

# **Cuttagee Bridge Community Advisory Group**

## **Guidelines**

Bega Valley Shire Council

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# Preface

The Cuttagee Bridge Community Advisory Group has been established as a mechanism for exchanging information and seeking community advice to help inform the future of Cuttagee Bridge.

Council resolutions of 10<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021 regarding the future of Cuttagee Bridge directed that a Community Advisory Group as specified below be formed:

“Delegate the General Manager to form a community advisory group to provide guidance on how best to capture the heritage of Cuttagee Bridge and the group include a representative of the Biamanga National Park Management Group.”

The group was established October 2021 following an open Expression of Interest process however despite several contacts no members of the Biamanga National Park Management Group were available to participate in the initial tranche.

These guidelines include information on the roles and responsibilities of members of this Group and the scope and limitations of the Group.

## Review

These documents will be reviewed and amended by Council as required.

Feedback from Group members is welcome and should be forwarded to Council to ensure consideration in the review process. Correspondence can be forwarded to [council@begavalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@begavalley.nsw.gov.au).

## Support

These guidelines are designed to give group members an understanding of the groups' operating framework. However, Council is committed to ensuring that group members have access to the support needed to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Any questions or requests for assistance should be directed in the first instance to Council's Project Services Manager.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Cuttagee Bridge

Cuttagee Bridge is nearing the end of its functional life and is now subject to weight restrictions due to the deteriorating condition of its ageing timbers. It is in danger of potentially catastrophic structural failure unless remedial action is taken. Council is now in a position where it needs to make difficult decisions about how to manage this bridge into the future. It is very important that the planners, designers, and decision makers at all levels are fully informed of the wants and needs of the local community, residents, businesses, and visitors and how any works will affect them and the wider Shire in years to come.

## 1.2 Implementation of these guidelines

A copy of the guidelines will be provided to all members of this group at the inaugural meeting. Additional copies of the guidelines are available from Council with prior notice.

It must be noted that the absence of guidelines for specific activities in this, or related documents, must not be taken as an absence of any required procedures or responsibilities. Questions not specifically addressed in this guideline should be directed in the first instance to Council's Project Services Manager.

## 1.3 Key dates for the group

The group shall meet at agreed intervals deemed appropriate during project development and immediately prior to any important project milestones.

# 2. Group Operations

## 2.1 The legal position of the group

This Group is not a formal Committee of Council within the meaning of Section 355 of the Local Government Act (1993) and has no executive powers.

## 2.2 Related Council policies and procedures

Policies and procedures are essential to ensure that legal, fair, and consistent decisions are made across Council operations. Policies and procedures support Council in achieving its corporate objectives and provide crucial guidelines for Councillors, staff, and other stakeholders.

This document aims to provide details of the steps that the group needs to follow to meet the requirements of Council policies and procedures.

A copy of all related Council policies and procedures are available from Council or online at <https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au>.

Council officers are also available to answer questions and assist the group with policies and procedures that are essential to ensure that legal, fair, and consistent decisions are made across Council operations.

## 2.3 Group correspondence and communications

The following guidelines are provided for this group to use in correspondence and communications to ensure appropriate representation on behalf of Council:

- A group may write to any person, body, organisation, or agency in the pursuit of information which, in the group's opinion is an integral part of information and data gathering and collecting to enable the group to be best placed to advise the Council.
- A group may write to or otherwise communicate with any person, body, organisation, or agency on any other matters within the group's delegations which are not of a contentious nature. A contentious matter is taken to be a matter which has the potential to be derogatory, unseemly, not in the public interest, or likely to erode public confidence in the Council.
- A group may not represent or imply a representation of the views of Council without express authorisation of Council's Chief Executive Officer or his/her representative. All correspondence

representing the group will be undertaken through the Chair and not by individual members unless otherwise agreed.

## 2.4 Group roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Cuttagee Bridge Advisory Group, as delegated by resolution of Council, are to:

- Provide guidance on how best to capture the heritage of Cuttagee Bridge into the future

In addition to the stated remit above, the following items will be discussed and considered by the group to assist in the fuller understanding of the issues and context and better inform its recommendation to Council:

- Future engineering, construction, and design options
- The social and environmental aspects of the project
- Consideration of funding opportunities as and when they arise

## 2.5 Group membership

The Cuttagee Bridge Advisory Group is chaired by the Director Assets and Operations, with membership comprising of 8 - 10 community representatives selected from an open Expression of Interest application procedure.

From time-to-time subject matter experts, not be limited to council staff, will be invited by the Chair to attend and contribute to group meetings.

The Cuttagee Bridge Advisory Group is not a forum for lobbying by members representing other groups, associations or interested parties not in keeping with items identified in paragraph 2.4.

To ensure a fair and equitable opportunity for participation, in addition to a greater breadth of public input, the initial term of group appointments will be for two years (with the exception of the Chairperson).

Council will provide a secretariat function to this group, in the form of a Council employee.

# 3. Meeting Procedures

## 3.1 Meeting frequency

As per Section 1.3 of the Guidelines, the Group shall meet a minimum 4 times per year.

## 3.2 Meeting notification

Although meeting dates are predetermined, as a reminder, notification of meetings will be made in writing to Group members providing at least 2 weeks' notice of the next meeting date.

## 3.3 Quorum

The quorum of the Cuttagee Bridge Advisory Group meeting shall be a minimum of five members of the Group including at least four community representatives.

### 3.4 Record keeping and public access to information

Draft minutes of the Cuttagee Bridge Advisory Group will be provided to Group members within two weeks after the meeting date (where possible) and confirmed at the next meeting of the Group.

It is anticipated that all information discussed at the group meetings will be publicly available, unless deemed to be Commercial in Confidence, and the minutes will be published on the Cuttagee Bridge Project page on the BVSC website.

### 3.5 Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice

Council recognises the importance of being transparent in all its dealings and has adopted a Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice to be observed by Groups. These codes detail the appropriate behaviours of Group members and the obligations of Group members should a conflict of interest or pecuniary interest arise.

In order to assist Group members, definitions of conflict of interest and pecuniary interest are provided below:

- a) A conflict of interest exists when a Group person has to deal in a matter in their public capacity, which is also a matter where the person:
  - has a private interest arising out of kinship, friendship, membership of an association, society or trade union, or involvement or interest in an activity; or
  - could reasonably be perceived by others as one in which a conflict of interest could possibly exist.
- b) A pecuniary interest is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person or another person with whom that person is associated.

In the event of a Group member feeling that they may have a conflict of interest or pecuniary interest, it is their obligation to ensure that they comply with the Council Code of Conduct and the Council Code of Meeting Practice.

The appropriate procedure for handling conflicts of interest or pecuniary interests is for that person to declare the interest and taking no part in discussion or voting on the matter under discussion. This may include the necessity for the person to leave the meeting while the agenda item is addressed.

Full copies of Council's Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice and are available from Council or online at: <https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au>.