

Frequently Asked Questions: Surf Coast Shire Community Panel

What is a Community Panel?

A community panel brings people together to discuss important issues and is a process used all over the world to help direct the work of governments and other organisations. It brings together a randomly selected group of people who broadly represent the entire community. Participants learn about issues, discuss them with one another, and then make recommendations about what should happen and how things should change.

What is this Community Panel about?

From our traditional owners to our newest arrival, and from our youngest resident to our furthest travelled visitor, we value the Surf Coast Shire as a special place. To ensure that Surf Coast Shire is a great place to live, work and play for everyone, we need to make choices about where we focus our efforts.

We will be asking members of the community to think about and give their recommendations on the question **“What is our future vision for our community, and how do we balance our differing interests and needs over the next four years?”**

What is involved?

If you are selected to take part you will have the opportunity to meet with individuals from all walks of life who live in the Surf Coast Shire. You will hear from technical and lived experience expert speakers, and you will discuss the issues involved in small groups. Facilitators will work with the groups to make sure everyone has their voice heard. You do not need to have any prior knowledge of the topics – all the information you need will be provided to you.

What will happen to the Panel’s recommendations?

The Surf Coast Shire will receive the report that the community panel writes and use it as a base for writing the Community Vision and Council Plan incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, as well as the Financial and Asset Plans.

When, where and how will the Panel meetings take place?

The Panel will meet online starting in March and finishing in May. There will be 4 evening sessions and 3 full day sessions. The initial and final sessions may be face to face, if approved by Surf Coast Shire and Mosaic Lab, based on Government guidelines.

If you don't have a computer or internet access at home, Council will make arrangements to ensure you can participate.

How will you ensure that the event is accessible?

All sessions will take place online and technical support will be provided to ensure everyone can participate, even if you are not very experienced working online, i.e., using Zoom or another online video conferencing platform to participate in meetings. If you don't have a computer or internet access at home, Council will make arrangements to ensure you can participate.

If participants need additional support, we will do everything reasonably possible to provide this support to you. If you are selected for the Panel, just let us know how we can help you participate.

Will panel members be paid?

If you are selected to take part and participate in all seven sessions, you will receive \$450 for your time.

Will panel members be paid?

The panel will meet for approximately 33 hours and make a significant commitment in representing their community.

Panel members who attend all sessions will receive payment to help cover costs associated with taking part and to recognise their significant commitment to the region and their community.

Similar to legal juries, payment of 'per diems' are strongly advised for deliberative process participants to help avoid excluding people who may find participation difficult through hardship.

These payments will be transferred at the completion of the Panel.

Who can apply?

Anyone aged 18 and over who is either a permanent or non-permanent resident of the Surf Coast Shire. Please note that a maximum of one person from any single household will be selected to participate.

The following people cannot apply: Elected representatives from any level of government; paid employees of any political party; or Council employees.

After I register my interest, what happens next?

Once registration has closed, 35 people will be randomly selected from those who registered their interest, to take part in the panel. The expressions of interest process will be managed independently by an expert recruitment organisation (the Sortition Foundation). Panel members will be randomly selected by the Sortition Foundation, using weighted criteria to ensure the Panel is broadly representative of our population by age, gender and resident location. Council is not involved in the selection of panel representatives. We encourage everyone in the Surf Coast Shire to register.

If you are selected, we will contact you by phone and email on or around **Tuesday 2 March** to let you know. We will then arrange a call with you to confirm that you can attend, discuss any requirements you may have to make it possible for you to attend, and explain what happens next.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like to talk to someone about the panel before registering, please phone the Free Call number below. You can also contact Council with questions, by emailing peopleplacefuture@surfcoast.vic.gov.au or calling 5261 0600.

To register your interest visit:
www.sortitionfoundation.org/rsvp
or call free 1800 979 787
by 9pm 1 March.