

City of Whittlesea Community Priorities

Community Focus Group - Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Focus to provide valuable insights to help inform the 2027-2028 Budget, the Community Action Plan 2027-2028 as well as informing other key documents that will guide Council's essential activities over the next 5-10 years.

2. Participation

Participation in the Community Priorities Community Focus Group will be capped at 30 people and participants will be chosen to reflect the diversity of the City of Whittlesea community. This diversity will include ages, genders, abilities, cultural backgrounds, suburbs and household structures.

To be eligible to participate in the Community Priorities Community Focus Group you will need to:

- be a resident of the City of Whittlesea and aged 18 years and over
- be willing and able to complete any pre-session reading, assistance can be organised for those requiring it
- declare membership of any special interest group, community groups, networks such as sporting clubs, craft and hobby groups, seniors' groups, schools etc
- not be a current staff member, contractor or Councillor of The City of Whittlesea.

If a participant believes that they may have a financial interest in any of the projects discussed during the focus groups, they must discuss that interest with the facilitator. Should the facilitator decide that the financial interest gives rise to a conflict, the participant will not be permitted to contribute to discussions regarding that project.

3. Role of the Community Priorities Community Focus Group

The 2027 Community Priorities Community Focus Group will help inform the 2027-28 Budget, the Community Action Plan 2027-28 as well as informing other key documents that will guide Council's essential activities over the next 5-10 years.

We will capture valuable insights from our community focus group participants to help us identify, assess, and prioritise community interests. This approach will enable us to achieve balanced outcomes that are informed by the community's perspectives.

4. Code of Conduct

All participants are expected to abide by the City of Whittlesea Code of Conduct and:

- operate with integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and openness
- participate and provide feedback that is in the best interest of the City of Whittlesea as a whole
- declare any potential conflict of interest (including financial) to the facilitator if it arises during the focus group sessions
- dedicate appropriate time and effort to the focus groups – approximately three hours in total over the project period
- prepare for focus groups by completing pre-reading and actively participate in all three focus group sessions
- maintain effective and respectful relationships with other participants and facilitators.

5. Focus group sessions

Community focus group participants will be required to undertake pre-reading and attend all three in-person focus group sessions and will receive a participatory gift voucher for their time.

The session dates and times are:

- Tuesday 8 September 2026, 6pm - 9pm
- Tuesday 1 December 2026, 6pm - 9pm
- Tuesday 23 February 2027, 6pm - 9pm.

Agenda and session pre-reading

The agenda and any pre-reading will be provided to community focus group members one week in advance each session. A summary of what we heard will be provided to participants following the focus group session.

Participatory gift

Community focus group participants will be required to complete all pre-reading and attend the three in-person focus group sessions and will receive a participatory gift voucher for their time.

6. Requirements of participants

Confidentiality

Community focus group participants are expected to maintain confidentiality and refrain from publicly sharing any information related to the focus group materials.

Public Statements

Community focus group participants are not authorised to issue public statements on behalf of Council.

Rescinding members

The City of Whittlesea retains the right to revoke the inclusion in the community focus group of any individual who violates the Terms of Reference or Code of Conduct. This includes if you are elected as a Councillor for the City of Whittlesea.