

Banana Shire Local Reference Group Information Pack

Banana Shire Council has recently formed the Banana Shire Local Reference Group (BSLRG) to provide advice to Council in respect to community priorities for the expenditure of Community Benefit Funds from renewable energy project across the Shire.

Council is seeking seven community members to be members of the BSLRG with the preferred composition of the group incorporating:

- 1 x Community member from the North of the Shire
- 1 x Community member from the South of the Shire
- 2 x Rural landholders from across the whole of the Shire
- 2 x Business representatives from across the Shire
- 1 x Indigenous Representative from across the Shire

All candidates for membership of the advisory committee must be permanent residents of the Banana Shire.

The Role and Operation of BSCLRG

What is a community reference group and why is it being set up?

The Banana Shire Local Reference Group (BSLRG) is being established by Banana Shire Council in partnership with Coexistence Queensland to provide advice on its 10 Year Legacy Plan and Community Legacy Fund. It provides the Banana Shire community with an avenue to share their perspectives and ensure community priorities are heard with a direct line of communication with Banana Shire Council. The BSLRG does not obtain any decision-making authority but provides community-led insights and recommendations for Council to consider when making decisions that impact the community.

What is the Banana Shire Local Reference Group connected to?

In 2024, the Queensland Government announced \$5 million in seed funding for a Community Legacy Fund to support the energy transition in the Banana Shire. The Banana Shire Local Reference Group (BSLRG) is a formal way for Council to seek feedback and input from the community to guide how that money is invested and ensure long-lasting benefits for the Shire.

Who is involved in the BSLRG?

The BSLRG will be Co-Chaired by the Mayor of the Banana Shire Council and the Chief Executive Officer of Coexistence Queensland. Final Membership of the committee will comprise of the seven community members and four ex Officio members being the two Co-Chairs and two Banana Shire Council Councillors.

Why is the BSLRG important right now?

Banana Shire is entering a period of major change and opportunity, particularly with energy transition, land use, and community development. The BSLRG ensures that local voices are heard early and often, so decisions about the 10 Year Legacy Plan and the \$5 million Community Legacy Fund reflect the values and priorities of the people who live and work here. The importance of strong local input in strategic planning activities and the need to secure long-term community benefits has been highlighted in local forums, and the BSLRG will advise Council on priority investments to improve the liveability of the region and attract new residents. It will also provide a forum for constructive dialogue between community, government, industry, and Traditional Owners, ensuring independent expertise and strong local input help shape Banana Shire's future.

Who can join the group?

All permanent residents of the Banana Shire are welcome to apply, and we encourage everyone who is willing to volunteer their time to understand their communities' priorities and proactively shape the future of the Shire.

What are the expectations of members?

Members will:

- Attend quarterly meetings (4 per year, up to 3 hours duration each).
- Read background materials and contribute constructively to discussions.
- Actively seek to represent the wider community's interests, not just their own.
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with other members.
- Declare and manage any conflicts of interest.
- Commit for the full term of the group (12–24 months).

How will members be selected?

Members will be appointed through this Expression of Interest (EOI) application process. Applications will be assessed against published selection criteria (community connection, representation/diversity, commitment, collaboration, problem-solving, integrity) by a Selection Panel including Council and Coexistence QLD representatives. The Selection Panel will propose a recommended membership list for review and formal endorsement by Banana Shire Council.

Will the BSLRG or its members have decision-making authority over Council actions or other proposals?

No. The BSLRG is advisory only. It provides advice, recommendations, and community insights, but does not make binding decisions. Final authority rests with Banana Shire Council.

How long does membership last, and can members be replaced?

Members are expected to serve for the full term of the Reference Group (anticipated 12–24 months). If a member resigns, becomes inactive, or is unable to continue, another suitable applicant from the EOI pool may be appointed at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.

What kinds of recommendations will the group be asked to make?

The group will provide input on issues linked to the 10 Year Legacy Plan and Community Legacy Fund. This could include: land use, agriculture, energy transition, community benefit, local business opportunities, and broader community wellbeing. Specific topics will be outlined in meeting agendas set by the Co-Chairs.

How will the group's advice reported and used?

Meeting outcomes and recommendations are documented and provided to Council. Council will consider and respond to advice (accept, adapt, or reject with reasons). Membership and updates will be published to maintain transparency, including plain-English updates on Council's website and via local communication channels.

Will members be paid or reimbursed?

Membership is voluntary and there are no sitting fees. The Secretariat may cover basic costs of meetings (e.g. venue hire, supporting materials), but members participate to represent the community, not for financial reward. Members will be required to cover costs to travel to quarterly meetings, but no other expenses are expected to be incurred by members.

What happens if there is a conflict of interest?

Applicants must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest when applying (e.g. representing an organisation that may apply for Council funding). During meetings, members must declare conflicts if they arise. The Terms of Reference set out how conflicts will be managed.

How will the group connect with the wider community?

Upon appointment, members will agree to share information with the community through channels and processes to be decided by the BSLRG. Members will also agree to contribute a wide range of community perspectives back to the group and continue to advocate for these insights during discussions and in forming recommendations. Plain-English public updates will be published after each meeting, so the broader community can see what issues are being discussed and how feedback is being used.

Who we are looking for:

Help shape the future of Banana Shire!

We are seeking applications from Banana Shire residents to form part of a new voluntary advisory committee to Council, known as the Banana Shire Local Reference Group (BSLRG).

This group will bring together representatives from across the Shire to seek community insights, share ideas, identify opportunities, and provide advice to Council to support implementation and investment under the 10 Year Legacy Plan and Community Legacy Fund. It's a chance to make sure our future reflects the needs, values, and aspirations of the people who live here.

About the Local Reference Group

The group will meet quarterly and provide community-led advice and recommendations for Council to consider.

Membership is voluntary, but your voice will help shape big decisions for our region.

Members will represent the interests of the whole community, not just individual organisations.

In addition to the seven community members the committee will also comprise of the joint Chairs and two Banana Shire Council Councillors. Representatives from the Queensland Government will attend as required.

Personal Characteristics

This group will be a true reflection of Banana Shire's people.

We encourage applications from:

- Residents from every corner of the Shire.
- Farmers, landholders, and local business owners.
- First Nations community members.
- Young people and older residents.
- People with lived experience of disability.
- Anyone with a passion for making a positive difference in their community.

Members are required to be 18 years or older and reside within Banana Shire.

What we're looking for in members:

- **Strong ties to Banana Shire** – living, working, or studying here, and an understanding of our community's needs and priorities.
- **Diverse voices** – people who can bring perspectives from different ages, backgrounds, and experiences.
- **Commitment** – being available to attend quarterly meetings and support additional community engagement activities throughout the year, for the duration of their membership.
- **Collaboration** – willingness to listen and share, be proactive and passionate, and work respectfully with others.
- **Constructive input** – ability to provide thoughtful feedback and focus on what's best for the whole Shire.

How to apply:

1. Read the *Draft Terms of Reference* and *Role Description* to understand what's involved.
2. Complete the Expression Of Interest Application Form and submit to Council via email to enquiries@banana.qld.gov.au or via mail to:

Chief Executive Officer
PO Box 412
Biloela QLD 4715

Key dates:

16 December 2025: EOIs open.
9 January 2026: EOIs close.
30 January 2026: Members announced.
February 2026: First meeting of the BSLRG.

For more information

Contact: Thomas Upton 07 4992 9500