

Cessnock City Council Youth Ambassador Program (Charter)

Date Adopted: 10-10-2025 Revision: 1

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PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Principles

- 1.1. To ensure this Group contributes to good public decision-making and increase Council's transparency and accountability to its community, Council is committed to running its Group meetings to be:
- a) **Transparent** – Decisions are made in a way that is open and accountable;
 - b) **Informed** – Decisions are made based on relevant, quality information;
 - c) **Inclusive** – Decisions respect the diverse needs and interests of the local community;
 - d) **Principled** – Decisions are informed by the principles prescribed under Chapter 3 of the Act;
 - e) **Trusted** – The community has confidence that Members act ethically and make decisions in the interests of the whole community;
 - f) **Respectful** – Members and attendees treat each other with respect;
 - g) **Effective** – Meetings are well organised, effectively run and skilfully chaired; and
 - h) **Orderly** – Members and attendees behave in a way that contributes to the orderly conduct of the meeting.

PART B – AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

2. Group Authority

- 2.1. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Group must at all times recognise that the primary responsibility for the management of Council rests with the elected Council and the General Manager, as provided in the Act.
- 2.2. The Group has no executive powers and cannot make decisions on behalf of Council. Furthermore, the Group is not a Group with delegated authority therefore it cannot exercise powers under section 355 of the Act.
- 2.3. Neither the Group nor any of its members may direct any Council staff member in his or her duties.

3. Purpose

- 3.1. Council has a leading role in creating opportunities for young people to express their opinions and have their voice heard. To assist with this process, Council will facilitate an annual Cessnock City Youth Ambassador Program comprising of young people aged between 11 and 18 that are living, working or studying in the Cessnock Local Government Area. The program will provide opportunity for young people to have their say on Council processes, planning and programs.

PART C – COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

4. Attendance and Membership

- 4.1. Attendance at any meeting of the Group is limited to the following:
- 4.1.1. Members,
 - 4.1.2. Guests, such as Council staff and Members of the public / stakeholder organisation representatives by invitation only.

4.2. Group Members report to the Group Coordinator.

4.3. Members, guests and Council staff cannot participate in a Group Meeting unless they are personally present at the meeting. For the purposes of this clause, attendance via audio-visual means (such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and other similar platforms) is accepted as personal attendance.

4.3.1. Meetings will generally occur in person at the Cessnock Youth Centre.

4.3.2. The Group may be contacted outside of Meetings for engagements at a local high school, or at other community Youth Services events/programs.

4.3.3. The Group may also be contacted in writing via email, for the purposes of providing newsletters or completing digital surveys.

4.3.4. Members are not permitted to send a delegate on their behalf.

4.4. Meetings are not accessible to the public. However, individuals with relevant expertise and skills may be invited by the Group Coordinator to provide advice and assistance as needed.

5. Members

5.1. The Group's membership comprises of:

5.1.1. Youth Services Coordinator

5.1.2. Senior Youth Worker

5.1.3. Up to 20 Youth Ambassadors

6. Apologies and Leave of Absence

6.1. Where a Member cannot attend one or more Group meetings, the Member should inform the Group Coordinator in writing, preferably at least two days prior to the Group meeting and provide their apology.

7. Appointment of Youth Ambassadors

7.1. Members will be appointed following a public Expressions of Interest (**EOI**) process annually. Applications must be made in writing and can be submitted via Council's website, email or in person at Cessnock Youth Centre.

7.2. Eligibility criteria for members include:

7.2.1. Applicants must be aged between 11 years to 18 years and,

7.2.2. Applicants must be living, working or studying in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

7.3. Applications will be assessed:

7.3.1. On merit according to the selection criteria on the application form, and

7.3.2. Be approved for appointment by the Group Coordinator.

7.4. If more than 20 applicants are deemed suitable for appointment as Cessnock City Youth Ambassadors, offers of membership will be made based on merit to the top 20 and the remainder placed on a waitlist.

7.5. The name and contact details of each Member will be recorded in Council's Group Register.

7.6. Appointment of a Member after the commencement of the term will be assessed and considered by the Group Coordinator. The Group Coordinator will consider if the group can continue with its functions if a representative is not replaced and if there are any candidates on the eligibility list noted in clause 7.4 that would be a suitable replacement.

7.7. Members are required to complete a Cessnock Youth Centre membership form. This will be provided by the Group Coordinator once a Member is appointed.

The Chairperson

7.8. Council's Youth Services Coordinator and Senior Youth Worker will alternate in the role of the Group's Chairperson.

7.9. When the Chairperson speaks during a Group meeting:

7.9.1. Any Member then speaking or seeking to speak must cease speaking and if standing, immediately resume their seat; and

7.9.2. Every Member present must be silent to enable the Chairperson to be heard without interruption.

8. Stakeholder Organisation representatives

8.1. The Group Coordinator can invite relevant Stakeholder Organisations and guests that work with young people to attend a meeting. Stakeholder Organisations can also request to attend themselves by contacting the Group Coordinator via email, youthcentre@cessnock.nsw.gov.au.

