
TERMS OF REFERENCE – BUSINESS ADVISORY GROUP

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Yarra established a business advisory group as a means of improving communication between Council and the local business community.

Yarra, with over 8000 businesses has one of the largest economies in metropolitan Melbourne. Features include:

- A significant presence of publicly listed corporations including: Carlton and United Beverages, Country Road, Just Jeans, Sensis, Telstra, Computershare and Amcor;
- A large concentration in the hospital and medical sector and related industries including St Vincent's Hospital, Epworth Hospital and Melbourne Pathology;
- Major concentrations of media related businesses including: GTV 9, Nova, Mix FM, Gold FM, 3RRR, 3AK, 3PBS and 3CR, SEN;
- Ten main retail strips with national and international appeal, including Bridge Road, Swan Street, Victoria Street, Smith Street and Brunswick Street; and
- A substantial investment in Victoria Gardens shopping complex.

Business provides a vital contribution to local character, employs over 70,000 people (including approximately 17500 local residents) and contributes \$15.8 million or 35% of Council's rate income per annum.

Good communication assists Council to better understand the views of the business community. Similarly, Council objectives can be clearly communicated to business.

The Business Advisory Group is a fundamental resource for the ongoing implementation of the Economic Development Strategy adopted by Council in August 2001. A key theme of the strategy is improving communication between Council and business.

2. OBJECTIVES

Specific objectives of the Group include:

1. Capitalising on the opportunities presented by the presence of a large and dynamic local business community.
2. Raising the profile of the business community in Council activities and planning.
3. Ensuring that a key sector of the community is provided with an appropriate communication mechanism.
4. Providing strategic advice to Council on issues that affect the business community; and
5. Providing a strategic link to Council's existing Community Advisory Groups.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Business Advisory Group provides advice to Council on the following matters:

- Trends and competitive influences that affect the performance and direction of the local economy.
- Strategies to enhance and promote economic development including a review of Council's Economic Development Strategy 2001.
- Influences on the future direction of land use planning within the municipality.
- The impact of government policies at a Federal, State and Local level on business viability; and
- Opportunities to develop partnerships that enhance business linkages with the local community.

4. SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria have been developed to guide selection of members to the Group.

Criteria for membership include:

1. A local business proprietor, property owner and/or employee based in the City of Yarra.
2. Must not be a member of another Community Advisory Committee.
3. Must be prepared to commit sufficient time to allow participation in the activities of the Group, (as a guide the expected time commitment will average at least 2-3 hours per month over a 12 month period).
4. Relevant skills and professional qualities.
5. An ability to complement other members of the Group, including:
 - i. Representation across the municipality;
 - ii. Representation for different size businesses; and
 - iii. Representation for different sectors.

Representation will also be weighted to reflect the total number of businesses in each area of the municipality. For example, Richmond has the largest concentration of businesses and this will be reflected in the composition of the group. At the same time every effort will be made to ensure all geographic areas of the municipality are represented.

In relation to activity sectors within the City of Yarra the following information is provided to help ensure that the Business Advisory Group is representative of the local business base.

The figures presented in Table 1 are based on the information contained in the City of Yarra Economic Development Strategy 2001-2004.

TABLE 1 – Business Advisory Group - Representation by Activity Type

Sector	% of Establishments	Number of Representatives
Manufacturing	9.9	3
Wholesale and Retail Trade	28.1	3
Hospitality	5.8	4
Commercial Services	31.7	3
Other (Construction, Transport, Recreation, Communications, Arts)	8.7	3
TOTAL		16

5. SELECTION PROCESS

When a position within the Group has been vacated, suitable applicants will be nominated and selected by the remaining members of the Group based on the Selection Criteria in Section 4.

6. COUNCIL PARTICIPATION

Business membership of the Group is complemented by representation from Council as follows:

- Mayor
- Councillor Representative
- Chief Executive Officer
- Director City Development
- Manager Strategic & Economic Planning & Development