

#### 9.4 PROPOSED MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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**Attachments:** Nil

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#### SUMMARY

This report proposes to extend the membership term of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee (MEAC) for an additional six (6) months due to difficulties with community engagement and induction during COVID-19.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** Council endorses the extension of the current membership of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee until 23 November 2020 being the date of the November Council meeting.

#### BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee, as stipulated in the Terms of Reference is to capitalise “...on the knowledge, experience and skill available in the community to provide Mitchell Shire Council with strategic advice in respect to environmental sustainability and management issues and initiatives within the municipality.”

The applications for the community positions on the Committee have been assessed against this purpose and other measures identified in the Terms of Reference.

The current membership was endorsed by Council on 18 May 2018 and was due to conclude on 18 May 2020.

#### ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

Given the current circumstances with COVID-19, this report recommends that the current committee continues for an additional six (6) months for consistency and to avoid the advertising and induction process of a new committee during the pandemic.

Ten of the eleven current membership have agreed to continue as part of MEAC until November 2020, which is in accordance with the Terms of Reference ‘that there must be a minimum of six (6) and maximum of twelve (12) community members.’

The members committed to continuing their term on the Committee are;

- Geoff Clarke;
- Michael Watson;
- Laura Mundy;
- Peter Chapman;
- Ian Julian;

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PROPOSED MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (CONT.)

- Marla Stone;
- Trevor Vienet;
- Lauren Hull;
- Lesley Dalziel; and
- Daniel Young.

The Terms of Reference for MEAC includes a clause that “*A matter that cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next meeting be resolved via email*”. This means that MEAC can continue to operate remotely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **CONSULTATION**

Officers have liaised with the current members of MEAC including Cr. Eldridge who is the chair of the committee in the preparation of this report.

### **FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There is an annual budget allocation provided to support and co-ordinate the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee meetings.

### **POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The operation of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee assists Council in delivering a strategic objective of the *Mitchell Shire Council Plan 2017-2021*, specifically the following actions;

- *Increase the use of the Environment Advisory Committee as a mechanism for community engagement on relevant environment matters;*
- *The Environment Advisory Committee is engaged on environmental matters impacting the community;*
- *Support Council’s Advisory Committee members; and*
- *Support the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee.*

The continued operation of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee also assists Council in achieving the aims and purpose of the Mitchell Shire Community *Mitchell Shire Engagement Framework 2016* and the *Mitchell Shire Environment Strategy 2014-2024*.

The Advisory Committees have been established by Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. They have been established to provide specific external expertise and input into strategy development and implementation and comprises of one or more Councillors, Council Officers, and several community representatives.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)**

The purpose of the Mitchell Shire Environment Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice in respect to environmental sustainability within the municipality.

PROPOSED MITCHELL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (CONT.)

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

**CONCLUSION**

The term of the current membership of the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee is due to conclude on 18 May 2020, however given the current COVID-19 pandemic it is recommended that the membership term is extended until the 23 November 2020, being the date of the November Council meeting.