



**CITY OF
PARRAMATTA**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY PANEL

June 2025

DOCUMENT ADMINISTRATION

Document Owner	Group Manager, Office of the Lord Mayor and CEO - Secretariat Services
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1. PURPOSE AND LIMITATION OF AUTHORITY

- 1.1 The primary role of the First Nations Advisory Panel is to provide strategic, expert and impartial advice to the Council on the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the City of Parramatta's policies, strategies and plans.
- 1.2 The First Nations Advisory Panel is an advisory body to the City of Parramatta and is not an executive panel and does not have the authority to:
- Expend money on behalf of Council
 - Undertake any work on behalf of Council
 - Commit Council to any arrangement
 - Consider any matter outside its specific reference
 - Direct Council officers in the performance of their duties; or
 - Represent the Council in any communication with the public or media without the express permission of the City of Parramatta.
- 1.3 The First Nations Advisory Panel's advice must take into consideration current City of Parramatta's policies, strategies and operational plans.
- 1.4 The First Nations Advisory Panel is directly responsible and accountable to the CEO in undertaking its responsibilities.
- 1.5 The responsibilities of the First Nations Advisory Panel may, in consultation with the Panel, be revised or expanded by Council resolution from time to time.
- 1.6 The First Nations Advisory Panel provides high level advice and guidance on Council matters and is not designed to provide in depth guidance for projects, however the Panel can advise on best community engagement methods to this end.
- 1.7 These Terms of Reference set out the terms that members of the First Nations Advisory Panel must follow.

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 Council's First Nations Advisory Panel will play an important role in ensuring Council remains accountable in delivering our commitments and providing the guidance required to ensure we are continually meeting the expectations set through the First Nations Strategy. Governance is about creating a shared responsibility to ensure First Nations voices inform Council decision-making.

2.2 The objectives of the First Nations Advisory Panel are to:

- Advise Council on the views, needs and interests of First Nations people and communities in the Parramatta area, within the scope of Council's authority.
- Advise Council on matters relating to embedding First Nations considerations into Council business, including appropriate approaches for engagement.
- Provide input into City of Parramatta Council's work to promote an increased knowledge and understanding of the wider community of First Nations culture, history, achievements and ongoing challenges.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND CULTURAL ROLES OF THE FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY PANEL

- 3.1 To provide advice towards and monitor the implementation of the First Nations Strategy and other relevant Council with respect to the needs, issues and interests of First Nations people and communities.
- 3.2 To provide specialist advice to Council relating to issues impacting First Nations communities and best practice approaches for community engagement.
- 3.3 To support and encourage the cultural competency of Council.
- 3.4 To provide higher level advice on how particular Council projects may identify, reflect, promote and protect First Nations heritage and culture.
- 3.5 To work with Council to develop and promote appropriate commemorations and celebrations of First Nations culture including Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week.
- 3.6 To continually liaise with local First Nations community members, organisations and networks to identify and represent issues affecting those communities.
- 3.7 To report back to community members, organisations and networks on Council's role and responsibilities and its decisions relating to First Nations communities.
- 3.8 To ensure the cultural safety of all members including respecting the diverse range of values, beliefs and customs of First Nations peoples.

3.9

Position	Responsibility
All Committee Members	• Read the agenda prior to each meeting. • Be an advocate for the First Nations Advisory Panel. • Have a broad understanding of relevant issues, the adopted Council strategies and the associated actions.
Chairperson	• Facilitate the meetings of the First Nations Advisory Panel.
Convenor	• The Convenor of the First Nations Advisory Panel is the Community Capacity Building Lead (First Nations), with the support of the Group Manager Social and Community Services. • Convene the meetings and support the Chairperson of the First Nations Advisory Panel. • Provide notice of cancellation of a First Nations Advisory Panel meeting in circumstances where there is no business (reports) to be considered.
Councillors	• All Councillors are ex-officio members of the First Nations Advisory Panel. • Ex-officio Councillor members may contribute to the meeting, as permitted by the Chairperson.
Council Secretariat	• Assist the Convenor and Chairperson with all aspects of the First Nations Advisory Panel. • Responsible for reporting the minutes and outcomes of each First Nations Advisory Panel meeting to the next available meeting of Customer, Community and Culture Committee for consideration, assisted by the Convenor.

