CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

Warrina Lakes Stakeholder Reference Group – Terms of Reference

Name of Group	Warrina Lakes Stakeholder Reference Group
Project Focus	Refurbishment or replacement of the existing building.
Status	Advisory Stakeholder Reference Group

1. Purpose

The Warrina Lakes Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) exists to give Council structured stakeholder input on the future of the Warrina Lakes facility.

The SRG will help Council consider the two options under consideration for the facility:

- refurbishing the existing building; or
- rebuilding / replacing the facility.

If Council decides to pursue a new facility, the SRG's purpose extends to providing stakeholder input into the design of the new facility, including participation in design workshops with the project's designers.

The SRG is advisory only. It cannot make decisions on Council's behalf, commit Council to any course of action, or direct Council officers, consultants or contractors.

2. Background

Council is reviewing the future of the Warrina Lakes facility because of the building's condition, and related risk, asset management, functionality and community-use considerations.

Council has received a petition about the future of the facility and has carried out community engagement to better understand community values and expectations. Council has also commissioned a range of technical, strategic and financial reports, including a structural condition report, building services condition report, community engagement and consultation results report, funding opportunities advice, and a technical risk mitigation study.

Council has not yet decided on a preferred approach. The SRG will give Council balanced, informed stakeholder input to help with that decision, alongside Council's wider responsibilities for risk, asset management, financial sustainability and duty of care.

3. Scope

The SRG may consider and give feedback on matters relevant to the future of the Warrina Lakes facility, including:

- the role and importance of the facility to the community;
- the strengths, limitations and implications of the refurbishment and rebuild/ replacement options;
- community values, user needs and functional requirements;

- accessibility, inclusion and usability;
- opportunities to support community connection, events and activation;
- how future options fit with the wider Warrina Lakes parklands setting;
- design principles and user priorities for any future facility; and
- outcomes of design workshops, where applicable.

The SRG is not responsible for:

- making decisions on Council's behalf;
- setting project budgets, procurement or delivery arrangements;
- acting as a project control group or steering committee;
- directing Council officers, consultants or contractors; or
- claiming that its views are binding on Council.

4. Objectives

The objectives of the SRG are to:

1. give Council informed stakeholder feedback on the viable approaches for the Warrina Lakes facility;
2. help Council understand stakeholder views on the facility's role, function and future use;
3. identify how community values can be reflected in future planning for the facility;
4. review and give feedback on technical and strategic material provided by Council;
5. support a transparent, structured engagement process before Council decides on a preferred way forward; and
6. if Council later decides to pursue a new facility, provide stakeholder input into planning and design, including taking part in design workshops.

5. Membership

5.1 Composition

To keep the SRG effective and manageable, membership is limited to **up to nine (9) external members**, supported by relevant Council officers.

Membership should reflect a broad range of stakeholders connected with the Warrina Lakes facility and its community use, for example:

- regular users of the Warrina Lakes building;
- community and service organisations;
- sporting, recreation or cultural groups;
- accessibility or inclusion representatives;
- First Nations representatives, engaged through the relevant Cassowary Coast Region Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) or other appropriate local cultural authority;
- local businesses or organisations;
- young people; and
- other stakeholders identified as relevant during the appointment process.

Council may also invite subject matter experts, project consultants or specialist advisers to attend meetings where their expertise is relevant. These attendees are not SRG members and do not count toward the nine (9) member cap.

Council officers may attend meetings in an advisory and administrative capacity, but are not members of the SRG.

5.2 Membership Principles

In appointing members, Council will look for a mix that reflects:

- diversity of age, background and lived experience;
- direct knowledge of, or connection to, the Warrina Lakes facility and its use;
- community credibility and constructive participation; and
- the ability to consider issues in a strategic, balanced and informed way.

5.3 Appointment of Members

The Chief Executive Officer will appoint members following an expression of interest process, a targeted invitation process, or a combination of both.

Appointments will be based on:

- a demonstrated connection to, or interest in, the Warrina Lakes facility;
- the ability to represent a relevant stakeholder perspective;
- willingness to participate constructively and respectfully; and
- the capacity to attend meetings and review material.

The Chief Executive Officer may appoint alternate members where appropriate.

5.4 Term of Appointment

Members are appointed for the life of the SRG, unless they resign, are removed, or Council decides to extend or change the group's role.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Role of the SRG

The role of the SRG is to:

- provide practical, informed stakeholder perspectives;
- review information presented by Council officers and consultants;
- identify key issues, opportunities and user considerations;
- give feedback on the comparative merits of the viable options;
- help test whether proposed approaches respond to community values and user needs; and
- where relevant, take part in design workshops and give feedback on design principles, concept options and user functionality.

6.2 Role of the Chairperson

The SRG will be chaired by a Council representative (a Councillor or a senior Council officer), as determined by Council.

The Chairperson is responsible for:

- presiding over meetings;
- making sure meetings are conducted in an orderly, respectful and efficient way;
- keeping discussion balanced and on track;
- keeping the group focused on its purpose and scope; and
- confirming meeting notes before they are circulated.

If the Chairperson is unavailable, a temporary chair may be nominated for that meeting.

6.3 Role of Council Officers

Council officers will provide administrative, governance and technical support to the SRG, including:

- preparing agendas and meeting papers;
- coordinating meeting dates, venues and attendance;
- providing relevant background information and presentations;
- recording meeting notes and action items;
- facilitating design workshops, where required; and
- liaising with consultants and specialist advisers.

Council officers may attend meetings to present information, answer questions and support discussion.

