Guidelines for the selection of Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP) community representatives

Selection criteria

Community representatives will be selected from the local community. Mayors, councillors, property developers and real estate agents are not eligible to be appointed as community representatives.

Local community representatives should:

- be current residents within the local government area (LGA)
- have knowledge and awareness of the LGA and issues of concern to the local community
- be able to represent and communicate the interests of the local community
- have an understanding of the planning process and assessment issues (but are not expected to be experts)
- commit to attending the IHAP meetings and contributing constructively to the determination of applications
- be willing to adhere to the IHAP code of conduct and operational procedures.

If your council area has wards, you need to appoint a community representative to address matters for each ward. Members can represent one or more wards. All community representatives for the ward can attend an IHAP meeting where the chairperson will identify the representative most closely associated with the matter before the panel to be heard and vote on the matter. Other community representatives would act as observers.

If council has an existing IHAP with a community representative, and is of the view that this person meets the new legislative requirements, you may choose to continue their appointment as a community representative.

The General Manager is to oversee the selection process for the community representatives of the IHAP.

Advertising

The council should seek expressions of interest from the community for the IHAP by placing at least two advertisements in local media publications (i.e. newspapers) and advertising through one or more of the following:

- the council’s website, newsletters and social media e.g. council’s Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages
- any relevant community forums, ward or precinct committees etc convened by the council
- local / community radio or magazines
- council offices, libraries, community or sports centres, schools, residents and community groups.

The advertising period is to give community members sufficient time to apply, and should be no less than 28 days. A sample advertisement which can be tailored is provided below.

Applications are to be mailed or emailed directly to the General Manager, not the Department of Planning and Environment.

Appointing community representatives

Within two weeks of the end of the advertising period, the General Manager should arrange a selection panel to:

- review the applications against the relevant selection criteria
- shortlist suitable candidates
- arrange for interviews (if required)
- identify community representatives and their alternates
- advise the Department’s Planning Panels Secretariat on who will be appointed to the IHAP, including any alternates / ward representatives, and provide reasons why they will be appointed.
It is good practice for the General Manager to notify the successful and unsuccessful applicants and the IHAP’s chairperson (if known) of the decision.

**Alternate representatives**

It is recommended that at least two alternate community representatives should be chosen to attend if the appointed representative is unable to attend, for example due to illness, conflict of interest or for ward specific development. This will facilitate the rotation of members and the efficient panel operation.

**Selection process for community representatives**

1. Council advertises for community representatives (for at least 28 days)
2. Applicants send their nomination directly to the General Manager
3. Within two weeks of the application closing date, the General Manager reviews applications against the relevant selection criteria and organises an interview panel to select the community representative and alternates
4. The General Manager will appoint the community representatives to the IHAP on behalf of council. The GM will notify the Department and nominees of the outcomes
Sample Advertisement for IHAP Community Representatives

A sample advertisement for community representatives is provided below.

This advertisement should be tailored to the specific circumstances of the council’s IHAP, and include information on the anticipated frequency, time and duration of meetings.

**NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR APPOINTMENT OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES TO THE [INSERT COUNCIL INDEPENDENT HEARING AND ASSESSMENT PANEL]**

**Want to contribute to your community?**

[INSERT Council NAME] is setting up an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP) to determine planning applications for local development.

The IHAP will consist of three independent experts and representatives of the local community.

We are looking for a mix of people who live locally to join our new [INSERT Council IHAP NAME].

Your role as an IHAP member is a part-time, paid role starting in March 2018. The position will be paid in accordance with rates to be set by the NSW Government. Further details will be provided on this shortly.

Selection criteria: You will be expected to contribute constructively to panel discussions, attend around [INSERT NUMBER] meetings a year, and help determine applications for new development in your area. Membership of the panel is for up to three years.

Mayors, councillors, property developers and real estate agents are not eligible to apply.

If you would like to apply, download a copy of the relevant nomination form at [INSERT COUNCIL WEB DETAILS] or contact [INSERT DETAILS] at [INSERT CONTACT DETAILS] for more information.

Applications must be lodged by [INSERT DATE] and sent to the General Manager [INSERT NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF GENERAL MANAGER]

Further details about the position and IHAPs can be found on council’s website at [www.INSERT LINK].
Sample Nomination Form – IHAP Community Representatives

Nomination details

I would like to be a local community representative on the [INSERT COUNCIL NAME] Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP).

I accept that selection and appointment to the IHAP will be subject to my:

- being a current resident in the local government area
- having knowledge and awareness of the local government areas and of issues of concern to the local community
- being able to demonstrate my understanding of the planning process and assessment issues
- being able to represent and communicate the interests of the local community
- being able to attend and the IHAP meetings and contribute constructively to the determination of applications
- being willing to adhere to the IHAP’s code of conduct and operational procedures.

I have attached a supporting letter demonstrating how I meet the criteria for membership.

Signed declaration

If appointed to the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP), I:

- confirm that I am aware of my responsibilities as a local community representative on the [INSERT COUNCIL NAME] IHAP
- confirm I meet the eligibility criteria for the panel
- agree to sign and comply with the panel’s code of conduct agreement
- agree to sign a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, and keep this declaration up to date.

Name ............................................................................................................................................

Contact details ..................................................................................................................................

Address ...........................................................................................................................................

Signature and date ..............................................................................................................................

This signed nomination form and supporting letter must be sent directly to the General Manager at [INSERT NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF GENERAL MANAGER] by [DATE] 2017.

Please do not submit forms to the Department of Planning and Environment.