4. CONVENOR

- 4.1 The Convenor of the First Nations Advisory Panel is the CEO, Executive Director Community and Culture or their delegate.
- 4.2 The Convenor will assist the Chairperson in progressing the meeting according to the agenda.
- 4.3 The Convenor is responsible for ensuring any action items, such as requests for information or guest speakers, as recorded in the minutes, are actioned and reported back to the Panel at a subsequent meeting.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1. Councillor Membership

5.1.1

5.1.2 All Councillors are ex-officio members of the First Nations Advisory Panel.

5.1.3 Ex-officio Councillor members may contribute to the meeting, as permitted by the Chairperson.

5.1.4 E-officio Councillors do not have voting rights on matters presented to the First Nations Advisory Panel as the Panel is not a decision-making body.

5.2. Community Membership

5.2.1 A minimum of five (5) and a maximum of twelve (12) community members meeting the criteria in clause 5.3, will be appointed to the First Nations Advisory Panel.

5.2.2 Community membership to the First Nations Advisory Panel is voluntary (unpaid).

5.2.3 The appointment of community representatives to the First Nations Advisory Panel will seek to:

- a) achieve a mix of skills to facilitate the sound functioning of the First Nations Advisory Panel; and
- b) represent the diversity and interests of our community.

5.2.4 Community members will be appointed following a public Expressions of Interest (EOI) process prior to the First Nations Advisory Panel meeting of the new Council term (refer to Clause 6 of this Terms of Reference).

- 5.2.5 Community members do not have voting rights on matters presented to the First Nations Advisory Panel as the Panel is not a decision-making body.

5.3. Community Membership Selection Criteria

- 5.3.1 The First Nations Advisory Panel will comprise of First Nations community members

- 5.3.2 Additionally, members must meet two or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate skills and capacity to contribute to the Panel;
- Live, work, study or have a strong connection and commitment to the City of Parramatta LGA;
- Are recognised members of the Dharug community

Past participation on the First Nations Advisory Panel, or previous related Council committees, will also be taken into consideration.

- 5.3.3 Consistent with Clause 5.2.4, applications for membership are encouraged from First Nations people from the following subcategories, with a focus on gender diversity and the diversity of the group as a whole:

- Young people.
- Elders.
- Dharug.

5.4. Member Leave of Absence

- 5.4.1 Members may apply to the Convenor for a leave of absence, and the granting of such leave of absence is at the discretion of the First Nations Advisory Panel.

- 5.4.2 All applications for leave of absence must be recorded in the minutes of the First Nations Advisory Panel.

5.5. Member Vacancies

5.5.1 Where a vacancy occurs:

- (a) within six (6) months from the appointment of members, the vacancy may be filled firstly by a person on the eligibility list, if they are still interested and available to join the First Nations Advisory Panel.
- (b) after six (6) months from the appointment of members, and more than 12 months from the end of the Term, an Expression of Interest (EOI) process must be undertaken, in accordance with Clause 6.

