

Terms of Reference – Lake Macquarie Youth Council

1. Role (Objects)

The role of the youth council is to:

- Offer the young people of the city the opportunity to participate in the public life of Lake Macquarie.
- Find out about issues that are important to young people in the local area and provide advice to Council about addressing issues facing young people.
- Participate in the planning, running and evaluation of local initiatives and projects for young people.

2. Responsibilities of the Youth Council

2.1 Youth council will seek to represent the views of young people and provide advice from the perspective of young people to Council and others.

2.2 Where youth council has capacity, it may assist with the development and delivery of other local activities, events and programs for young people.

2.3 All members of youth council are responsible to conduct themselves in a reasonable manner and respect the views of other members. Breaches can result in termination of membership (Section 5).

3. Membership

3.1 Members of youth council are entitled to communicate their views, debate motions and vote.

3.2 Ex-Officio members are present to provide support and advice to members and have neither debating or voting rights, this includes elected Councillors, staff and the area Youth Development Officer.

3.3 A Member shall be aged from minimum of twelve years with a maximum age of twenty-four years. Upon turning twenty-five years of age, the person will automatically cease to be a member of the LMYAC.

3.4 To be eligible to apply for membership an applicant must live, work or meaningfully participate in the community of Lake Macquarie at the time of application.

3.5 The youth council where possible, will seek to have an equal representation from each electoral ward.

3.6 General Membership can be offered to eligible young people after receipt of a membership application and attendance at two meetings. At the first meeting the applicant will be provided with an opportunity to give reason why they are eligible for membership. Any concern regarding the applicant's eligibility must be raised through the Chairperson or with the Council Officer and resolved before the second meeting.

3.7 In order to maintain General Membership status, members must attend four meetings each calendar year including the annual meeting in July to elect the new executive team. Where members are unable to attend a meeting, they are asked to submit an apology which is correctly minuted.

3.8 Where a member does not attend three meetings in a row without submitting an apology, they will be contacted by a Council officer to check if they wish to continue as a member. If no response has been received within a week, the person will cease to be a member of youth council and will be required to re-apply if they want to resume membership.

3.9 A member may request a 'leave of absence' for up to 12 months by submitting the request in writing to a member of youth council's executive (i.e. Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary). The executive has the authority to grant a leave of absence. If the period exceeds 12 months, the person is required to re-apply for membership.

4. Procedures and Proceedings

4.1 The youth council shall elect an executive team including the following positions at the first meeting (July) of each financial year; Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson/s, and Secretary. Election will occur where possible, through consensus decision. If a consensus is not reached, position will be determined by a majority resolution of youth council reached through a secret ballot where Council Officer will act as returning officer. Term of office shall be one year, or as a vacancy arises until the first meeting of the financial year.

4.2 Other roles such as Project Officers, may be identified and appointed by gaining approval from four members after a motion is put at a meeting or through online decision-making process.

4.3 A quorum for the purposes of gaining approval by youth council requires the presence of at least four (4) members and where any one (1) ex-officio member is present to confirm due process has been followed.

4.4 If at the start time of the meeting the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson shall assume the role of chairing the meeting until the Chairperson arrives, or until the meeting is concluded. If neither Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson is present, the role will be temporarily filled by a member chosen by consensus of members present.

4.5 Any member that has a pecuniary interest (i.e. personal stake or benefit) in a matter being discussed by the youth council shall declare that interest and will refrain from voting and discussion of the matter but may remain in the room.

4.6 Members will receive at least three (3) days notice of the time and place of meetings via facebook postings or individual email where required.

4.7 Minutes of each meeting of youth council will be recorded by the Secretary or delegate, and reviewed by a Council Officer and then posted on facebook for approval by four (4) general members, details of which are to be recorded in the following minutes.

5. Termination of Membership

5.1 A Member or Ex-Officio Member of youth council may have their membership terminated, or be stood down for a nominated period for the following reasons:

a) Disrespectful and/or unprofessional conduct during meetings, or other activities / events attended by Youth Council and towards other members of youth council;

b) Failure to conduct themselves in accordance with these Terms of Reference;

c) Failure to attend at least four (4) meetings a year including the annual meeting in July to elect new executive committee where an apology has not been received and minuted.

d) Where a member misses three (3) meetings in a row without apology they will be notified in writing that their membership is at risk. If there is no response after the second attempt to contact the member, they will cease to be a member.

5.2 A Member who has received formal notice of termination or otherwise has fourteen (14) days to respond in writing to appeal the notice including the grounds for that appeal. If no appeal is made the termination will stand.

5.3 Where an appeal is received, it is to be considered by the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and at least one (1) Ex-Officio member. A recommendation is to be made to youth council by this group and resolved by majority resolution of members. The decision is to be recorded in the minutes and the Council officer is to inform the applicant of the decision.

5.5 The decision of youth council is final and no further appeal process can be offered or awarded.

6. Alteration to the Terms of Reference

6.1 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on a biennial basis by the community-based Youth Development Officer (YDO) and the Council officer to ensure the document adequately reflects the functions and responsibilities of the Committee.

6.2 The Committee Terms of Reference are to be reviewed and adopted by the members at their annual planning day and/or at the end of each Council term. Members may adopt minor changes to the Terms of Reference at other times.

6.3 Significant changes to the Terms of Reference must be referred to the department responsible for administering the Committee for concurrence with the proposed amendments, following consideration and approval of members.