

ITEM 9 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL 'LOCAL EXPERT' MEMBERS AND COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES ON THE SOUTHERN 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 following the current vacancy after the 2024 Local Government elections.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 The Councillor representatives on the Southern Regional Planning Panel, namely a Delegate and Alternate Delegate, be elected for a three-year term.
- 2 The election of the Councillor representatives be undertaken by open means on a show of hands.

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 (SRPP) which was the first in the state to hold a determination meeting on 24 September 2009. Regional Panels consist of five members comprising:

- One Chair (appointed by Minister)
- Two Experts (appointed by Minister)
- Two Council appointed members (including one Local Expert).

Section 4.4 of the Sydney and Regional Planning Panel Operational Procedures 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.*

To satisfy the relevant areas of expertise, Council has previously appointed local area experts with expertise in environmental planning and planning law, and a Councillor (and alternate delegate).

On 21 February 2022, Council resolved unanimously to appoint Councillor David Brown (Delegate) and Councillor Tania Brown (Alternative Delegate) as Councillor representatives. The Panel structure and membership has been a very successful and collaborative group. The current local area experts were appointed to the Panel by a resolution of Council on 5 February 2024 to replace outgoing members that had reached the maximum three-year term.

The Councillor Representative positions are now vacant following Local Government elections on 14 September 2024. 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. The alternate will not be included in any briefings, site visits or receive assessment reports for matters they are not presiding over.

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.

The three-year duration is considered appropriate as it will align closely with the tenure of the existing local area experts and provide continuity of the Panel team.

PROPOSAL

This report proposes that –

Council elects the two Councillor representatives: one being the Delegate and the other being the Alternate Delegate be appointed to the Panel.

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

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.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 Goal 1 – We value and protect our environment. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2032	Delivery Program 2022-2026
Strategy	Service
1.5 Maintain the unique character of the Wollongong Local Government Area, whilst balancing development, population growth and housing needs.	Development Assessment

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Matters reported to the Panel involve development that has been designed and assessed in accordance with relevant legislative planning framework that includes necessary sustainable design.

RISK MANAGEMENT

No risk identified. Decision making by the Panel is by a majority vote after considering all relevant issues and Councillors are guided by the Code of Conduct.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No additional payment beyond existing Councillor Entitlements.

CONCLUSION

This report recommends that Council elect two Councillor Representatives to the Southern Regional Planning Panel - one being the Delegate and the other being the Alternate Delegate.