



Northern Beaches Council Environmental Grants Assessment Panel

Terms of Reference

June 2023

1 **NAME**

Environmental Grants Assessment Panel

2 **PURPOSE**

- a) The purpose of the Environmental Grants Assessment Panel (the Panel) is to provide independent expert advice to Northern Beaches Council on the assessment of Environmental Grant applications.
- b) The Panel will provide comments and scoring for eligible applicants to:
 - Present a final list of applicants recommended for funding in accordance with the Environmental Grants Guidelines to be considered by Council.

3 **MEMBERSHIP**

- a) Collectively the Panel will have professional knowledge of the environment and sustainability sector, an informed view of the Northern Beaches and an understanding of the objectives of the Environmental Grants program in accordance with the Protect. Create. Live. Environment & Climate Change Strategy.
- b) Membership of the Panel comprises up to four members representing the following:
 - Two local residents of the Northern Beaches with expertise in the environment and/or sustainability sectors.
 - Two Northern Beaches Council staff members.

The primary responsibility of the Panel is to provide independent, expert advice to Council. All members of the Panel have an obligation to:

- Review all eligible applications,
- Score and provide comments for each eligible application against each of the assessment criteria,
- Attend all meetings scheduled for the Panel,
- Share knowledge, encourage discussion, and actively participate in Panel deliberations,
- Communicate and seek feedback from each other to achieve consensus on recommendations, and where consensus is not possible for any reason, respect the Panel's majority decision regarding advice provided to Council,
- Respect the values of the communities that may be affected by Panel advice,
- Treat fellow Panel members and Council staff professionally and act in good faith,
- Maintain confidentiality as appropriate and as required,

- Serve independently with the ability to give impartial advice without financial interest and without representing the specific interests of specific groups or individuals, and
- Demonstrate a robust approach to actual or perceived conflicts of interest and provide relevant updates as required.

4 **ELIGIBILITY**

- a) Councillors and Environmental Strategic Reference Group (ESRG) members are not eligible to nominate for membership on the Panel. Community appointments will be determined and endorsed by the Executive Manager, Environment & Climate Change.
- b) Panel members must possess relevant skills and expertise.
- c) Community representatives must possess relevant expertise in the environment and/or sustainability sectors.
- d) Community representatives that are submitting, advising on or sponsoring an application to the 23/24 Environmental Grants Program either themselves or as part of a group are not eligible to nominate for membership.
- e) Should a representative vacancy occur during the terms of appointment, a new representative will be determined and endorsed by the Executive Manager, Environment and Climate Change.
- f) Members must meet the requirements of the [Northern Beaches Council Code of Conduct](#).

5 **APPOINTMENT**

An Expression of Interest (EOI) for community representatives to the Panel will be publicly promoted on the Council website. Submissions will be assessed by Northern Beaches Council staff in accordance with the [Appointment of Committee Members Policy](#) and associated [Northern Beaches Council Committee Framework](#). The Executive Manager Community, Arts & Culture confirms community representative selection to the Panel.

6 **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PANELS**

The Panel Chair may at any time invite members of other Council appointed panels or committees to provide advice on any matter before the Panel.

7 **TERM**

- a) Panel members are appointed for a limited term for the purpose of assessing the grant applications, August – September 2023.
- b) If there is a change to the Term, Council will provide notice to affected Committee members in writing.

8 **SUPPORT**

- a) Council will provide necessary resources to the Panel. This will include the venue and administrative support such as facilitating and running the meeting, preparation, and distribution of the notice of meeting, agenda, and the recording of the minutes.
- b) The Environment & Climate Change Business Unit is responsible for managing the Panel and will be the main point of contact for members on Panel related matters. Specialist staff will be available to provide expertise, if required.

9 **MEETING SCHEDULE**

- a) The Panel will meet up to two (2) times throughout the process.
- b) A meeting will be scheduled to review the scoring of panelists and to come to a consensus for the list of recipients recommended for funding. The duration of the meeting will be determined by the volume of applications.
- c) The schedule of meeting dates and venues will be provided to the members in advance.

10 **MEETING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

- a) The meetings will be chaired by a nominated Council staff member.
- b) All members are expected to attend the meetings.
- c) The quorum for each meeting will be three members.
- d) The Panel should have the intention of reaching consensus when finalising the list of applicants recommended for funding.

11 **FEE**

Community representatives are paid a fee, which covers all preparatory time such as review of applications, scoring, Panel meetings and other relevant business required by the Panel. The fee provided per panel member will be dependent upon the volume of applications received in the grant round; \$400 for up to 74 applications received, and \$750 for 75+ applications received.

12 **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GROUPS AND COMMITTEES**

- a) All members are required to observe the adopted [Code of Conduct](#) and any other policy or requirement applicable to the proper functioning of the Panel.
- b) Members shall act in a professional and responsible manner with the information they obtain.
- c) Members must respect each other (often despite differences) and work together to create an open and trusting atmosphere. The Panel requires openness and honesty in order to function well and members should feel free to express their opinions and views without fear of recrimination.
- d) A breach of the Terms of Reference may lead to the member being removed from the Panel by the Chair.

- e) Members of the Panel do not have the authority to make representations to the media on Council or the Committee's' behalf. In accordance with Council's Media Policy, the Mayor is the only person permitted to speak to the media on behalf of the Council and the Panel.
- f) Conflicts of Interest: Council recognises that community representatives join such Groups and Committees because of special interests they may have, and Council welcomes their expertise. Nevertheless, it is important that Council understands the basis of advice it receives from the Groups, so members will be requested to declare any organisation they may represent. Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest, particularly pecuniary interests need to be made by members of the Panel and recorded in the minutes in accordance with section 442 and 443 of the Local Government Act 1993. The Panel Chair reserves the right to discuss conflicts of interest with panel members in light of Section 4(d) of these Terms of Reference.
- g) Confidentiality and Privacy: Members may have contact with confidential or personal information retained by Council. If so, members are required to maintain the security of any confidential or personal information and not access, use or remove any information, unless the member is authorised to do so.

13 COUNCIL VALUES

All members of the Panel and all meeting attendees are expected to observe Northern Beaches Council Values outlined below:

- **Trust:** Because being open brings out our best.
- **Integrity:** Because we are proud to doing what we say.
- **Teamwork:** Because working together delivers.
- **Service:** Because we care as custodians for the community.
- **Respect:** Because valuing everyone is how we make
- **Leadership:** Everyone has a leading role

14 NEXT REVIEW DATE:

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed prior to the establishment of a new Panel.