

Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee - Councillor Representation

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Council Meeting Date: 19 November 2019

File Ref: CM7.1

G/19 /3990 Council Resolution:

*Moved Cr Goodluck
Seconded Cr Hansen*

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the appointment of a Councillor as a Management Partner of Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee, noting that Cr O'Grady is the current representative;*
- 2. Endorse the Chief Executive Officer to appoint a relevant Officer position as a Management Partner of the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee.*

CARRIED

Purpose:

Allow Council to consider the nomination of a Management Partner for the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee.

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council determines its position in relation to the nomination of a management partner(s) for the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee.

Background:

The Gladstone Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) established advisory committees two decades ago, in 1999, to facilitate community feedback regarding the management of the Great Barrier Reef. Council has been involved with the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee (LMAC) since its establishment. The Gladstone Committee is one of the 12 voluntary, community-based consulting bodies which deliberates about management issues regarding the Marine Park.

Any appointed Councillor attends the Committee as a Management Partner, a category of participation reserved to government agencies (local, state and federal). Unlike Committee members, Management Partners do not have voting powers, they are also not subject to the attendance rules imposed on Committee members. Their responsibilities within LMAC revolve around enabling a clear channel of communication between LMAC and the government including:

- participating in the meetings;
- contributing to committee discussions;
- providing verbal or written updates on their management activities at each meeting;
- enacting action items and requests for information; and
- communicating the committee's information and issues to Council.

If the appointed Councillor cannot attend a LMAC meeting, they may appoint a proxy. Recently the business's Manager Environment and Conservation has served as a proxy, when needed.

LMAC members are appointed every 3 years, following calls for public nominations. The Committee is comprised of 10 members nominated by the Chief Executive of GBRMPA; however, this number may change throughout the 3-year term. Management Partners such as Council, DAF and QPWS, as well as Observers (external stakeholders or LMAC members' guests, whose attendance has been approved by LMAC's Chair or Coordinator prior to meetings) are also encouraged to attend LMAC meetings.

The Committee meets five times per year in Gladstone. Councillor O'Grady is currently appointed to LMAC as a Management Partner on behalf of Council. Whilst there are no records indicating any expiry date on her term, it is noted the current LMAC term for members is 2018-2021. Council's appointments are reviewed at the start of each new term of Council unless another reason requires an earlier reconsideration of the appointment.

Council's recent involvement with LMAC includes:

1. LMAC's "What's down our drains project" which saw the installation of drain buddies in the Gladstone CBD storm water pits to stop rubbish run off into the catchment and allowed a better understanding of what is going down the drains.
2. Presenting Council's Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy to members, highlighting the need and benefits of long-term planning for the region.
3. Involvement in clean-up activities.
4. Strengthened community support for Council's actions and activities (such as the Lilley's Beach permit enforcement which started July 2019), among others.

All consulted parties during the course of this review have highlighted Council's presence at LMAC is beneficial. These benefits are listed below under each proposed option for Council's representation at LMAC.

Consideration:

Options & Risk Analysis:

Option 1 – Council nominates a Councillor and delegates the CEO to appoint a Council employee as Management Partners

The greatest advantage of this option is with two representatives, Council would have both a high-level strategic input, as well as the technical expertise from a skilled officer. When consulted, GBRMPA described this option as their preferred scenario in terms of Council representation at LMAC. This would also guarantee Council's input to committee discussions, the promotion of greater understanding between GBRMPA and Council.

A potential disadvantage of this option is having two representatives involved can result in passivity if both representatives do not communicate clearly regarding actions allocated to Council. This can be overcome if both representatives commit to exchange information and clearly outline who will be responsible for each action on behalf of Council. Furthermore, having two representatives will impact on greater time allocation from Council if both representatives are to attend the same meetings.

Suggested Resolution

That Council:

1. *Endorse the appointment of a Councillor as a Management Partner of Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee, noting the Cr O'Grady is the current representative;*
2. *Endorse the Chief Executive Officer to appoint a relevant Officer position as a Management Partner of the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee.*

Option 2 – Council nominates a Councillor as a Management Partner

This would maintain the status quo regarding Council's participation on LMAC. A councillor presence at LMAC enables Council to contribute to the committee's discussions with the community at the forefront and gain a better understanding of community interests regarding GBR matters. Furthermore, it strengthens Council's ties with the community, contributing to a better social licence to operate. It also provides a clear path of communication between GBRMPA and Council, given Councillors' holistic understanding of Council's activities impacting on GBR management.

Although to date there have been no reported issues regarding Councillors' role as LMAC management partners there may be a perceived conflict of interest, given Council policies and activities may be adversely impacted by LMAC advice and activities. This is minimised by the fact management partners do not have voting rights or formal obligations to LMAC. Another significant consideration is the broad range of councillors' responsibilities, best use of time should be considered and whether a complementary balance is necessary.

Suggested Resolution

That Council endorse the appointment of a Councillor as a Management Partner of Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee, noting the Cr O'Grady is the current representative.

Option 3 – Council delegates the CEO to nominate a Council employee as a Management Partner

Currently, a Council employee acts as a proxy whenever the appointed Councillor cannot attend a LMAC meeting. Having a staff member representing Council similar to the previous option would enable Council to contribute to the committee's discussions with the community at the forefront and promote a better understanding of community interests regarding GBR matters, contributing to Council's social licence to operate. Furthermore, staff members have technical expertise and considerable understanding of sustainability concerns affecting GBR and their participation would enable direct operational engagement between LMAC and Council officers.

Suggested Resolution

That Council endorse the Chief Executive Officer to appoint a relevant Officer position as a Management Partner of the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee.

Option 4 – No nomination

This option is a clear risk for Council's image, community engagement and social licence to operate, as Council may be perceived to have little regard to GBR's management.

Suggested Resolution

That Council advise the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee that it no longer seeks to have a Management Partner on the committee.

Communication and Consultation (Internal/External):

The review of Council's appointment to LMAC has been with internal and external stakeholders listed below:

- Executive Team
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- Manager Environment and Conservation
- Marketing Specialist, former Gladstone LMAC committee member
- Cr O'Grady

Legal Environmental and Policy Implications:

There are no legal implications regarding any of the options highlighted above.

Financial and Resource Implications:

Resource implications are discussed as part of report considerations.

Commentary:

Nil.

Summary:

Nil.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

Within a month of resolution.

Attachments:

Nil.

Tabled Items:

Nil.

Report Prepared by: Governance Officer