, break into technical working groups (5/2/22)

- CRG meets as a large group
- Background and context to Sustainable Hepburn
- Break into Technical Working Groups

Workshop 2: Technical working groups (19/2/2022)

- CRG divides into four technical groups and meets separately
- Information provided on technical areas and ideas for strategy development
- Activities to seek input on overall direction, gaps, priorities and outcomes

Workshop 3: CRG meets as large group and breakout groups (technical working groups) (26/2/2022 and/or 12/3/2022)

- Each technical group reports back on progress
- CRG divides into four technical groups and meets separately
- Activities facilitated to agree on outcomes, targets and actions as a pathway

MEETING PROCEDURE

Member responsibilities and behaviours

Confidentiality

Confidential material may be discussed as part of the CRG.

All CRG members are requested to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 1989 and associated codes of conduct relating to confidential when confidential material is disclosed.

Any materials shared in CRG meetings will be identified as:

- Confidential – Not for distribution
- Confidential – For internal distribution only (within Council)
- Due for public release – Treat as confidential until release date
- Publicly available – Not confidential

CRITERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE HEPBURN COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

SELECTION

- 1) Applicants agree to contribute to the *Sustainable Hepburn* Community Reference Group plus the specific Technical Working Group applied for.
- 2) Applicants can be a member of one Working Group only, to ensure diversity across the Shire.
- 3) Applicants will be chosen according to demonstrated subject matter knowledge, experience and skills and how this will be beneficial to the particular Working group (and Reference Group as a whole).
- 4) Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively in a group and represent the interests of the wider Hepburn community.
- 5) Define interest for participation on the *Sustainable Hepburn* Community Reference Group and outline expertise relevant to nominated *Sustainable Hepburn* Working Group.
- 6) Due to the pandemic restrictions placed on the community by the State Government, ability to attend meetings electronically, either via teleconference or video conference if required.
- 7) Demonstrated understanding of Council's legislative responsibilities in the development of strategy.
- 8) Agreement to work collaboratively with Council and Reference/Working group members and respect the opinions of other members.
- 9) Availability for the dates presented above (*Availability to attend at least 80% of scheduled sessions*).