



**Weed and Pest
Advisory Committee**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Adopted 28/08/2019
Minute: M02/08/2019**

APPOINTMENT

Gympie Regional Council has resolved to convene an Advisory Committee to be known as the Weed and Pest Advisory Committee under Section 264 of the Local Government Regulation 2012. Stakeholder members are appointed to the Advisory Committee by resolution of Council.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to advise Council on invasive plant and animal related matters relevant to Council and in accordance with Council's adopted Biosecurity Plan. The Advisory Committee will also act as a conduit and single point of contact enabling stakeholder members to raise issues with Council before such matters become significant.

ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In particular, all members of the Committee will:

- Act as an information conduit for the community and member's respective networks, highlighting key issues, expectations and ideas to inform the outcomes for Council projects;
- Increase community understanding of the scope and deliverables of Council projects and actions;
- Act as ambassadors for invasive species management and communicate key messages regarding progress and outcomes (where made publicly available) to member's respective networks;
- Raise matters to assist Council in achieving desired project outcomes and inform proposed actions;
- Receive briefings on the progress of projects and highlight stakeholder interests, opportunities and issues to be considered by Council;
- Review draft documentation at key milestones during individual projects and provide advice and make suggestions to refine proposed outcomes/deliverables;
- Provide feedback on a wide range of invasive species matters;
- Contribute agenda items and present relevant subject matter at meetings; and
- Actively promote and contribute to invasive species management.

CONSTRAINTS ON THE ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The role of the Committee is advisory in nature. As such the group cannot direct Council officers on any matter, nor is Council bound by any advice or suggestions put forward. Council will however give consideration to all the suggestions of the group and provide feedback as to how suggestions, proposals and/or initiatives have been addressed.

Any recommendations of the Advisory Committee will be reported to an Ordinary Meeting of Council for consideration and resolution. Council's resolution will be communicated back to Committee Members.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Advisory Committee are to:

- Enable members to represent their networks by contributing experience and local knowledge;
- Contribute, advise and promote actions and initiatives to enhance management of invasive species throughout the Gympie Region;
- Be proactive in providing suggestions to enhance current actions, projects and programs relevant to invasive species management; and
- Disseminate information about Council events, initiatives and programs relevant to invasive species management.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNCIL'S BIOSECURITY PLAN AND THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Biosecurity Plan has been built on past planning outcomes and the accumulated experience and expert local knowledge of Council staff, the community and Committee members and their networks. The Biosecurity Plan is a guide for resource allocation and investment in relation to invasive plant and animal matters in the region and provides a consistent basis for regional planning and delivery.

By committing to the Biosecurity Plan, Council has recognised the significance of the Plan as a guide to invasive species management in the Gympie region.

The Biosecurity Plan and the *Biosecurity Act 2014* which underpins it are based on the premise that biosecurity in the Gympie region is everyone's responsibility; the creation of the Committee acknowledges this collective responsibility. The Biosecurity Plan also acknowledges the existence and development of a '*general biosecurity obligation*' (GBO) culture (a shared responsibility), and is intended to guide all facets of the community in effective and coordinated management of invasive plants and animals, thereby meeting statutory obligations.

Council views the Committee as a significant resource in gathering constructive feedback, while providing valuable input regarding how practical and appropriate solutions may be implemented to manage the risks posed by invasive species.

MEMBERSHIP PROTOCOL AND EXPECTATIONS

Membership Numbers

The Advisory Committee shall consist of no more than twelve (12) members.

Council members will comprise the Portfolio Councillor and another Councillor as determined by Council. The Mayor is an ex officio member of the Committee. Meetings will be chaired by one of the Councillor members, as determined by Council.

The Director Planning and Development and Manager Lands Protection or their respective delegates are also Committee members. The Director and Manager will also be responsible for communicating information and advice provided by the Advisory Committee back to other relevant Council Officers and to the elected Council where necessary.