5.5.2 Vacancies occurring within the last 12 months of the end of the Term will not be filled.

6. COMMUNITY MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS

- 6.1 All applications must be made using the online application and should address the selection criteria of the First Nations Advisory Panel.
- 6.2 Applications will be assessed by the Convenor of the First Nations Advisory Panel on merit according to the selection criteria in accordance with clause 5.3.
- 6.3 The Convenor is to prepare a report to Council recommending the community members to be appointed to the First Nations Advisory Panel.
- 6.4 Community membership shall be determined by Council resolution.
- 6.5 If more applications than positions are received, and deemed suitable for appointment as community members, offers of membership will be made to the top applicants and the remainder placed on an 'Eligibility List'.
- 6.6 The first two (2) persons listed on the Eligibility List for the First Nations Advisory Panel will be appointed as 'Alternate Members'.
- 6.7 Where a vacancy occurs, the vacancy may be filled by a person on the Eligibility List (without the need for further approval from Council) if they are still interested and available to join the First Nations Advisory Panel, unless within 6 months of the end of the Council term.
- 6.8 Where an absence / apology is received from an appointed Community Member prior to a meeting of the First Nations Advisory Panel, an Alternate Member can be called upon to attend a meeting in their absence to avoid the meeting lapsing for want of quorum.

7. TERM

- 7.1 The term of membership generally coincides with the term of Council, or such other period as resolved by Council.

8. CHAIRPERSON

8.1 Chairperson

- 8.1.1 The Chairperson of the First Nations Advisory Panel is to be a First Nations community member.
- 8.1.2 The First Nations Advisory Panel shall vote annually to determine the Chairperson, with the election taking place at the first meeting in each calendar year.
- 8.1.3 The Chairperson is to be appointed for a duration no longer than two (2) consecutive years.
- 8.2 If the position of Chairperson becomes vacant for any reason, the First Nations Advisory Panel will vote to elect another existing member to be the Chairperson the remainder of the current Chairperson term.
- 8.3 In the absence of the Chairperson, a chairperson for that meeting will be a member of the First Nations Advisory Panel, elected by members of the First Nations Advisory Panel as the first item of business at the relevant meeting and conducted by the Convenor.

9. QUORUM

- 9.1. The quorum of the First Nations Advisory Panel shall comprise a minimum of 40 percent of members of the First Nations Advisory Panel.
- 9.2. Business must not be conducted at any meeting of the First Nations Advisory Panel unless the Convenor or their delegate is present.
- 9.3. Business must not be conducted at any meeting of the First Nations Advisory Panel unless a quorum is present.
- 9.4. Where a meeting is cancelled, notice of the cancellation will be published on Council's website and in such other manner that is likely to bring notice of the cancellation to the attention of as many people as possible.

10. PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

- 10.1 Meetings of the First Nations Advisory Panel are not open to the public to attend. Carers and other support persons can attend as observers with permission of the Convenor.
- 10.2 Notwithstanding Clause 10.1, guest speakers, relevant experts, or other interested parties, may be invited to attend and speak at Panel meetings subject to the approval of the Chairperson.

11. MEETING ADMINISTRATION AND PROTOCOL

- 11.1 Council will provide administrative support to the First Nations Advisory including:
- scheduling meetings of the First Nations Advisory Panel, in accordance with the annual Council and Panel meeting calendar.
 - compiling and circulating agenda and relevant documents to all members of the First Nations Advisory Panel.
 - taking and distributing minutes that include attendance, declarations of interest and outcomes of the First Nations Advisory Panel.
 - coordinating other meeting arrangements, as required.
- 11.2 **Frequency of Meetings**
- The First Nations Advisory Panel will meet quarterly on a day and time determined by the Council, in accordance with the annual Council and Committee meeting calendar.
- 11.3 **Venue**
- The venue for meetings of the First Nations Advisory Panel shall be determined by the Convenor.
- 11.4 **Webcast**
- Meetings of the City Economy Advisory Panel will not be webcast.
- 11.5 **Audio-Visual Attendance**
- 11.5.1 All First Nations Advisory Panel members may attend and participate in the Advisory Panel meetings by audio-visual link.
- 11.5.2 To attend an Advisory Panel meeting by audio-visual link, the panel member must notify Council Secretariat staff by email

(secretariat@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au) before midday on the day of the meeting.

11.5.3 Following the midday deadline, Council Secretariat staff will:

- issue an audio-visual link to all/any Advisory Panel member/s attending the meeting remotely; and
- notify the Chairperson and Convenor of all/any Advisory Panel member/s who will be attending the meeting remotely.