8.2. Representative attendance will be approved by the Group Coordinator.

8.3. If an approved representative is unable to attend a meeting, the relevant Stakeholder Organisation may nominate an alternative representative to attend on their behalf, with prior notice to the Group Coordinator.

8.4. Representatives and guests must provide a copy of their valid Working With Children Check Number to the Group Coordinator prior to attending the meeting.

9. Responsibility of Members

9.1. Members are required to abide by the Charter.

9.2. Members should work in collaboration with Council's Youth Service to assist and support on youth initiatives.

9.3. To ensure the Group can fulfil its stated purpose, Members are required to attend at least 6 meetings in a 12-month period.

9.4. If a Member is absent for three (3) consecutive meetings without giving prior notice to the Group Coordinator, they may forfeit their position on the group. These Members may be replaced by a young person on the waitlist.

10. Conduct by Members

10.1. Members are expected to abide by this Charter and Council's [Code of Conduct](#).

10.2. The group will work with the Group Coordinator and Chairperson to create an annual code of conduct.

10.3. Conflicts of interest must be declared and managed in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct. A record of a declared conflict of interest in the minutes is sufficient.

10.4. Pecuniary or significant, non-pecuniary conflicts of interest must be managed by the Member excluding themselves from the meeting during the discussion of the relevant agenda item. Such exclusion should be recorded in the minutes.

11. Responsibility and requirements of the Group Coordinator

11.1. The Group Coordinator role will be undertaken by the Youth Services Coordinator and they will undertake the following functions:

- 11.1.1. Accept or reject items of business;
- 11.1.2. Ensure Members are familiar with this Charter and Council's Code of Conduct;
- 11.1.3. Facilitate discussion at Group meetings, provide input to meetings and actively contribute to the Group's role and purpose;
- 11.1.4. Focus the Group on its objectives outlined in clause 17 of this Charter and the meeting agenda items as outlined in the Group's Procedure (if any);
- 11.1.5. Act as the communication link between the Group and the elected Council;
- 11.1.6. Manage the resources available to the Group;
- 11.1.7. Manage the performance of the Group;
- 11.1.8. Where appropriate, liaise closely with the coordinators of Council's groups to assist with the collaboration between these, the sharing of information and the efficient and effective use of Council and Group resources; and
- 11.1.9. Work closely with the Chairperson to administer the Group and its meetings.

PART D – BEFORE THE MEETING

12. Meeting schedule

- 12.1.** Meetings will be held throughout the calendar year on a monthly basis. Meetings will usually be held on the last Friday of the month, however meetings may be called outside of this schedule by the Group Coordinator.
- 12.2.** Meetings will be held at Cessnock Youth Centre and Virtually via Microsoft Teams. Members unable to attend in person will have the option to attend virtually.
- 12.3.** Special meetings with notice of less than 5 working days may be called by either the Chairpersons or Group Coordinator if urgent matters are required to be considered, these meetings may be virtual, face to face or via email.

13. Notice, meeting agendas and business papers

- 13.1.** The Group Coordinator will ensure that notice of meetings, including the agenda and business papers, is given to the Group at least 5 business days prior to the day of the meeting. These may be transmitted electronically.
- 13.2.** The Group agenda must state:
 - 13.2.1. An Acknowledgment of Country; and
 - 13.2.2. All matters to be dealt with arising out of the proceedings of previous Group meetings; and
 - 13.2.3. Any matter or topic that the Chairperson proposes, at the time when the agenda is prepared, to put to the Group meeting; and

13.2.4. All matters, including those that have been referred for consideration by the elected Council, that are the subject of staff reports or informal advisors, to be considered at the Group meeting; and

13.2.5. The requirement to declare conflicts of interests and apologies; and

13.2.6. Any business of which due notice has been given.

14. Minutes

14.1. All Group business will be properly minuted and recorded by the Group Coordinator. The minutes will be checked and approved by the Group at the following meeting.

14.2. Minutes for inquorate meetings will note the informality of the meetings and no recommendations are to be recorded. In other words, such minutes will be for informational purposes only.

15. Voting and Group recommendations

15.1. A quorum is constituted by attendance of a majority of Members. If a quorum is not achieved, an informal meeting may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairperson. Informal advisors and Attendees cannot vote.

15.2. Recommendations of the Group are made, generally, on a consensus basis. However, at the discretion of the Chairperson, formal voting may be conducted. When formal voting is conducted, recommendations made by the Group will need to be approved by the Group Coordinator prior to implementation.

15.3. For all recommendations made, the Group Coordinator will identify the scope of the program including:

15.3.1. The budget

15.3.2. Key requirements that must be met

15.3.3. Focus areas

15.3.4. Council requirements and limitations

15.4. Where recommendations made by the Group are incompatible with the requirements or limitations identified in the scope of the project, the Group Coordinator may decline the recommendation.