6.4 Responsibilities of Members

Members are expected to:

- attend meetings and take part constructively;
- review material sent to them before meetings;
- contribute their knowledge, experience and stakeholder perspective;
- consider issues in a balanced, informed way;
- respect differing views and the Chairperson's role;
- declare conflicts of interest;
- keep information confidential where required; and
- follow these Terms of Reference and any relevant Council policies or directions.

7. Governance

7.1 Advisory Status

The SRG is advisory only and cannot make decisions on Council's behalf.

The SRG can give Council feedback, observations and advice, but Council is not bound by the SRG's views.

7.2 Recording of Members' Views

The SRG will aim to reach a shared view on matters within its scope wherever possible.
Where members hold different views, meeting records will show the position each member present has taken — for example, how many were in favour, against, or held no clear position — along with how many members were absent. If a member has declared a conflict of interest and did not take part in discussing a matter, this will be recorded separately from an absence.

The SRG does not vote, and its views do not count as a decision of the SRG or of Council. Recording members' views is meant to give Council a clear, honest picture of the range of stakeholder opinion, not to determine an outcome.

7.3 Conflicts of Interest

Members must disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest as soon as possible, and at least at the start of any meeting where the issue arises.

The Chairperson, with advice from Council officers, will decide how to manage the conflict.

This may include:

- noting the conflict and letting the member stay;
- asking the member not to take part in discussing that matter; or
- asking the member to leave the meeting for that item.

7.4 Standards of Conduct

Members must:

- act respectfully, honestly and in good faith;
- listen to and consider different views;
- contribute constructively and stay focused on the SRG's purpose;
- avoid disruptive, offensive, intimidating or inappropriate behaviour;
- not misrepresent the SRG's role or Council's position;
- not make public statements on behalf of the SRG or Council unless authorised; and
- follow any relevant Council policies, codes or directions.

If a member does not meet these standards, the Chairperson may issue a warning, ask the member to leave a meeting, or recommend to Council or the Chief Executive Officer that the member's appointment be reviewed or ended.

8. Meetings

8.1 Frequency

The SRG will meet at key stages of the Warrina Lakes Building project, rather than to a fixed schedule. Meetings may be called when:

- significant technical information becomes available;
- the refurbishment or rebuild / replacement options are being developed or assessed;
- Council reaches an important project milestone;
- funding or project delivery information becomes available;
- detailed design work begins, if applicable; or
- Council considers further stakeholder input would help its consideration of the project.

8.2 Meeting Format

Meetings may be held in person, online, or in a mix of both. Design workshops and site visits may also be held where relevant to the SRG's role.

8.3 Agenda and Papers

Agendas and supporting papers will be sent to members ahead of meetings where practical.

9. Administrative Arrangements

Council will provide secretariat support to the SRG, including:

- coordinating and facilitating meetings;
- providing relevant project information and updates, and explaining technical detail, constraints, risks, costs and options in clear, plain language;
- making relevant technical officers, consultants or specialists available where appropriate;
- preparing a short record of each meeting — covering what was discussed, key questions raised, information provided, matters needing further work or response, and agreed actions (this is a summary, not a word-for-word transcript);

- on matters where the SRG gives feedback on the viable approaches, recording members' positions (for example, how many were in favour, against, or held no clear position), how many members were absent, and any member who did not take part due to a declared conflict of interest, as set out in clause 7.2;
- responding to outstanding questions where reasonably practical;
- making sure significant issues raised through the SRG reach the relevant project officers and decision-makers;
- maintaining a membership register and recording conflict-of-interest declarations; and
- coordinating any design workshops or site visits.

The Chairperson will confirm meeting records before they are circulated to members.
Members should let Council officers know in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting.

If a member misses three meetings in a row without a reasonable excuse, Council or the Chief Executive Officer may review that member's appointment.

10. Confidentiality and Information Management

Members may be given information to support informed discussion. Members must:

- use information from Council only for SRG purposes;
- respect confidentiality requirements where Council identifies them; and
- not distribute confidential, draft or restricted material without Council's approval.

Nothing in these Terms of Reference stops Council releasing information as required by law or its usual governance processes.

11. Communication with Networks and the Media

11.1 Sharing Information with Members' Networks

Members are appointed partly because of their connection to a particular network, organisation or community interest. Members are encouraged to keep that network broadly informed about the SRG's work and general direction, using non-confidential information available to them, so the organisations and communities they represent stay aware of the project's progress.

This is meant as general, informal communication, not a way for the SRG to collect structured community feedback. The SRG's value to Council comes from members forming considered views based on the detailed technical and strategic material they see over the course of their appointment. Members should not present views gathered from their network as if they carry the same weight as the SRG's own informed feedback to Council.

11.2 Media and Formal Public Statements

The SRG is not a public spokesperson for Council.

Members must not speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of the SRG or Council unless expressly authorised to do so.

Members may share their own views personally, but must not present those views — or their network's views — as the formal position of the SRG or Council.

12. Term and Dissolution

12.1 Term

The SRG will operate from the date it is established until Council has considered a further report recommending a preferred way forward, unless Council decides otherwise.

If Council decides to pursue a new facility, it may extend the SRG's role and term to provide input into later planning and design phases.

12.2 Dissolution

The SRG will end following written advice from the Chief Executive Officer that the group's purpose has been fulfilled or that it is no longer required.

13. Review

Council may review or amend these Terms of Reference at any time.
A review may also happen if:

- the SRG's scope changes;
- Council decides to extend the SRG's role into future planning and design phases; or
- Council considers changes are needed to improve the group's effectiveness or governance.

14. Approval

These Terms of Reference take effect from the date Council adopts them.

Approved by	Council Resolution	**Approval date**	
Review date	As required.		