

City of Sydney Advisory Panel Members

File No: S111818

Summary

Council has established a number of advisory panels with Council appointed Councillor representatives that provide advice on the policies and operations of the City of Sydney across various subject areas.

These advisory panels are specifically an opportunity for input and engagement, not decision-making bodies. They are not constituted as a committee of Council under the Local Government Act 1993, nor a sub-committee of the Central Sydney Planning Committee under the City of Sydney Act 1988.

On 10 October 2024, following local government elections, Council representatives were appointed to City of Sydney advisory panels. The terms of reference and functions of all advisory panels were then reviewed to ensure that they were fit for purpose, to improve consistency and to strengthen diversity of panel members. Council endorsed revised terms of reference on 17 February 2025.

Following Council endorsement of the revised terms of reference, an expression of interest process for advisory panel members was conducted.

A call for nominations was open for 4 weeks from 9 April to 7 May 2025 and was advertised on the City of Sydney's website social media channels and via City of Sydney e-newsletters. Applications for membership to advisory panels were reviewed and assessed by City of Sydney staff in accordance with the selection criteria detailed in the terms of reference.

It is recommended that Council endorse the appointment of members to the Housing For All Advisory Panel, Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel, Multicultural Advisory Panel and the Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the Terms of Reference for Advisory Panels as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council endorse the appointment of the following members of the Housing For All Advisory Panel: Tara Somerville, Mark Degotardi, Leo Patterson Ross, Jessie Hohmann, Paul Coe, Michael Zanardo, Thomas Chailloux and Allan Vidor for a term commencing 1 July 2025 and ending on 31 March 2029;
- (C) Council endorse the appointment of the following members of the Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel: Megan Spindler-Smith, Edward Morris, Bruce Maguire, Nicole Smith, Yvonne Munce, Alexander Elliott, Priscilla Brice, Sharon Xabregas, Rebecca McCash, Stephen Adei, Emily Matthews and Giancarlo de Vera for a term commencing 1 July 2025 and ending on 31 March 2029;
- (D) Council endorse the appointment of the following members of the Multicultural Advisory Panel: Elaine Laforteza, Cynthia Simango, Zahra Babuji, Rushi Vyas, Balasundaram Nirmanusan, Mary Karras, Turkan Aksoy, Kevin Cheng, Ravi Prasad, Rosa Loria, Annette Kalczyńska and Dilara Nikolovski for a term commencing 1 July 2025 and ending on 31 March 2029;
- (E) Council endorse the appointment of the following members of the Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel: Andrew Richardson, Ash Nicholson, Bethan Donnelly, Christopher Tooher, Dane Gorrel, James Thorpe, John Green, Josef Muller, Katherine Winten, Kat Dopper, Michael Gibb and Tyson Koh for a term commencing 1 July 2025 and ending on 31 March 2029; and
- (F) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Lord Mayor, to appoint any new/replacement members to Advisory Panels within the term, should the need arise.

Attachments

Attachment A. Terms of Reference for Advisory Panels

Attachment B. Advisory Panel Member Expressions of Interest (Confidential)

Background

1. Council has established a number of advisory panels with Council appointed Councillor representatives that provide advice on the policies and operations of the City of Sydney across various subject areas.
2. On 10 October 2024, following local government elections, Council representatives were appointed to City of Sydney advisory panels. The terms of reference and functions of all advisory panels were then reviewed to ensure that they were fit for purpose, to improve consistency and to strengthen diversity of panel members. Council endorsed revised terms of reference on 17 February 2025.
3. A call for nominations was open for 4 weeks from 9 April to 7 May 2025 and was advertised through the City of Sydney's website, social media channels and via City of Sydney e-newsletters.
4. Applications for membership to advisory panels were reviewed and assessed by City staff in accordance with the selection criteria detailed in the terms of reference.

Housing for All Advisory Panel

5. The primary role of the Housing for All Advisory Panel is to bring together industry leaders and experts to share knowledge and provide strategic, expert advice and guidance to the City on the development of agreed strategies and initiatives to increase the supply of market, affordable and diverse housing (including social housing) within the City of Sydney Local Government Area.
6. On 10 October 2024, Council appointed Councillor Zann Maxwell and Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore as the Councillor representatives to the Housing for All Advisory Panel. The Lord Mayor is also a member of the Housing for All Advisory Panel, with Councillor Jess Miller currently the Lord Mayor's delegate.
7. Recommended members are:
 - (a) Tara Somerville (lived experience representative)
 - (b) Mark Degotardi (CEO, Community Housing Industry Association NSW)
 - (c) Leo Patterson Ross (CEO, Tenants Union NSW)
 - (d) Professor Jessie Hohmann (Faculty of Law, UTS)
 - (e) Paul Coe (CEO, Birribee Housing)
 - (f) Michael Zanardo (Director, Studio Zanardo)
 - (g) Thomas Chailloux (Senior Policy Officer, Shelter NSW)
 - (h) Allan Vidor (Managing Director, TOGA)

Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel

8. The purpose of the Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel is to provide strategic, expert and impartial advice to the City of Sydney on the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the City of Sydney's policies, strategies and plans to advance the inclusion of people with disability.
9. On 10 October 2024, Council appointed Councillor Yvonne Weldon as the Councillor representative to the Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel. The Lord Mayor is also a member of the Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel, with Councillor Zann Maxwell currently the Lord Mayor's delegate.
10. Recommended members are:
 - (a) Megan Spindler-Smith, Deputy CEO, People with Disability Australia
 - (b) Edward Morris, CEO, Physical Disability Council of NSW
 - (c) Bruce Maguire, Lead Policy Advisor, Vision Australia
 - (d) Nicole Smith, Head of Disability Supports, Settlement Services International (SSI)
 - (e) Yvonne Munce, Executive Director, Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA)
 - (f) Alexander Elliott, Project Worker, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability (CID)
 - (g) Priscilla Brice, CEO, National Mental Health Consumer Alliance
 - (h) Sharon Xabregas, Managing Director, Sign Hear
 - (i) Rebecca McCash, Founder/CEO, Future Tech Australia/Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
 - (j) Stephen Adei, Peer Health Manager, NSW Health
 - (k) Emily Matthews, Executive Manager Member Services, Australian Disability Network
 - (l) Giancarlo de Vera, CEO, BEING Mental Health Consumers

Multicultural Advisory Panel

11. The purpose of the Multicultural Advisory Panel is to provide advice on policies and operations of the City in relation to matters of importance to culturally, spiritually and linguistically diverse communities.
12. On 10 October 2024, Council appointed Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore as the Councillor representative to the Multicultural Advisory Panel. The Lord Mayor is also a member of the Multicultural Advisory Panel with Councillor Robert Kok currently the Lord Mayor's delegate.
13. Recommended members are:
 - (a) Elaine Laforteza, Equity and Diversity Project Officer (Cultural Diversity), University of Technology Sydney - UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion
 - (b) Cynthia Simango, Founder, Embrace for Every Curl
 - (c) Zahra Babuji, Chair, Trikone Australia
 - (d) Rushi Vyas, CEO and Founder, Whats On! Campus
 - (e) Balasundaram Nirmanusan, Manager, Community Engagement, Multicultural NSW
 - (f) Mary Karras, CEO, Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
 - (g) Turkan Aksoy, NSW Coordinator Welcoming Cities, Welcoming Australia
 - (h) Kevin Chen, Co-Founder, Soul of Chinatown
 - (i) Ravi Prasad, Founder, Parliament on King
 - (j) Rosa Loria, CEO, Sydney Multicultural Community Services
 - (k) Annette Kalczynska, President, ISANA International Education Association
 - (l) Dilara Nikolovski, Multicultural Community Liaison Officer, NSW Police

Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel

14. The purpose of the Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel is to provide high-level independent expert advice to the City on a strong, inclusive, culture-led nightlife and the implementation of the Cultural Strategy 2025-2035.
15. On 10 October 2024, Council appointed Councillor Olly Arkins as the Councillor representative to the Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel. The Lord Mayor is also a member of the Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel with Councillor Jess Miller currently the Lord Mayor's delegate.
16. Recommended members are:
 - (a) Andrew Richardson, Managing Director, Hyper Karting Ptd Ltd
 - (b) Ash Nicholson, Director, Government and Industry, CBRE
 - (c) Bethan Donnelly, Founding Director, Vital Commons
 - (d) Christophehr Tooher, CEO, Sydney Festival
 - (e) Dane Gorrel, Music Director, Club 77 Holdings Pty Ltd
 - (f) James Thorpe, CEO, Odd Culture Group
 - (g) John Green, Director Policy, Australian Hotels Association (AHA) NSW
 - (h) Josef Muller, Managing Director, Music NSW
 - (i) Katherine Winten, Head of Programming, Performance Space
 - (j) Kat Dopper, Creative Director and Founder, Heaps Gay
 - (k) Michael Gibb, CEO, Night Time Industries Association (NTIA)
 - (l) Tyson Koh, Managing Director, fbi.radio

Other Advisory Panels

17. Expression of interest processes for other City of Sydney Advisory panels will be conducted as applicable as panel terms end or new members are required in line with terms of reference. Membership recommendations will be considered by Council as required.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

18. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - the operation of advisory panels are a collaboration between elected members, City staff, representatives of NSW Government agencies, stakeholders and the community.

Organisational Impact

19. Various City of Sydney staff provide secretariat and operational support to the City of Sydney's advisory panels. These staff are not members of panels.

Risks

20. Without relevant support from advisory panels, the City of Sydney risks not having an appropriate source of advice on the policies and operations of the City of Sydney across various subject areas.
21. This approach is within the City of Sydney's risk appetite which states:
- Our risk philosophy is centred around achieving a balance between innovation, community and user satisfaction and risk management, ensuring that we meet our strategic objectives while maintaining a robust control environment.
 - We encourage considered risk taking that supports innovation, efficiency and the achievement of our strategic objectives.

Financial Implications

22. There are sufficient funds available in the draft 2025/26 operating budget (subject to a separate report) and future years' forward estimates for the operation of City of Sydney Advisory Panels.

Relevant Legislation

23. Local Government Act 1993.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

24. Advisory panel meetings have been tentatively scheduled for various dates in July 2025.

Options

- 25. Council could choose not to have any advisory panels.
- 26. Council could consider other members for the relevant advisory panels.

Public Consultation

- 27. A call for nominations was open for 4 weeks from 9 April to 7 May 2025 and was advertised through the City of Sydney's website, social media channels and via City of Sydney e-newsletters.
- 28. There were 932 page views/interactions throughout the expression of interest period.
- 29. The following nominations were received and assessed:
 - (a) Housing For All Advisory Panel – 17 nominations.
 - (b) Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel – 22 nominations.
 - (c) Multicultural Advisory Panel – 31 nominations.
 - (d) Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel – 54 nominations.

MONICA BARONE PSM

Chief Executive Officer

Kirsten Woodward, Executive Manager Social City

Julie Guiffre, Manager City Business and Safety

Sam Ngui, Program Manager – Affordable and Diverse Housing