

ITEM 11

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL 'LOCAL EXPERT' MEMBERS AND COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES ON THE SOUTHERN JOINT REGIONAL PLANNING PANEL

Sydney and Regional Planning Panels were introduced to NSW in 2009 to strengthen decision making on regionally significant development applications and other planning matters. The five member panels include three State appointed members and two Council appointed members one of which is required to be a local "expert" member. This report sets out a process to refresh the Council appointed Panel members.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 1 The Councillor representatives, on the Southern Regional Planning Panel, namely a Delegate and Alternate Delegate, be elected for a term determined by Council.
- 2 The election of the Councillor representatives be undertaken by open vote.
- 3 Council endorse the extension of term for existing local expert representative Mark Carlon (alternative delegate) to coincide with the term of the currently endorsed local expert representative, Mr Michael Mantei until 31 August 2023 after which Council refreshes the Panel and seeks expressions of interest for local expert representatives.

### REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Mark Adamson, Manager Development Assessment and Certification  
Authorised by: Linda Davis, Director Planning + Environment - Future City + Neighbourhoods

### ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

### BACKGROUND

The Regional Panels provide independent, merit-based decision making on regional development and commenced operation on 1 July 2009. Wollongong City Council is part of the Southern Regional Planning Panel which was the first in the state to hold a determination meeting on 24 September 2009. Regional Panels consist of five members comprising: - one (1) chair (appointed by Minister); - two (2) experts (appointed by Minister); - two (2) Council appointed members (historically one Councillor and one local expert).

Section 4.4 of the Sydney and Regional Planning Panel Operational Procedures it states that *two council members are appointed by each council. At least one council member must have expertise in one or more of the following areas: planning, architecture, heritage, the environment, urban design, land economics, traffic and transport, law, engineering or tourism.*

Councillor representative positions are currently vacant following Local Government elections on 4 December 2021 and this report recommends the appointment of two Councillors, one to be the Delegate and one to be the Alternate Delegate. The alternate member's role is to act in the place of the appointed member when they are unavailable (or where conflicts are declared) with all the powers of the member. Alternative members are generally appointed for all State and Council positions on the SRPP.

The term of Council's expert member Michael Mantei expires on 31 August 2023. However, the term of the alternate member, Mark Carlon expired in December 2021. Both expert members have been effective professional Panel members and their service has been highly regarded. The need to call upon the alternate expert member is notably infrequent however, as a consequence of a conflict of interest of the primary expert, he has been engaged on a current significant project. This matter is ongoing, and it would be in the interests of Council and the Panel to maintain continuity with this matter and extend the term of the alternate expert and align it with primary expert.

Section 4.5 of the Sydney and Regional Planning Panel Operational Procedures it states that *Councils are not restricted to nominating people from the council's local area. They can appoint, terminate, and reappoint members at any time, and can determine the duration of each appointment. Generally, so as to ensure the greatest degree of continuity for the Panels, councils should consider appointing members for the maximum term of three years provided for under the EP&A Act. However, councils should reconsider if the nominations to the Panels are appropriate within 12 months following a council election.*

## PROPOSAL

This report proposes that –

- Council elects the two (2) Councillor representatives; one (1) being the Delegate and the other being the Alternate Delegate, and the term of the Alternate Local Expert be extended to coincide with the primary local expert panel member.
- This appointment ensures the continuation of local representation and the strong performance delivered by the Southern Regional Planning Panel on significant local development proposals.

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Seek external expressions of interest for local expert representatives following the end of term on 31 August 2023.

## PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 Goal “We value and protect our environment”. It specifically delivers on core business activities as detailed in the Development Assessment Service Plan 2020-21.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council determines the fees paid to local Panel members and is responsible for making payments to local expert Panel members when they attend Regional Panel meetings. It is proposed to retain the existing remuneration (\$1,100 per meeting) for the remaining duration of the current term. Fees may be reconsidered when a refresh of local experts occurs following the end of the existing term on 31 August 2023. Current remunerations paid to the Council appointed members is as follows:

- Councillors - no additional payment beyond existing Councillor entitlements
- Council Experts - \$1,100 (GST inclusive) per meeting.

## CONCLUSION

This report recommends that Council elect two (2) Councillor representatives to the Southern Regional Planning Panel – one (1) being the Delegate and the other being the Alternate Delegate. Expressions of interest will be publicly sought to refresh the local experts following finalisation of the existing term on 31 August 2023. The term of the alternate local expert should also be extended to coincide with the primary local expert to provide expertise in the event the primary expert is unavailable or identifies a conflict of interest.