

	<h1>Advocacy Policy</h1>
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Responsible officer:	General Manager, Corporate Services
Policy owner	Manager, Economic Development & Advocacy

1. Purpose

To provide direction for Council's advocacy efforts in working in partnership with our community to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions by other levels of Government, and other key stakeholders, to fulfil responsibilities in the delivery of services and assets to our existing and fast growing future community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Council and its Officers when establishing and delivering on key advocacy themes and priorities and how Council resources its efforts to advocate on behalf of the community.

The Mayor and Councillors play a key role in the development and maintenance of political relationships to pursue Council's advocacy on behalf of the community.

Council Officers support the Council in the development and resourcing of the advocacy effort and providing an evidence base to assist the determination of priorities and approach.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Advocacy	<p>An action intended to influence those who hold governmental, political or economic authority and or influence to implement public policies, resource and projects to the benefit of any specific affected or interest populations within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Melton; and/or • The Region, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adjacent Councils, ○ Greater Western Melbourne ○ Interface Municipalities.
Advocacy Framework	<p>A high level framework for Council, setting advocacy priorities that align with the Council Plan, which seek to complement those of the State and Federal Governments, the business sector and the community.</p>
Advocacy Strategy	<p>Individual strategies that assist the formation of actions and campaigns that seek to identify or clarify the advocacy theme or subject, research surrounding issues, plan a campaign and set of activities, and establish an evaluation framework.</p>

Advocacy Campaigns	Individual campaigns that establish a program of resourced techniques to influence a target audience/s to achieve the strategic goal.
Advocacy techniques	Variety of practices such as effective submissions, direct lobbying, leading deputations, inviting decision-makers to tour, hosting consultations, establishing hearings, media strategies, and advertising.

4. Policy

The Melton City Council Plan provides identification and commitments on issues that matter to our community. Council's Advocacy Policy and associated Advocacy Framework, Advocacy Campaigns and actions, are built from the issues and foundation of the Council Plan and reinforced by a series of specialist strategic plans, which provide the themes and priorities for how Council directs its resources and uses its voice on behalf of residents.

Advocacy focuses on what needs to be done to influence external parties that have an authority or significant influence on whether Council can deliver on its plans and strategies to meet the needs and aspirations of our community.

Council's advocacy position is developed via a framework informed by the Council Plan through the establishment of actions and resourced campaigns as provided in individual advocacy strategies.

Successful advocacy will result or contribute to one, or a combination of the following;

- A change in government legislation, policy or practices, to the overall benefit of residents, our local environment and/or local business;
- Committed investment / provision into local infrastructure and/or services by sources other than Melton City Council;
- Receipt of external funding to Melton City Council to implement services, projects and initiatives;
- Promotion of an issue or information to key stakeholder decision makers and other levels of government to influence positive change;
- Promotion of, or raised awareness of, issue or information to facilitate positive change in community behaviour and attitudes; and/or
- Empowering community to become more involved in local issues, decision-making and initiatives.

Successful outcomes of this advocacy ultimately result in a better quality of life for both existing and future residents.

4.1. Advocacy Principles

The following principles reinforce Council's approach to advocacy:

- **Representative of local need** – Council's advocacy actions will be based upon policy and strategic positions adopted by Council, established via an evidence base either developed by Council or sourced from other agencies.
- **Community engagement**
Council will commit where able and appropriate, to inform and engage our community on advocacy strategies and campaigns. This includes communication on issues, actions and outcomes and of advocacy process.

- **Leadership**

Council will lead through advocacy on behalf of our community on key issues to protect and enhance our municipality, with an emphasis placed on working with and advocating to State and Federal Governments.

- **Transparency**

Council will be open and transparent in our advocacy objectives, strategy and priorities.

- **Partnerships and Alliances** – Council recognises that when addressing advocacy issues, it will optimise its likelihood of success by working in collaboration with other organisations with similar aims.

As such, to advocate and address advocacy issues of shared concern, Council will situate itself where possible, in key partnership or alliance approach with appropriate organisations and bodies, including but not limited to the following:

Federal / National Approach

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)

National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA)

Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)

Local Federal Members of Parliament & Ministers

State /Territory Approach

Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA)

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)

Property Council of Australia (PCA)

Victorian Disability Advocacy Network (VDAN)

Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF)

Local State Members of Parliament & Ministers

Regional Approach

Interface Group of Councils

Western Region Councils

Regional Management Forum (RMF)

LeadWest

Western Transport Alliance

Victoria Police

City West Water and Western Water

Victoria and Federation University's

Womens Health West

Metropolitan Waste Management Forum

Western Melbourne Tourism

Local Approach

Djerriwarrh Health Service

Djerriwarrh Employment and Education Service

Local GP's and health bodies

Local Resident Associations

Best Start Partnership Group

Victoria Police

Emergency & Essential Services

- **Outcome Focussed** – Council will seek to position its advocacy as providing solutions to problems, issues or concerns through the development of options that are proactive and innovative.

