

Terms of Reference Community Reference Group



Environment Protection Authority Victoria

1. Background

- 1.1. EPA's Community Reference Group (CRG) is made up of:
 - individual strategic environment advocates acting for environment protection
 - volunteers and representatives of community and local environment groups
 - passionate environment focussed professionals able to represent the interests and views of different aspects of Victoria's environment, and the communities who are actively engaged in protecting them
- 1.2. The CRG's main purpose is to enable EPA to collaborate, at a strategic level, with key individuals engaged in environment protection and advocacy to:
 - focus on State wide environmental issues and opportunities, and work towards achieving shared objectives;
 - have strategic discussions that challenge and influence EPA in constructive ways, advance EPA's knowledge, and support the delivery of its mandate; and
 - provide a forum to enhance two way communication and develop relationships for the benefit of the Victorian environment

2. Establishment of the Community Reference Group (CRG)

- 2.1. Invitations to the Community Reference Group will initially be made by invitation. New requests for attendance will be considered by the group.
- 2.2. The membership of the Community Reference Group will be capped at 11 to allow for quality discussion to occur and for all members to be heard.

3. Role of the Community Reference Group (CRG)

- 3.1. The role of the CRG is to support EPA Victoria in the discharge of its functions by providing advice and input to:
 - support a healthy environment for a liveable and prosperous Victoria
 - support the EPA CEO and Chairman in successfully delivering the EPA 5 Year Plan for the Victorian community
 - contribute to EPA's understanding of community concerns and external environmental priorities in order to shape effective EPA policy and operational activities
 - support and enhance programs and projects aimed at improving environmental outcomes, including exploring opportunities to partner in the development and delivery of programs
 - support and enhance EPA's administration of the *Environment Protection Act 1970* and accompanying regulation

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- 3.2. The CRG is an advisory forum to provide EPA with strategic advice to assist it in making decisions required under its jurisdiction. It is not a decision making forum.
- 3.3. Members of the CRG are engaged in the provision of advice to EPA as individuals with specific skills, knowledge and networks. Their role in the CRG will not be as representatives of organisations they may be part of.
- 3.4. The CRG will have a strategic focus, rather than focusing on specific issues.

4. Meeting procedures

- 4.1. Community Reference Group meetings will be held quarterly at EPA Victoria, 200 Victoria Street, Carlton VIC.
- 4.2. The Executive Director Knowledge, Standards and Assessment will Chair the meetings. Facilitators will also be invited to co-chair some meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the Chair will nominate another person to fulfil the role for that meeting.
- 4.3. EPA Victoria will provide the Secretary to the Community Reference Group.
- 4.4. The Secretary will call meetings in keeping with the CRG Timetable, and determine each meeting's agenda in consultation with the broader group.
- 4.5. An accurate record of each Community Reference Group meeting will be kept.

5. Remuneration

- 5.1. Attendance at the Community Reference Group will attract a sitting fee for its non-government members. Reasonable travel and accommodation costs for members from regional Victoria will be reimbursed.

6. Decision-making processes

- 6.1. The Community Reference Group is advisory and hence consensus or other decision making processes are not required.

7. Reporting

- 7.1. A summary paper and copies of presentations on the topics discussed at Community Reference Group meetings shall be circulated to the group following the meeting