16. Records management

16.1. A copy of the agenda, minutes and promotional material shall be filed in Council's record management system.

17. Youth Ambassador Program Objectives

17.1. The Cessnock City Ambassador Group aims to:

17.1.1. Provide young people with an opportunity to express their ideas and views while raising important youth issues.

17.1.2. Create opportunities for young people to participate in a range of activities that support their interests and development, and to have fun.

17.1.3. Connect young people of similar interests and passions together.

17.1.4. Give Council and the wider community the opportunity to listen to young people.

- 17.1.5. Provide young people with the opportunity to engage with Council's Business Units.
- 17.1.6. Offer a source of consultation to ensure Council's Youth Service delivers events, programs and activities that are reflective of the needs and interests young people.
- 17.1.7. Develop leadership potential.
- 17.1.8. Promote the positive image of young people within the community and highlight the contribution young people make to programs.

17.2. The Cessnock City Ambassador Group is responsible for:

- 17.2.1. Supporting the planning, promotion and facilitation of Youth Service events and programs including Cessnock Youth Centre based activities, School Holidays and NSW Youth Week.
- 17.2.2. Identifying opportunities where young people can participate in community activities.
- 17.2.3. Providing Council with feedback on proposed plans, programs and events.

18. Media

- 18.1. Council will obtain formal, written consent from both a Youth Ambassador and their parents/guardians before publishing their photos, names, and ages in any publicity developed by Council in accordance with the Procedure for Photography and Video Consent of Children and Young People aged 17 years and under. Where a Youth Ambassador is aged 18 years, they themselves will be consulted for media consent.
- 18.2. All requests for media are to be directed to the Group Coordinator and will be actioned in accordance with their staff delegation and Council's Media Policy.

19. Public Comment

- 19.1. Group Members, informal advisors or attendees must not speak to the media or members of the public on behalf of Council or the Group.

20. Performance of the Group

- 20.1. The Group Coordinator must undertake a review and tabling of the Group's performance annually using the template at Appendix A.

21. Termination of Membership

- 21.1. Membership will end at the conclusion of the Calendar year.
- 21.2. Members are permitted to reapply to the Cessnock City Youth Ambassador Group once their term has ceased.

PART E - ADMINISTRATION

22. Charter Definitions

Act	means the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW).
Chairperson	means the responsible person outlined at clause 7.8.
Group	means the Youth Ambassador Group.

Group Coordinator	means the Youth Services Coordinator responsible for the tasks set out in clause 11.
Council	means Cessnock City Council.
Member	means each of the individuals described in clause 5.1.
Stakeholder Organisation	means a stakeholder organisation nominated by the Group Coordinator
Guest	Means a member of the public invited to attend a meeting.

23. Charter Administration

Group type:	Community	Charter's latest review Date:	Each Council term or as required
Date Group originally established:	2025	Approval when Group was originally established:	2025
Date Group last re-established:	Annually	Approval when Group was last re-established	2025 – Community and Cultural Development Manager
Group Coordinator	Youth Services Co-ordinator	Document number:	DOC2025/183879
Relevant strategic direction and/or objectives within Council's Community Strategic Plan:	1.1 Encourage social connections and wellbeing 1.1.2 Strengthen outcomes for young people to make our city a vibrant place of opportunity.	Group Members:	Youth Services Coordinator Senior Youth Worker Youth Ambassadors
Related Policies / Protocols / Procedures / Documents:	- Code of Conduct (DOC2018/086716) - Committees Register (DOC2024/145794) - Undertaking(s) templates (DOC2019/013512) - Attendance sheet template (DOC2019/013444) - Nomination sheet template (DOC2019/013510) - Media Policy (DOC2014/002728) - Child Safe Reporting Standard Operating Procedure (DOC2024/113976) - Procedure for Photography and Video Consent of Children and Young People aged 17 years and under (DOC2025/013320)		
Dissolution date	Membership of each Member will end at the conclusion of the appointed 12 month period		

24. Charter History

Revision	Date Approved / Authority	Description of Changes
1	10-10-2025	New charter adopted

25. Appendices

25.1. Appendix A: TEMPLATE - Report to Group Performance of the Youth Week Ambassador Program

Appendix A - Performance of the Youth Week Ambassador Program

1. Number of Members
2. Detail the number of meetings required to be held per calendar year as provided for in the Charter.
3. Detail the number of meetings held in [insert year], that were quorate.
4. The Group Charter requires members of the Group to conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Does the agenda include a standing item for Members to declare a conflict of interest? (yes/no)
5. Do minutes of meetings:
 - a. Contain a summary of the decisions (Yes/No).
 - b. Are adopted by the Group at a subsequent meeting (Yes/No).
 - c. Are distributed to Members in the timeframe set out in the Charter (yes/no – if no list details of reasons for delay).
6. Attendance – Total Occasions of Service.
7. Have Members attended induction? (Yes/No)

Approval

Group Coordinator

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Governance

Name:

Signature:

Date: