

Terms of Reference

How does Brimbank Community Voice work?

Background

Brimbank City Council is committed to expanding opportunities for community participation in Council projects, strategies and service design. Brimbank Community Voice was created to provide the community with opportunity to engage with Council projects in ways that suit your life and your schedule.

Purpose

Brimbank Community Voice provides a representative sample of the Brimbank community. The panel members discuss various projects, plans, and issues. The purpose of the panel is to:

- Provide representative insights of community views, needs and priorities
- Increase community participation and civic engagement
- Build relationships and provide more ways to engage.

Scope and Function

Brimbank Community Voice is a panel through which community members share their feedback, experiences and ideas with Council. This feedback will be considered by Council when planning projects and services. Brimbank Community Voice has no decision-making authority. Council makes the final decisions.

Who is eligible to join?

Brimbank Community Voice is open to all Brimbank residents, rate payers and local business owners over the age of 18. Elected government representatives, paid employees of any political party, and Brimbank City Council staff are not eligible to join.

What commitment is required of me?

We understand that people lead busy lives, so there is no specific commitment required for how often you participate. After joining Brimbank Community Voice you will receive emails about upcoming activities. You can decide whether or not to put in an Expression of Interest to participate.

The main commitment we require is that you treat all Brimbank Community Voice members and Council staff with courtesy and respect. We will not permit threatening behaviour, or insulting/aggressive words and actions.

Is participation in activities paid or voluntary?

General membership of Brimbank Community Voice is unpaid. Throughout the year there will be a variety of activities available for you to participate in. Some activities may be paid with a gift voucher, while others will be voluntary. We will tell you whether an activity is paid or voluntary before you agree to participate.

Is there a minimum time commitment needed?

There is no minimum time commitment required. You can choose to participate when it suits your schedule. You can remain a member of Brimbank Community Voice as long as you choose. Your membership will remain active until you decide to leave the group, or after 12 months of inactivity. Inactivity is defined as when you have not expressed an interest in any opportunities, updated your details or interacted with Council Community Engagement staff. Before we remove inactive members from Brimbank Community Voice, we will contact you. We will either provide an opportunity to re-engage or check if you wish to be removed.

How will we contact you?

Communication will be mostly through direct email or a member email newsletter.

For example:

- Inviting you to participate in activities
- Workshops reminders (email & SMS)
- Thanking you for your participation
- Sharing the outcomes of consultation

We will only contact you via other means if you have asked for this to occur. For example, to accommodate accessibility needs or to further discuss feedback you have provided.

What type of activities may be available for members?

You can participate in the activities that suit your interests and availability. There will be different opportunities to be involved. This may include participating face-to-face, online or over the phone. Workshops may be several hours or sometimes held over multiple days.

How does the selection process work?

Members will be invited to take part in various engagement activities. Some consultations will be open to all members, and some will be targeted to specific groups, for example, based on age, gender or another demographic. Some consultations will allow all of those invited to participate and others will have limited places. When there is a new engagement activity:

- We will email you the link to an Expression of Interest (EOI) online form
- You will fill in the EOI online form by the due date. (If you are interested and available.)
- We will contact everyone who applied. We will tell you if you were selected or unsuccessful.

Council Officers cannot request specific members be included or excluded from an activity. This helps prevent any bias in the voices we are hearing from.

It is the responsibility of all members to declare any conflict of interest that may arise as a result of their participation in a Brimbank Community Voice activity. Where a conflict of interest is identified, this must be reported to the group administrator immediately and the member is required to excuse themselves from participating in the activity.

What supports are available for me to participate?

- An interpreter
- Vision support
- Hearing support
- Child-friendly spaces
- Transport support
- Or other assistance you need.

Conflict of interest

It is your responsibility to declare to staff any conflict of interest that may arise as a result of your participation in a Brimbank Community Voice activity. Where a conflict of interest is ongoing and not isolated to a specific project, it may be necessary to step down from the group.

Members running in Local Government elections must step aside during the election period and will be exited from the group if elected.

How will you protect my privacy?

We take your privacy very seriously. All data is stored in line with Australian Privacy Principles. We are committed to protecting the privacy of personal and health information collected and used. Our Information Privacy and Health Records Policy complies with our obligations under the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (VIC) and the Health Records Act 2001 (VIC).

Review

These Terms of Reference will be subject to review in two years. The review will include evaluation of the member experience, processes and management.