

This charter relates to the establishment and operations of the Rural Villages Strategy Reference Panel, hereafter referred to as 'the reference panel'.

About the Rural Villages Strategy

Tweed Shire Council is preparing a Rural Villages Strategy to identify priorities and inform planning for the future use of seven key rural villages across the Tweed: Burringbar, Chillingham, Mooball, Stokers Siding, Tumbulgum, Tyalgum and Uki.

The objectives of the Rural Villages Strategy are:

- To acknowledge current perceptions of each village's role in the Tweed settlement hierarchy;
- To determine possible future roles for each village in the Tweed settlement hierarchy;
- To plan for a sustainable region that meets the needs of its current residents and is responsive to future changes in communities and their needs;
- To maintain and enhance the liveability of Tweed's rural villages;
- To explore ways of fostering improved relationships and connectivity between the rural villages;
- To strengthen the role of Murwillumbah as a central place within the Tweed; and
- To develop an understanding of the needs of people living in the Tweed's rural villages.

Role of the Reference Panel

The role of the reference panel is to provide assurance to key stakeholders that the project is being conducted appropriately and properly, as outlined in the 'Key Responsibilities' section, below.

The reference panel must have a degree of independence from the project team.

Structure of the Reference Panel

The reference panel should include up to fourteen (14) members, ideally comprising of two representatives from each of villages (as consulted in November 2013): Burringbar, Chillingham, Mooball, Stokers Siding, Tumbulgum, Tyalgum and Uki.

Key Responsibilities

The reference panel will be responsible for communicating between Council's project team and the broader village communities, including:

- Providing feedback and input on community engagement activities;
- Facilitating effective liaison between Council and the village communities;
- Advising on the quality of the strategy, particularly in relation to its responsiveness to the communities' needs and aspirations;
- Assessing whether solutions provided under the strategy will meet the communities' needs and the strategy is progressing towards that target;
- Advising on the impact of proposed solutions from the communities' perspectives; and
- Reporting on any perceived risks with the production aspects of the project.

Selection Committee for Appointment of Panel Members

The selection committee for the appointment of the reference panel will consist of three Council officers. Selection of panel members will be undertaken against the following selection criteria:

- Ability to adequately represent community interests;
- Sufficient knowledge of issues and challenges affecting rural villages;
- Ability to critically analyse and assess draft documents; and
- Ability to stay with the project throughout its drafting stage.

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

A call for expressions of interest will be advertised in the Tweed Link and on Council website. Council will also contact all key community associations.

Expressions of interest should be received no later than Friday 7 February 2014.

Initial and Subsequent Meeting Procedures

Once the reference panel has been appointed, an initial meeting will be convened to:

- Bring members up-to-date with progress in developing the Rural Villages Strategy;
- Determine how members will provide input into the process;
- Ensure an understanding of issues and requirements regarding confidentiality, identifying and managing conflicts of interest, and the planning process as it relates to the Rural Villages Strategy; and
- Set out protocols for correspondence, meeting procedures, information dissemination and the like.

Frequency of Meetings

While the majority of technical review and input can be done remotely, meetings will be convened at the request of the Project Manager, but are not expected to occur more than once every month.

The location of the meetings will be determined by the reference panel.

Duration of Panel

Upon appointment of its members, the reference panel will be convened as soon as possible.

It is expected that the reference panel will be dissolved once the final draft Rural Villages Strategy has been prepared, which is anticipated to occur before the end of 2014.

Record keeping

A record of meetings and general correspondence on other occasions will be kept by the Project Manager for referral to the consultants preparing the Strategy and its various reports.

Disclaimer

Council will give due weight and consideration to the views expressed by the reference panel, but is not obliged to act upon any recommendation. Feedback will be provided to the reference panel as to how its contributions have been considered and incorporated into the strategy.