

## Terms of Reference

**Version:** 2.1

**Endorsed By Meeting Minute Ref:** Item 4 Meeting No. 31 – Wednesday 13 December 2023

**Commencement Date:** 13 December 2023

### 1. Definition of Terms

Wherever “Taskforce” is mentioned below, it is referring to the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum.

### 2. Purpose

- i. Coordination of joint state-wide advocacy by Australian Local Government Councils to address policies and guidelines affecting humanitarian arrivals. This is achieved in collaboration with peak refugee and people seeking asylum organisations.
- ii. Other issues relating to humanitarian arrivals where collaboration by Councils would be of benefit.

### 3. Strategic Priorities

See Appendix 1.

### 4. Duration

When Member Councils decide that the:

- i. need to continue advocating against the Federal Government humanitarian policy and guidelines has ceased.
- ii. that there are no other issues affecting humanitarian arrivals where collaboration by Member Councils would be of benefit.

### 5. Membership

The composition and responsibilities of the different membership are described as follows:

a) *Executive Member Council*

- i. Drive the implementation of the strategic priorities of the Taskforce.
- ii. Actively participate in the activities of the Taskforce, including providing feedback, endorsing motions and facilitating advocacy and campaign activities as required.
- iii. Make key decisions on strategic matters of the Taskforce in a timely manner, including the expenditure of funds collected from Member Councils.
- iv. Report decisions back to Member Councils including the acquittal of funds received.
- v. Always have a representative or delegate attend meetings - Mayors, Deputy Mayors, interested Councillors or senior officers.

b) *General Member Council*

- i. Assist the Executive in setting and implementation of the strategic priorities of the Taskforce.
- ii. Provide resources where needed to help achieve the strategic priorities.
- iii. Contribute to decision-making on strategic matters of the Taskforce.
- iv. Participate in the activities of the Taskforce where appropriate, including attendance at meetings, providing feedback, endorsing motions and supporting other campaign activities.
- v. Advise the Executive on best practice examples of community engagement.

c) *Supporter Council*

- i. Support the purpose of the Taskforce.
- ii. Supply organisational logo for use in promotional activities of the Taskforce.
- iii. Encouraged to promote the Taskforce, campaign and associated activities.

d) *Councillor Friends*

- i. Support the purpose of the Taskforce.
- ii. Encouraged to promote the Taskforce, campaign and associated activities.

e) *Secretariat*

- i. Must be an Executive Member Council.
- ii. Arrange meetings as called by the Executive or upon request by Member Councils. Ensure the timely preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and minutes to Member Councils.
- iii. Maintain a current Member Council contacts database.
- iv. Facilitate activities of the Taskforce as agreed by all Executive Member Councils.
- v. Commit a minimum 0.5 EFT officer resourcing to the role.

## 6. Membership Transition

Member Councils can nominate for transition to a different membership tier at any point in time however the following recommendations should be noted:

- i. General Members are encouraged to nominate for Executive membership with the expectation to fulfil the requirements as an Executive Member Council after a membership duration of two years.
- ii. Supporter Members are encouraged to nominate for General membership with the expectation to fulfil the requirements as a General Member Council after a membership duration of two years.
- iii. Nominations are to be submitted for approval by Executive Member Councils at the next scheduled meeting.

## 7. Meetings

- i. Meetings will be called by the Executive or upon request by Member Councils for a general duration of two hours.
- ii. Meeting agendas will be prepared in consultation with Member Councils and all Member Councils can submit agenda items for consideration at meetings.
- iii. All meetings will have minutes recording attendees, apologies, decisions and actions.
- iv. Under special circumstances a meeting may be cancelled or re-scheduled.

- v. All meetings shall be held online or in a Council venue, rotated between the offices of Member Councils.
- vi. Decisions at meetings should be by consensus but if a vote is required there would be two votes per Executive Member Council and one vote per General Member Council, regardless of how many participants there are from any one Council at a particular meeting. The Chair may exercise a casting vote where appropriate.

## **8. Role of the Chair**

The current Mayor of the Council performing the Secretariat function would be the Chair of the Taskforce.

On the occasion that the Mayor of the Secretariat Council is not available to Chair, the role of the Chair would default to the Mayor of another Executive Council Member.

The role and function of the Chair will be:

- i. to chair meetings of the Taskforce, ensuring fair and equitable opportunities for views and opinions to be voiced and discussed by the Taskforce.
- ii. to act as the default spokesperson of the Taskforce, except in the case where specific campaign spokespeople are used.

## **9. Officer Working Group**

- i. The purpose of the officer working group would be to facilitate the implementation of joint actions agreed at meetings.
- ii. The officer working group would be composed of Council officers of Member Councils.

## **10. Conflict of Interest**

Any matter deemed by a member to represent a Conflict of Interest shall be reported to the Chair either prior to a meeting or before the specific item is discussed.

## Appendix 1 - Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum Strategic Priorities

We are calling on the Federal Government to:

- 1) **Provide everyone with a valid visa with work, travel and study rights.**
  - Provide all people waiting for their protection application to be processed with a valid visa and associated work rights.
  - Provide people higher education study rights and access to scholarships.
  - Enable all bridging visa classes to have overseas travel rights and remove the need to apply for a waiver.
- 2) **Expand the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) eligibility criteria and simplify the application process so that people in need can access healthcare, disability, housing support and other essential services.**
  - Expand SRSS eligibility to all people in need to fully utilise the underspent Federal budget allocated to the program.
  - Simplify the SRSS application process so eligible people are not excluded by the burden of applying.
  - Ensure all people seeking asylum have access to basic healthcare, disability, income, housing and social support while they await decisions in the refugee determination process, in order to reduce the burden on Local Governments and charitable organisations.
- 3) **Ensure an independent, timely and fair application and merits review process for all humanitarian applications.**
  - Enable fairer and faster processing of onshore protection visa applications, including providing certainty on processing timeframes.
- 4) **Provide people who have received a negative refugee determination under the 'Fast Track' system with a fair review process.**
  - There is no review process for people denied protection under the Fast Track system, other than requesting Ministerial intervention. People who have received a negative outcome under the Fast Track process should have their reviews heard in a timely and fair manner.
- 5) **Continue to invest resources to urgently clear the backlog of asylum applications and appeals.**
  - Ensure the backlog of applications and appeals are cleared with appropriate, ongoing resourcing.
- 6) **Abolish temporary visas like Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) and replace them with permanent protection visas and pathways to citizenship for all humanitarian arrivals.**
  - Ensure all refugees on TPVs and SHEVs are offered permanent Resolution of Status visas by April 2024.
  - The temporary protection regime will continue to exist after the Resolution of Status conversion for refugees who arrive in Australia without a valid visa. Abolish temporary protection visas (TPVs and SHEVs) and provide permanent protection to all refugees.
  - Despite permanent residents being eligible for citizenship, many are unable to provide the proof of identity documentation that is required for their citizenship application and as a result, their applications are being refused. Permanent visa holders applying for citizenship should be permitted to use the same identity documents as per their permanent visa application, for their citizenship application.
  - In circumstances where proof of identity for application of citizenship cannot be provided that the Department considers other mechanisms for appropriate identification to be provided by applicant.