



INSPIRING MULTICULTURAL HARMONY

MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY and ACTION GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

JANUARY 2016

Community development

1. BACKGROUND

The Multicultural Advisory and Action Group (MAAG) was formed in 2015 as part of commitment of local community stakeholders to strengthen capacity to address Cultural and Religious issues of linguistically diverse communities. The catalyst to this project was the fracture that occurred in the community of the southern end of the Gold coast over the proposal to build an Islamic place of worship and a community centre in Currumbin. Leaders of local communities met and initiated the MAAG. The invitation was extended to individuals with professional experience in community work.

The first meeting of the working group was held at the Catholic Church in Tugun in December 2015 with attendance from leaders of various community groups including the Islamic community, the Christian community, the Buddhist society and members of the Baha'i community.

It was recommended that MAAG is urgently required and that the membership be broadened to help achieve its goals, one of which to make the Gold Coast a compassionate city in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2018.

MAAG consulted with local councillors and the Police Service to initiate and expand co - operation from all sectors.

2. VISION

The vision of MAAG is to create and strengthen existing links with already established community and charitable organisations in order to promote social harmony, cohesiveness and empowerment of the people through education, integration, inculcating a sense of belonging to the society.

3. PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

The overriding purpose of MAAG is to promote harmony and equality for all residents of the City of Gold Coast. MAAG will work closely with Council and the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland and all sectors of the community on multicultural and inter-faith issues and provide

advice and participate in the promotion of increased understanding and awareness of cultural diversity within the broader community of the City of Gold Coast.

MAAG is committed to partnering with various community groups and local City Council to provide advice on the barriers facing people from various backgrounds who work, live or study on the Gold Coast.

MAAG does not intend to represent only individual group interests, but rather acts as an advocate for harmony amongst all communities on the Gold Coast.

The establishment of MAAG will contribute to the understanding, respecting and celebrating unity in diversity.

MAAG will be actively involved in advocating on issues of importance to community wellbeing, ensure equitable access and a high level of service to meet the varied needs of our community, promote and foster health and wellbeing in the community, promote and enhance community pride and a sense of belonging through arts, recreation, culture and every aspect of community life.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 To understand and act on the issues faced by community groups which hinder their physical and physiological health, sense of wellbeing, safety, sense of belonging and ability to participate actively within the broader community equally.

4.2 Every resident of the City of Gold Coast has the right to equal access to services, projects and programs initiated by respective communities so long it is for the benefit of the society.

4.3 All residents of the City of Gold Coast should be able to observe their own cultural and religious practices without being discriminated against or disadvantaged and be able to show respect to other cultures.

4.4 Gold Coast communities should be given opportunities to develop confidence and reach their full potential for active mainstream civic participation.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP

The objectives of MAAG are:

- Provide advice and recommendations to local groups and Council on multicultural and inter-faith issues;
- Promote and celebrate cultural and religious diversity by advocating for increased awareness and understanding of issues and needs of specific and new and emerging communities.
- To seek the highest wisdom and the most expedient expression for the well-being of the community.

6. GUIDELINES FOR THE MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY and ACTION GROUP

MAAG will fulfil its role by adhering to the guidelines outlined below:

- The members of MAAG will have the community's best interests in mind;
- MAAG will advise on issues relating to their individual communities and their relationship to the whole community;
- MAAG will seek to balance the different cultural perspectives and needs which can be integrated within the whole society.
- MAAG will report back and consult with their respective communities on any information or issues arising in MAAG's meetings; it will assist in providing effective counsel to local communities in promoting the benefits of cultural and religious diversity by offering their informed opinions and recommendations.

7. MEMBERSHIP

All members of the community, incorporating a cross-section across gender, age, cultural background, established communities and newly arrived communities will be invited to join MAAG.

MAAG executive membership will consist of:

At least two (2) representatives from a community organisation or service provider whose primary purpose is supporting the communities of the Gold Coast;

A maximum of fourteen (14) community members plus the chairman will form the executive committee at any one time. These will include the following:

- Key community leaders from new and emerging communities as well as established communities,
- Residents and individuals with extensive skills in community affairs with knowledge and understanding of the needs and issues affecting the local communities;
- Youth from diverse backgrounds.

In the event of a low turn up at an executive meeting, a quorum shall constitute six (6) members of various communities plus the chairman. Additional members if present may join the executive committee even if their respective communities are already numerically represented.

If there are more than 14 members present, the supernumerary members may still attend the meeting but will not have any voting rights. They may advise MAAG on issues being discussed during recesses. The frequency of meetings will depend on the activity of MAAG.

Members of the QPS or ADCQ who attend will not have any voting rights.

MAAG reserves the right to achieve a broader representation from wider geographical areas across the Gold Coast and representation of as many communities as possible.

Members should have an interest and involvement in local and/or broader multicultural community affairs, advocacy and networks; contributing to MAAG's aims and objectives and a commitment to making a positive difference for the residents of the City of Gold Coast.

Members should agree to join MAAG on a voluntary basis;

Member should have direct links to local multicultural and inter-faith groups and new emerging communities and should not just be representing oneself except if one has unique skills that will benefit MAAG to achieve its goals.

8. MEETINGS

Meetings will be held as required and minutes will be taken.

Each member should exercise reasonable care and diligence;

Should not make improper use of the information acquired because of their position;

Treat others with respect, equality and dignity at all times; and

Respect the views, opinions, cultural and religious differences of others.

Where a member of MAAG has an interest or conflict of interest in relation to a matter in which MAAG is concerned, or is likely to be considered or discussed, the member must disclose the interest to MAAG before the matter is considered or discussed at the meeting. Disclosure must include the nature of the relevant interest and be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Members must treat information they receive as confidential unless otherwise advised.

MAAG may require members to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The only person authorised to speak to the media on behalf of MAAG is the Chair of the Committee.

9. REPORTING PROCEDURE

- MAAG is required to prepare a formal report on an annual basis in line with the stated objectives, and present it to the Annual General Meeting of MAAG.
- The report must be formally adopted by MAAG and should directly reflect the objectives and the performance measures of the group as set out in these Terms of Reference.

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE

These Terms of Reference must:

- Be reviewed within 12 months of operations. . Any proposed changes to the Terms of Reference resulting from a review must be agreed on by MAAG and be presented to the AGM for consideration and ratification with or without further amendment.

