

Shire of Mundaring Lobbying and Advocacy Strategy

Introduction

Lobbying and advocacy activities undertaken by and on behalf of the Shire of Mundaring are ad-hoc, and are not strategically planned or managed.

Opportunities to increase Shire influence over major projects, decisions or reforms, or to attract investment into the Shire, may be missed.

Existing lobbying or advocacy activities may be of sub-optimal effectiveness, or may be counter-productive in achieving strategic objectives.

Elected representatives and senior staff may not be well briefed to approach lobbying or advocacy in a strategic or targeted manner.

This strategy attempts to create a framework for lobbying and advocacy activities, supporting the Shire's Strategic Directions. It is designed to facilitate a more effective, consistent, targeted delivery of the Shire's messages, with specific plans developed to address predetermined key priority issues.

Definition

Advocacy can be defined as pleading for, supporting, or recommending. It is an active process in support of a specific outcome – influence. The sole purpose of advocacy is to seek to influence policy-making, investment or service provision. This definition raises three key questions, the answer to which collectively provides the policy framework for the Advocacy Strategy and its' implementation:

- What influence are we trying to achieve?
- Who are we trying to influence?
- How are we trying to influence them?

In other words, effective advocacy needs to:

- clearly identify the key issues and desired outcomes
- have clearly articulated unambiguous messages
- target the appropriate influencers or decision-makers
- use appropriate and effective methods to deliver the message.

Policy Framework

The first Key Strategic Objective for the Shire of Mundaring is to “Promote and support sustainable development.” As part of this Key Strategic Objective, the Shire has committed itself to “actively promote business, employment and tourism initiatives in a planned way” (Strategic Directions, A Plan for the Future 2008 – 2012).

The Key Strategic Objective provides the context for the first question above – What influence are we trying to achieve?

We are trying to achieve influence over decisions and policies taken by other parties that may affect the sustainable development of the Shire of Mundaring. This may be to support a policy or decision that will have a positive outcome for the sustainable development of the Shire. Alternatively it may be to resist a policy or decision that will have a negative outcome for the sustainable development of the Shire.

Advocacy is simply a tool that can be used to achieve the outcomes that support this Key Strategic Objective. Like all tools, its effectiveness is a function of the design and use of the tool. If the tool is well designed to suit the purpose, and used in the manner for which it is designed, it will achieve the outcomes for which it is designed. If it is not designed well or used well, it will not be as effective.

Aim

The aim of the Shire of Mundaring Advocacy Strategy is to facilitate increased ability of elected representatives and senior staff to exercise influence over policy, service provision, investment, and infrastructure decisions taken by other parties.

Additional Benefits

Apart from the primary benefit of achieving better outcomes for the residents of the Shire of Mundaring, a track record of effective advocacy can achieve the additional benefit of credibility. By undertaking consistent, thoughtful and well-structured advocacy efforts the Shire can enhance its reputation as a credible and effective representative of the community.

Sustained engagement in well-designed advocacy programme can also assist in building a network of influential contacts that can facilitate easier access to decision makers and influencers. A concerted effort at advocacy can make the process easier.

Process

In January each year, the Executive Team will identify and prioritise high-level issues that are considered to be of sufficient import to warrant a formal plan of advocacy to be developed for the coming year. The Executive Team will also identify small teams to develop and implement an Advocacy Implementation Plan for each issue.

The Executive Team will allocate priorities to each item on the list according to the following matrix:

		PRIORITY		
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
URGENCY		Warrants a pro-active approach. Opportunities to pass the message to the identified target groups should be created	Opportunities to pass the message to target groups should be sought out.	Opportunities to pass the message to target groups should be taken as they arise.
	IMMEDIATE Requires results from advocacy immediately			
	MEDIUM TERM Requires commitment to results from advocacy in the current year and/or the following year			
	LONG TERM Requires commitment to results from advocacy, but not in the next two years.			

At the first available opportunity the list of issues will be discussed at Council Forum and then endorsed at a Council meeting.

Other high-profile or newly-arising issues may be added to the list by the Executive Team at any time.

Advocacy Implementation Plans

Each identified issue will have a small team allocated to develop and implement an “Advocacy Implementation Plan.” The plan will:

- Summarise the issue for which an Advocacy Implementation Plan is required.
- Identify key outcomes required to be achieved for the Mundaring community.
- Identify Shire personnel required to implement the Plan.
- Identify key decision-makers and influencers to be approached.
- Provide “key messages” that are to be reinforced to pursue the issue.
- Identify requisite resources to effectively implement the Plan.
- Outline the actions required to be taken to implement the Plan
- Outline the timeframes in which these actions will be undertaken
- Include an evaluation and reporting process for the Plan.

Issues on the list will be prioritised by importance and by urgency. Issues of higher importance may warrant allocation of more resources. Issues of greater urgency will require quicker application of effort to develop and implement the Advocacy Implementation Plan.

Budget

Resources required for lobbying will be determined by the nature and extent of activity undertaken for each individual matter. Some matters may be effectively advocated locally, within existing resources. Others may require consultancy fees for research and analysis, air travel and accommodation, or other items. These items will be identified and quantified in the Advocacy Implementation Plans.

Council may consider including an allocation in the annual budget for a pool of funds that are available to be drawn upon for activities identified in Advocacy Implementation Plans.

ADVOCACY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ISSUE				
STATUS	Draft Endorsed <input type="checkbox"/> Updated <input type="checkbox"/> _____			
	PRIORITY			
URGENCY		HIGH Warrants a pro-active approach. Opportunities to pass the message to the identified target groups should be created	MEDIUM Opportunities to pass the message to target groups should be sought out.	LOW Opportunities to pass the message to target groups should be taken as they arise.
	IMMEDIATE Requires results from advocacy immediately			
	MEDIUM TERM Requires commitment to results from advocacy in the current year and/or the following year			
	LONG TERM Requires commitment to results from advocacy, but not in the next two years.			
OUTCOME MESSAGES- <i>(Key messages that are to be delivered in this Plan)</i>				

BACKGROUND

TARGET GROUPS (*Groups, individuals that can influence the outcome*)

- T1
- T2
- T3
- T4

STAKEHOLDERS (*Potential partners, groups that will be affected*)

- S1
- S2
- S3
- S4

BENEFITS (*economic, environmental, social*)

- B1
- B2
- B3
- B4

OPPORTUNITIES (*i.e. funding programs, potential partners, media attention*)

- OP1
- OP2
- OP3
- OP4

BARRIERS (*i.e. cost, lack of political support, poor understanding of the issue*)

- B1
- B2
- B3

ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAMES: (*Actions needed to achieve outcome i.e. apply for funding, gain media support, write to target audiences etc.*).
Timeframes to be attached to each action.

A1

A2

A3

A4

A5

EVALUATION AND REPORTING (*mechanisms to evaluate and report on progress towards outcomes*)

RESOURCES (*Identify required resources, staff time, budget, etc*)

ATTACHMENTS (*relevant materials & further information i.e. position papers, reports*)

A1

A2

A3

A4

A5