

Advocacy Policy

Objective

The objective of the policy is to establish a set of guidelines and accountabilities to develop an integrated, efficient and transparent approach to the identification of advocacy priorities in pursuit of the strategic objectives for the Town of Bassendean.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Council Members and Officers of the Town of Bassendean.

Definition

Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic and social institutions. Advocacy includes activities and publications to influence public policy, laws and budgets by using facts, their relationships, the media, and messaging to educate government officials and the public. Advocacy can include many activities that a person or organization undertakes, including media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning and publishing research.

Policy statement

Legislative basis:

1. Section 1.3 (3) of the *Local Government Act 1995* provides that:

“In carrying out its functions a local government is to use its best endeavours to meet the needs of current and future generations through an integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity”.

2. The responsibility conferred by this section is considered to include the Council advocating for those services, programs and facilities whose absence, presence or ineffectiveness is impeding the environmental protection, social advancement or economic prosperity of the community.

Advocacy in Local Government Context:

3. Local governments play an important role in advocating for their communities on issues. This includes issues that are often outside of the scope or capacity of normal local government operations and activities. Whilst the subject matter of an Advocacy Project may fit into this “non-core business” category, it remains the fact that the actual act of advocacy is itself a key responsibility of a local government.

4. In advocating for its community, the Town is to:
 - a. Identify critical gaps in services, programs and infrastructure.
 - b. develop meaningful and sustainable solutions which address these gaps.
 - c. negotiate and influence decision makers to support, endorse and agree to implementing or funding these identified solutions.

Criteria for Advocacy Priorities:

5. Advocacy Priorities are priorities where the Town can clearly demonstrate that the Town does not have the financial capacity, the organisational capability or the jurisdictional responsibility to provide or to administer the required change. Advocacy priorities may take the form of projects and / or position statements. Projects being capital works projects and position statements that address change to existing legislation and policy.
6. Advocacy Focus Areas (align with Council Plan)
 - a. Economic: Major transport infrastructure projects such as grade separation or intersection realignment of Main Roads WA classified roads, new or upgrades to railway stations, access to job creation programs, attracting major employer-based industries, provision of high-capacity data highways etc.
 - b. Social: Council will make submissions on social issues/matters, as required, in line with the strategic outcomes and objectives of its Council Plan.
 - c. Legislative: Updates or changes to state or federal policy that can assist in service improvements for the Town or the Community.

Advocacy Program Development

7. To ensure that adequate organisational resources can be applied and to optimise advocacy effectiveness the Advocacy Program, should be limited and supported by key strategic documents such as the Council Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan.
8. As a general principle, Advocacy Projects are to be endorsed by the Council in advance of Federal and State Government election cycles. If a State or Federal election is called or in extraordinary circumstances this timeline can be reviewed.
9. A periodic review of Advocacy Priorities can be undertaken at any time via a council workshop.

10. Following a review of the Towns Advocacy Priorities, the CEO is to prepare an updated Annual Advocacy Program for endorsement by the Council at the next available council meeting reflecting the outcomes of the workshop.
11. The updated Advocacy Program is to provide details of each agreed Advocacy Project including:
 - a. the identified problem and proposed solution
 - b. intended courses of advocacy action over the forthcoming year
 - c. the resources required; and
 - d. identified lead personnel.

Implementing the Annual Advocacy Program:

12. The CEO and Mayor are to make every reasonable effort to implement the Advocacy Program within the resources made available to them.
13. The Council is to give consideration to the Advocacy Program when allocating resources in the annual budget process and ensure that travel, accommodation and other expenses are made available so as the Mayor and CEO can reasonably facilitate the effective implementation of the Advocacy Program.
14. A written progress report on the implementation of the Advocacy Program is to be provided by the CEO as deemed appropriate.
15. It is acknowledged that success in the pursuit of Advocacy Projects rests, typically, with external decision makers amid a competing array of stakeholder groups and interested parties. Therefore, the completion of the agreed actions contained within the Advocacy Program should be used as a reasonable indicator of performance given that complete satisfaction of the ultimate advocacy goal might never be realised.

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