4.2. Advocacy Framework

Council directs its advocacy through an Advocacy Framework. The framework is structured to align with the objectives as established in the Council Plan. This is supported and reinforced through the guiding strategic plans extending out of the key directions and actions the Council Plan provides.

It is acknowledged that advocacy is an essential component of the day to day planning, development and delivery of the many individual programs and services that Council provides.

Consequently, not all advocacy activities can be captured in one overall strategy. As such, those responsible for initiating advocacy activities need to demonstrate strategic alignment to the Council Plan via the Advocacy Framework.

Engagement with the Advocacy Framework will also ensure that all activity meets necessary approvals and reporting requirements. This will assist in Council capturing and monitoring all of its advocacy initiatives.

4.3. Relationship with other levels of government

Federal, State and Local Government have the common objective of enhancing the prosperity and wellbeing of communities. Given the country is governed by the State and Federal Governments, and Council is reliant on the policy and support funding from both levels of governments, managing relations between different levels of government is a fundamental requirement.

State and Federal Governments have different areas of responsibility, which require different levels of engagement. Council recognise that the State Government may have responsibility for one issue, but we may be aware that the Federal Government may be more sympathetic to a local advocacy cause. In such instances, it may be better to advocate the Federal Government in order to achieve aims or support (and vice versa).

As such, Council will ensure that it develops and maintains regular engagement with other levels of Government, including parliamentarians, local members and government department officials, conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, with recognition of each other's roles and responsibilities. This will enable Council to strengthen relationships, networks and facilitate the gathering of information that better position Council to influence on advocacy issues.

4.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Council will review and confirm advocacy themes and priorities through:

- Quarterly and annual reviews of the Council Plan;
- Ongoing community engagement;
- Formal evaluations at key stages of advocacy campaigns; and
- Continuing work of the development of new and review of existing policy and strategy that guides service delivery.

Changes and amendments as an outcome of evaluations and reviews will be aligned to Council annual budgetary process, to ensure campaigns are appropriately resourced to meet advocacy strategy objectives for the forthcoming years.

This will involve review and public reporting on the performance of advocacy strategies and associated campaigns.

This will ensure that Council is committed to a fluid framework that is responsive to a fast growing and evolving community and that has an advocacy framework that continually improves its policy, procedure and services in response to advocacy efforts.

Individual evaluations will be focussed on delivery against established objective of actions which are typically focussed on levels of influence given Council is not the decision maker on most advocacy issues.

5. Responsibility /Accountability

5.1	Mayor & Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the priorities and most appropriate advocacy approach for each initiative.• Use the advocacy information developed and approach to practice good governance.• To develop & maintain relationships with key stakeholders & networks including political to influence, inform and direct Council's advocacy actions
5.2	Chief Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under the Local Government Act 1989 (Vic) the Chief Executive is responsible for administration of council operations. They have the authority to authorise operational (including administrative) policy and associated advocacy strategies.
5.3	Executive & Managers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comply with this policy and ensure leadership teams comply likewise• Ensure resources are allocated to enable delivery of committed advocacy strategies and campaigns• Ensure that they and service teams are informed and competent in skills required to implement advocacy activities• Approve the Advocacy Framework and individual Advocacy Strategies and Campaigns
5.4	All Council Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are responsible for compliance of the requirements of this policy.
5.5	Manager, Economic Development & Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Advocacy Policy and Framework• Coordinate annual review of advocacy programs• Manage centralised repository of all current and approved advocacy initiatives

6. References and links to legislation and other documents

Name	Location
Advocacy Framework	http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Council/Publications/Documents_Reports_Strategies
Council Plan	http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Council/Publications/Documents_Reports_Strategies
<p>Support strategies and Action Plans</p> <p>Council has a number of strategic plans for many of its functions and services, including the following that directly influence the Advocacy Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Strategy • Community Infrastructure Plan • Community Safety Plan • Digital Economy Strategy • Economic Development & Tourism Plan • Green House Action Plan • Lifelong Learning Strategy • Municipal Early Years Plan • Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan • Road Management Plan • Youth Strategy 	