Membership Criteria

It is important that the Committee is representative of all landholders in the Gympie region. Members of the Committee will be selected from a cross-section of stakeholder interest groups including (but not limited to) government agencies, natural resource managers, primary production businesses and other industry groups.

The community sectors involved in invasive plant and animal management include individual landholders, community groups such as Landcare, rural industry and farmer groups, non-government organisations, and conservation interest groups. Ideally all of these sectors are represented on the Committee, and the members are tasked with engaging with their own networks as part of their role on the Committee.

Appointment of Members

Members will be sought through an Expressions of Interest process, which will be publicly advertised. Members will be selected based on their ability to support the Role and Objectives of the Advisory Committee and suitability as highlighted in the section above. Council may also select prospective members to address identified gaps in representation.

Working Groups

On occasion the Advisory Committee may co-opt working groups or external parties with appropriate expertise to deal with particular events or initiatives.

On occasion Council may also invite representatives from other parts of Council or external parties, including relevant government agencies, with appropriate expertise or interests.

Any decision to dissolve the Advisory Committee will be accompanied by written correspondence to members highlighting the reason/s for Council's decision.

Membership Term

The Advisory Committee will be established and will meet as required on a continuing basis until determined otherwise by a resolution of Council.

Appointments will be for terms of up to two years. Members may be reappointed for additional terms of up to two years.

Gympie Regional Council reserves the right to discontinue the Advisory Committee at any time under the following circumstances:

- it is deemed that the group is not effectively achieving its objectives and/undertaking its role as outlined in this TOR; and/or
- the Advisory Committee is no longer required due to a change in Council direction or the completion of a significant number of projects, actions or initiatives.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Meetings

The Advisory Committee will meet on a six monthly basis and in addition as required to enable members to contribute to specific projects and programs.

An annual community forum will be held for the purpose of providing education/information and engagement on biosecurity issues as determined by the Committee.

Secretariat

Gympie Regional Council will be responsible for the secretariat functions of the group, including requests for agenda items, preparing and distributing agendas and minutes, and distributing relevant documentation for consideration.

Meeting Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority of members, and if the number of members is an even number, one half of the number will be considered as a quorum.

Meeting Protocol

Members must ensure their conduct at meetings contributes to the success and effectiveness of the Advisory Committee. Members must abide by the following:

- respect the right to involvement and views of other members;
- participate openly and honestly and not make improper use of information or their position;
- not engage in any conduct, or behave in any manner, which may discredit the Advisory Committee (both within and outside the meeting).

Meeting Attendance

There is an expectation that an Advisory Committee member will attend all designated meetings. Where unable to attend a scheduled meeting it is expected that a member will advise of their inability prior to the meeting. The Council may remove members of the Advisory Committee if they fail to meet the meeting protocol of the Advisory Committee, miss two or more meetings without adequate reason or if they are convicted of criminal behaviour.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is acknowledged that with a stakeholder group of this nature various conflicts of interest may exist for individual members and may arise throughout the life of the Advisory Committee. As such, a member must declare any potential perceived or actual conflict of interest at the commencement of their appointment as a member of the Advisory Committee.

New and/or additional potential conflicts of interest must also be declared at the commencement of each scheduled meeting or as soon as possible following awareness of such conflict and prior to the discussion of any items for which the conflict may exist. Conflicts of interest raised in relation to specific agenda items and/or projects/programs will be addressed by the Chairperson, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, who will declare if a conflict of interest exists. If a conflict of interest does exist the member must not take part in the discussion of that item or excuse themselves during that discussion.

Spokesperson and Media Liaison

It is not envisaged that the Advisory Committee will have any role in media liaison. Individual members are welcome to speak to the media as individuals about invasive species matters, however it is to be made clear that this is not as a representative of the Advisory Committee. Care must also be taken to not make statements relating to the views or involvement of others or pertaining to any confidential information/information not yet made publicly available.