## FORESHORE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Code of Conduct – November 2021

### Introduction

Frankston Foreshore Advisory Committee (FAC) was convened to secure wide community participation in decision making on foreshore related matters within Frankston City. It is vital that members of advisory committees have a consistent understanding of the roles and responsibilities expected of them.

This Code of Conduct outlines: the behaviors expected of advisory committee members both within and outside committee meetings; the responsibilities and obligations of committee members, Council representatives and agency staff; and, expectations with respect to ethical dilemmas or conflicts of interest.

All committee members are expected to observe the following principles:

1. to act with integrity and professionalism in the performance of their duties;
2. to exercise fairness, equity, courtesy, consideration and sensitivity in their dealings with other committee members, Council officers and other stakeholders; and
3. to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.

### Responsibilities

Committee members are expected to:

1. Perform their duties with care and diligence in a fair and equitable manner;
2. Act and advise with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their duties;
3. Ensure all actions, decisions and advice is based on a comprehensive consideration of relevant facts and based upon best practice;
4. Treat Council and agency staff, other advisory committee members, stakeholders and the public with respect, recognising their rights, duties and aspirations;
5. Behave in a manner that maintains and enhances the reputation of the advisory committee; and
6. Act in the public interest.

Council and agency officers are expected to:

1. Provide information requested by advisory committee members, promptly and in an easily understood form. Make sure it is accurate, current and complete; and

Council officers are also expected to:

1. Accurately report the recommendations and advise of the advisory committee to Frankston City Council.
2. Follow-up on committee recommendations and notices of motion and provide comments on actions taken.

### Committee communication

Communication to and by the advisory committee should normally occur formally, on a committee rather than an individual basis. As the advisory committee’s primary role is to advise Council on matters within its terms of reference, formal communication of decisions, policy positions etc. will normally be reported to Council. Occasionally the advisory committee will communicate directly with other stakeholders, agencies and the general public, and will clearly identify its communications as representing the advisory committee. Once a decision has been made by the committee, all committee members are bound by that decision.

Members shall be at liberty to discuss with appropriate organisations or individuals the general issues and principles related to the business of the advisory committee prior to the meeting. Members are expected to exercise discretion to ensure that disclosure of information does not prejudice the deliberation of the Advisory Committee or Council.

### Use of Committee Information

Advisory committees often consider privileged, confidential or personal information, and may work on a project for several months. Advisory committee members must not use or communicate information associated with the advisory committee other than for official purposes, except where such information is within the public domain.

At times, committee members have access to personal information relating to other committee members and members of the public. This information is provided on the understanding it will only be used for the specified purpose and will remain confidential.

Committee members must not at any time pass on information to external individuals or organisations that may prejudice the workings of the committee or benefit to others.

All information must be stored securely, and not disclosed to any person without first seeking the permission of the owner of the information.

Only authorised representatives of Council and/or the advisory committee are to liaise with the media. The chair of the advisory committee is authorised to represent the views of the advisory committee and its working groups.

### Conflict of interest

Conflict of interest may arise for various reasons and committee members may have private interests that from time to time conflict with their public duties. There is an expectation that where such conflict occurs it will be resolved in favour of the public rather private interest.

Any personal, financial or other interest which may represent a conflict of interest must be disclosed by committee members at the time of appointment to the advisory committee and prior to discussion of an agenda item.

Opinions and decisions made in the course of committee duties must not be improperly influenced by business, family or other personal relationships.

It is not possible to define all potential areas of conflict of interest and if in doubt as to whether a conflict exists, it should be raised with the committee chair. In some circumstances, the perception of a conflict of interest could itself jeopardise public integrity of the committee. You are required to declare to the committee any conflict of interest that arises or is likely to arise and should stand down from any decision making process where you may be compromised.

### Giving and/or accepting gifts, gratuities and other benefits

Committee members are not permitted to give and/or accept gifts, gratuities or other benefits accruing the performance of their duties.

### Post committee membership

Committee members who retire or resign from the advisory committee must not use confidential information obtained during their membership to their advantage or to disadvantage Frankston City Council in commercial or other relationships.

### Process for handling breaches of the Code of Conduct

Should there be concerns regarding a possible breach of the Code of Conduct by any member, Council representative or agency staff, then the following process will apply.

1. The matter is raised in writing at a meeting of the FAC for discussion, with all parties concerned having the opportunity to talk to their case;
2. The FAC reviews the matter and determines a course of action to be received to Council. Options for addressing the breach include:
   * + for minor issues, a written warning to the person concerned and if it happens a second time the person's term on the FAC is terminated;
     + for major issues [ie. acting against an agreed FAC decision or not abiding to confidentiality clauses], the person's term on the FAC would be terminated.
3. The FAC makes a recommendation to Council on the appropriate way of addressing the matter.