11.6 Agenda and Business Papers

11.6.1 The Convenor is responsible for the preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and minutes of all meetings, with the assistance of the Council Secretariat.

11.6.2 The Convenor will inform the Chairperson of the meeting agenda prior to the publication of the agenda.

11.6.3 The Convenor will publish the agenda a minimum of three (3) business days prior to the meeting, with the assistance of Council Secretariat.

11.7 Minutes

11.7.1 The outcomes of the First Nations Advisory Panel meetings shall be reported to the Customer, Community and Culture Committee, as per Clause 11.8.

11.7.2 Council is to keep full and accurate minutes of the proceedings of First Nations Advisory Panel meetings.

11.7.3 The minutes of the meetings of the First Nations Advisory Panel must be confirmed at a subsequent meeting of the First Nations Advisory Panel.

11.7.4 The Convenor, with the assistance of Council Secretariat, will publish the confirmed minutes on Council's website a maximum of five (5) business days after the meeting where the minutes were confirmed.

11.8 Reporting Requirements

The Council Secretariat is responsible for reporting the minutes and outcomes of each First Nations Advisory Panel meeting to the next available meeting of Customer, Community and Culture Standing Committee for consideration, assisted by the Convenor.

11.9 Managing Culturally Sensitive Matters

- 11.9.1 Where an issue is identified as culturally sensitive, the First Nations Advisory Panel can proceed according to cultural practices (i.e. with only First Nations people present at the time of discussion). Non-indigenous people will be required to leave the meeting.
- 11.9.2 Any decisions arising from discussions held during this time will be relayed to other attendees when they return to the meeting.

12. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 12.1 The general order of business of the First Nations Advisory Panel meeting will be as follows:

1. Opening
2. Acknowledgement of Country
3. Meeting Attendance and Apologies
4. Request for Remote Attendance (audio-visual link)
5. Disclosure of Interests
6. Confirmation of Minutes
7. Matters for Discussion
8. Status Update
9. Emerging trends, recent developments and potential funding/partnership opportunities
10. General Business
11. Conclusion of Meeting

13. CODE OF CONDUCT, CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 13.1 Members of the First Nations Advisory Panel must comply with the City of Parramatta's Code of Conduct in their capacity as a Panel Member.
- 13.2 Members of the First Nations Advisory Panel must act lawfully, professionally, ethically and with integrity.
- 13.3 Any confidential information accessed, discussed, received and used in the First Nations Advisory Panel meetings must not be distributed, until deemed otherwise by the Convenor. Council or the CEO may terminate a First Nations Advisory Panel member's term for breaching these requirements, or Terms of Reference.

- 13.4 Conflicts of Interest must be disclosed and managed in accordance with the Code of Conduct. It is each members responsibility to be aware of their obligations under the Code of Conduct for both pecuniary and non-pecuniary conflicts of interest.
- 13.5 In addition, where members are engaged as City of Parramatta contractors or consultants, outside their work on the First Nations Advisory Panel but for work that pertains to an item on the First Nations Advisory Panel agenda, the member shall not participate in any discussion, decision-making or voting on that item.

14. VARIATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 14.1 The Terms of Reference may be amended by resolution of the Council at any time.

15. VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Amendment Details	Document Owner	Period Active	Review Date
1.0	<i>New Terms of Reference document - no previous version</i>	<i>Group Manager, Office of the Lord Mayor and CEO</i>	<i>14 April 2025</i>	<i>December 2028</i>
1.1	<i>Amendments associated with Council Resolution 23 June 2025 (Report No. XCM25-4)</i> <i>Inclusion of 'Alternate Community Member' provisions (Section 6)</i>	<i>Group Manager, Office of the Lord Mayor and CEO</i>	<i>24 June 2025</i>	<i>December 2028</i>