

Terms of Reference – April 2015

Purpose

Strategic Objective 05 in the Bass Coast Shire Council Plan 2013 - 2017 relates to diverse, local and innovative businesses and employment within Bass Coast Shire. One of the key strategies listed to achieve this objective is to 'Protect productive farmland and support rural business sustainability'.

In order to achieve this objective it is important that there is an open and productive relationship between Council and representatives of the agricultural sector. As a significant sector of the Bass Coast economy it is vital that Council maintains an effective working relationship with the agricultural sector.

Role

The Rural Engagement Group will act as an advisory group to Council.

Functions

Functions of the Rural Engagement Group include:

- Discuss matters that impact on the rural sector,
- Provide an opportunity for increased networking and collaboration between key stakeholders in the rural sector,
- Provide advice to Council in relation to its strategic direction.

Outcomes

Tangible outcomes produced by the Rural Engagement Group include:

- Increased networking and collaboration,
- Increased engagement between Council and the rural sector,
- Providing advice to Council to help achieve Council's strategic objectives.

Membership

Total membership of twelve. Members will initially be appointed for 12 months. Continuation of committee beyond twelve months will be subject to review by Council. Membership will constitute the following.

Three farmers representing:

- Geographical location
- Rural activity type

- Farm size

Bass Coast Shire Council:

- Mayor – Chair
- Councillor - alternative chair
- C&ED Director
- Economic Development Coordinator - additional duties include coordination of meetings and administrative support
- Natural Resources Officer
- Strategic Planning Coordinator

Representatives from:

- Department of Environment & Primary Industries
- Landcare
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- Agribusiness Gippsland

Meetings

Meetings to be held during work hours on a quarterly basis at a location central to the Shire e.g. Civic Centre Council Chamber, Wonthaggi or Newhaven Visitor Information Center.

Support

Support for the operation of the group will be met by Council including:

- Executive support
- Administration cost
- Room hire and catering.

Amendment to Terms of Reference

Council Decision