

Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership - Councillor Representation

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Council Meeting Date: 4 February 2020

File Ref: CM 7.1

G/20/4074 Council Resolution:

*Moved Cr Goodluck
Seconded Cr Churchill*

That Council endorse the appointment of a Councillor as a member of the Gladstone Healthy Harbour, noting the Cr O'Grady is the current representative.

CARRIED

Purpose:

To provide Elected Members with information regarding representations on the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership (GHHP).

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council determines its position in relation to the nomination of a representative at the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership.

Background:

The GHHP is a forum formed on the 28 August 2012 to better understand and protect the health of the Gladstone Harbour ecosystem. Gladstone Regional Council (Council) is a member of GHHP as well as a member of its Management Committee. As a GHHP member, Council has voting powers, financial commitments (\$7,500/annually) and attendance requirements – representatives must attend at least two partnership meetings in a year.

The Management Committee is responsible for implementing GHHP decisions e.g. strategic plan, monitoring program, communications plan etc. The committee is elected every two years and comprises 10 members including the Partnership Chair. Management Committee members are elected by partners and are comprised of 3 community, 3 industry, 3 government and 1 research representatives. These members meet at least once every second month in Gladstone or via teleconference; if a member cannot attend, they are required to provide a proxy. Government Partnership members will elect the government representatives on the management committee.

Councillor (Cr) O'Grady is the current Council representative at GHHP and in the past has acted as Vice Chair of GHHP. Council's Manager Environment and Conservation has acted as Cr O'Grady's proxy at selected Management Committee meetings; as a member of Council's technical body he assists in the review of technical reports provided to the Partners and Management Committee, provides expert advice to Council's representative on GHHP matters and also regularly attends Partnership meetings.

Options, Risk and Opportunity Analysis:

Option 1 – Council nominates a Councillor as its representative in GHHP

This option would maintain the status quo regarding Council's participation in GHHP.

A Councillor presence enables Council to contribute to the Partnership's discussions, maintain Council's advocacy role for a healthy harbour with community interests at the forefront, and gain a better understanding of community concerns, needs and interests regarding Gladstone Harbour. Furthermore, it strengthens Council's ties with the community, contributing to a better social licence to operate.

Given the environmental and economic significance of the Harbour to the Gladstone region, Councillor participation in GHHP highlights the local government commitment to a healthy environment and a thriving community.

Option 1 Suggested Resolution:

That Council endorse the appointment of a Councillor as a member of the Gladstone Healthy Harbour, noting the Cr O'Grady is the current representative.

Option 2 – Council delegates to the Chief Executive Officer to nominate a Council employee as Council representative at GHHP

Currently, a Council employee acts as a proxy whenever the appointed Councillor cannot attend GHHP Management Committee meetings. Having a staff member representing Council would continue to enable Council to contribute to the committee's discussions similar to the previous option. However, there is a risk for Council's social licence that it may be perceived that elected members do not see benefit in allocating time for discussions with the community, industry and other Gladstone Harbour stakeholders.

A staff member already participates in Partnership meetings, where they do not have voting powers, but are able to contribute to discussions. This also enables direct operational engagement between GHHP and Council officers. Therefore, there are no additional benefits anticipated from a staff member taking part in the management committee instead of a Councillor.

Option 2 Suggested Resolution:

That Council endorse the Chief Executive Officer to appoint a relevant Officer position as a Council representative to GHHP.

Option 3 – No nomination

This option presents the greatest risk for Council's image, community engagement and social licence to operate, as Council may be perceived to have little regard to harbour related matters.

Option 3 Suggested Resolution:

That Council advise the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership that it no longer seeks to have a representative on the Management Committee.

Communication and Consultation:

Governance has sought feedback from GHHP's chair and secretariat, Council's current representative to GHHP and from the Manager Environment and Conservation regarding the value of Council's participation in the forum. All consulted parties highlight Council's participation as a voting member of GHHP is mutually beneficial to Council and the Partnership as it raises awareness about Gladstone Harbour matters and provides an opportunity to Council to engage with the community and consider stakeholders perspectives when addressing concerns and opportunities surrounding the Gladstone Harbour.

Legal Strategy and Policy Implications:

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

Financial and Resource Implications:

Maintaining Council's appointment to the GHHP would not result in new financial commitments other than the current annual membership fee of \$7,500.

Summary:

Nil.

Anticipated Resolution Completion Date:

Within a month of resolution.

Attachments:

Nil.

Tabled Items:

Nil.

Report Prepared by: Governance Officer