

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Cook Shire Youth Council

1. Objectives

- To give young people the opportunity to take a leading role in consulting on issues that affect their lives.
- To act as a conduit to the elected Council on the views of young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years of age.
- To raise awareness of the aspirations and needs of young people within communities across Cook Shire.
- To facilitate interaction between young people, Council and the wider community.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- To represent and advocate on behalf of young people in the community.
- To be an advisory and consultative group for Cook Shire Council and the wider youth community providing feedback and input.
- To ensure that the diversity of young people's experiences and circumstances is reflected in advice to Cook Shire Council.
- To attend Youth Council meetings, training and development sessions and other relevant activities.
- Facilitate and engage on agreed youth-related project/s.
- One Cook Shire Councillor to be linked to the Cook Shire Youth Council and will attend meetings in a non-voting capacity to create linkages and be a conduit between the Cook Shire Youth Council and Cook Shire Council.

3. Membership

The Cook Shire Youth Council comprises of one (1) or more groups of up to 9 young people aged between 12 (Year 7) and 23 years (inclusive to a maximum of 25 years of age) at the time of their appointment.

- Every effort will be made to ensure membership of the Cook Shire Youth Council reflects the diversity of young people residing in the Cook Shire, including a gender balance, all abilities and representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally linguistically and diverse backgrounds.
- Members over the age of 18 years must hold a current Blue Card.
- Cook Shire Youth Council members must be aware of Cook Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and Code of Conduct.
- Youth Council members are appointed as individuals, not as representatives of a particular area or network.
- Individuals of any age with expertise may be co-opted to the Cook Shire Youth Council, when necessary, for specific lengths of time to provide advice on identified issues. These individuals will act as advisers and will not be regarded as Council members.

4. Application and Appointment Processes

- Nominations for Youth Council membership will be sought publicly, using a broad publicity strategy, including schools and the youth sector.
- Youth Forums will be conducted to generate interest in joining the Youth Council.
- The selection panel will consist of:
 - The appointed Cook Shire Council Portfolio Councillor (Chair);
 - Director Community Economy and Innovation;
 - Senior Coordinator, Economy and Community Lifestyle;
 - Manager Cape, DATSIP;
 - PCYC Branch Manager.
- The panel will determine an appropriate selection process to ensure broad representation from across Cook Shire and will provide a short-list of suitable applicants for Cook Shire Council's consideration and formal approval.
- Selections will be based on the applicant's ability to fulfil the Roles and Responsibilities of the Cook Shire Youth Council.

5. Terms of Appointment

- Appointments to the Cook Shire Youth Council can be made for up to two (2) year terms depending on the age of the young person at the time of the appointment.
- Members are appointed for a two-year term. Casual vacancies may be filled based on the merit list of the preceding recruitment period.
- Members are eligible for re-appointment for a further term.
- The maximum length of appointment is four years.
- Director Community Economy and Innovation will seek Cook Shire Council's approval of the Selection Panel's recommended Cook Shire Youth Council members.

6. Resignation

- Members are required to notify the Chair in writing of their intention to resign from the Cook Shire Youth Council. Vacancies due to resignation may be filled based on the merit list of the preceding recruitment period. The resigning member must address their resignation to Director Community Economy and Innovation, who will forward the resignation to the Chair.
- Members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings without an apology are deemed to have resigned from the Cook Shire Youth Council.

7. A Cook Shire Youth Council member's appointment will be revoked if:

- A member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without an apology; or
- The member resigns from the Youth Council.

A member's appointment may be withdrawn by the Chair in consultation with Director of Community Economy and Innovation for one of the following reasons:

- The member is unable to meet performance standards outlined in the Code of Conduct; or
- A Breach of the Code of Conduct.

8. Disciplinary Action

A Youth Council member will face disciplinary action if he/she breaches the Code of Conduct. The member must be informed and provided with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the matter.

9. A Cook Shire Youth Council member breaches the Code of Conduct for:

- Disregard of the guidelines of the Code of Conduct;
- Wilful, or deliberate behaviour that is inconsistent with the continuation of their term on the Cook Shire Youth Council;
- Conduct that causes imminent and serious risk to the health or safety of a person or the reputation, viability of the Cook Shire Youth Council's business;
- Commits an offence.

The member will be advised of the disciplinary action to be taken as per the action steps outlined in the Code of Conduct. The Chair will advise the member in writing of the outcome, as per the Code of Conduct.

10. Office Holders

The Cook Shire Youth Council will appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair. Cook Shire Youth Council members will nominate candidates for these positions.

The Chair's role is to:

- Act as public spokesperson for the Cook Shire Youth Council;
- Facilitate all meetings of the Cook Shire Youth Council;
- Encourage members to work together as a group by facilitating discussion and drawing participation from all members;
- Maintain a positive and constructive atmosphere at Cook Shire Youth Council meetings by encouraging courtesy, respect and openness; and
- Ensure all members have equal opportunity to contribute ideas, opinions and concerns;
- In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair will assume the role of Chair for the duration of the absence.
- If the Chair and the Deputy Chair are absent members will appoint another member to fulfil the role of Chair for a meeting.

11. Council Operation

The Cook Shire Youth Council will initially hold monthly meetings, and on effective establishment will revert to bi-monthly meetings. Meeting times, dates and locations will be arranged by the appointed Secretariat.

- Meetings will be facilitated by the Chair.
- PCYC Cooktown Branch Manager will liaise with schools on behalf of the Cook shire Youth Council.
- Meeting agendas will be prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair. Items for the agenda will be sought from the Chair of the Cook Shire Youth Council.
- Minutes of Cook Shire Youth Council meetings will be compiled by the Secretariat.
- All ingoing and outgoing correspondence should be approved and stored in accordance with Cook Shire Council's policies and procedures.
- Any social media platform will be administered and approved by Cook Shire Council in accordance with Cook Shire Councils media policy.
- Decisions by the Cook Shire Youth Council will be by consensus.
- Diversity of opinion on matters will be reflected in any advice provided to Cook Shire Council.
- The quorum for decision-making at Cook Shire Youth Council meetings must be fifty percent of current membership plus 1.
- Sub-committees can be formed to fulfil specific purposes. However, these sub-committees must have the Cook Shire Youth Council endorse all of its major decisions and proposals.
- Minutes of the Cook Shire Youth Council meetings to be tabled at the next available Cook Shire Council meeting.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which Cook Shire Youth Council functions. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the valuable contribution that Traditional Owners have made and continue to make within the Cook Shire community.