

Minutes

Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday 16 November 2022

Venue:

Harvard Room, Tweed Heads Administration Office and Blue Jeans Virtual Meeting

Time:

10.00am

Present:

Kyle Sculley, Wendy Buckingham, Suzanne Hudson, Vanessa Riggs, Pat Miller, Colin Usher (Community Representatives); Cr Meredith Dennis, Cr James Owen, Helen Carter (Unit Coordinator Community Services), Giselle Benitez Hetherington (Community Development Officer - Ageing and Disability / Committee Secretariat), Sandra Freeman (Administrative Officer), Lily Morgan (Road Safety Officer) (Tweed Shire Council).

Apologies:

Stewart Brawley (Acting Director Sustainable Communities and Environment), Robert Noakes (Senior Building Surveyor) (Tweed Shire Council).

Guests:

Leah Burgess (Communications Officer), Tarra Martel (Recreation Planner), Iain Lonsdale (Project Director Tweed Valley Rail Trail) (Tweed Shire Council), Clint Nittolo (Project Officer NSW Public Works).

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

It was noted that Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday 27 September 2022 will be tabled for Council to consider endorsing at earliest available meeting.

The meeting was opened and the Acknowledgment of Country was read by Colin Usher.

Agenda Items:

A1. Introduction and apologies

Giselle welcomed members, accepted apologies and advised that Lisa Rea recently submitted her resignation as a member of the Committee. Council staff consider there are no impacts on the Committee function, as a quorum can be reached with the remaining membership in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Action: *Giselle to seek advice from Corporate Governance on the requirement and process to fill the vacant position. For example, if required, whether a candidate may be drawn from the recent Advisory Committee Expression of Interest (EOI) process, or if a new call for EOIs needs to be done.*

A2. Administration

1. Confirmation of agenda items

Giselle invited members to contribute any additional items. Giselle tabled one item: 'Leave Nobody Behind' – Disability Inclusive Disaster Reduction Project'.

2. Previous minutes and actions.

Giselle noted the minutes from previous meeting on 27 September 2022 were ready to be tabled for the first available Council meeting for consideration of endorsement. The status of the following 5 previous actions were reviewed:

- a) **Action: Code of Conduct form returns** - Committee members were to sign and return the Code of Conduct form. Giselle thanked those who have actioned this, and reminded any outstanding to action as soon as possible, or discuss with the Corporate Governance Officer.
- b) **Action: Meeting frequency** - Members were to advise of their preferred meeting schedule and interest to nominate for Chair. All members expressed a preference to meet every 2nd month on a Wednesday. The election of Chair is tabled at item A3.
- c) **Action: International Day of People with Disability event on 3 December 2022** - Giselle confirmed the event will be at Kingscliff and kept members informed as planning progresses. Discussion is tabled at Item A6.1.
- d) **Action: Variety Activate Inclusion Sports Day 9 November** - Giselle gave an update and thanked Karen and Kyle for attending this event. They shared their experiences saying “there was a great energy” and they were glad to participate. Giselle showed and described photos taken from the day and would share with members via email. Completed.
- e) **Action: Committee priorities** - Giselle to produce a schedule for projects programmed for the next 12 months. Discussion is tabled at Item A6.1.

A3. Election of Chair

Giselle thanked Pat Miller for nominating for Committee Chair, the only nomination received from members. Pat spoke about his experience in government and industry, and his personal experience as a carer of a person with disability. Pat invited fellow members with lived experience of disability to nominate as Chair, with his support. No nominations were received. Members discussed their concerns for the need for a Deputy Chair, as important for this Committee, given the ranging abilities of members. Karen nominated Suzi Hudson, as Deputy Chair. All members supported this. Suzi Hudson accepted the nomination.

The EAAC appointed Pat Miller as Chair and Suzi Hudson as Deputy Chair for the Committee’s current term.

Action: *Giselle to liaise with Corporate Governance on the appointment of Deputy Chair and amending the Terms of Reference for the Committee to recognise this role.*

A4. Northern Rivers Rail Trail project update – presentation by Iain Lonsdale, Project Director and Clint Nittolo, Project Manager North Coast Region, Public Works Advisory, Department of Regional NSW.

The update comprised the following key information:

- The disability audit by WOA (Wheelie on Accessible Housing) consultant Tracey Barrell OAM PLY, was completed and report received. The report outcomes were being implemented into the current project works.

- At the trail opening, scheduled for March 2023, two sections will be more accessible for people with disability, than other areas being:
 - a) section between Murwillumbah Rail Station and close to the Tweed Regional Art Gallery (noting there would be no access directly from the Trail to the Gallery due to the steep gradient of the terrain)
 - b) section between Burringbar and Mooball townships.
- At both locations, there will be a designated accessible carparking space and grade level access to the trail and retail outlets. At Murwillumbah Station, there are existing 'heritage' toilets, but these are not accessible facilities. Burringbar and Mooball townships also have toilets, however, these are not compliant with standards for accessible facilities. The project team is exploring a short-term alternative and awaiting additional funding to install fully compliant facilities.

Members raised concerns about the lack of accessible toilets and change facilities at any section of the trail, as an essential and basic amenity for people with disability. Members queried how these facilities were not provided for before a public launch. The project director advised members that bathrooms were not part of the original project scope, and the current project could not budget for it, and the project team were working on ways to upgrade the facilities as soon as possible. The project team will identify and clarify in marketing to the community that the trail that is accessible with limitations.

All members expressed their dismay and frustration that accessible toilets and change facilities were not included in the project scope. They considered the cost of facilities not to be significant within the total project budget, and that Council and state government has made commitments to meet their legislative requirements under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act, through their Disability Inclusion Action Plans. Members considered this was a significant issue preventing people with disability to participate and access the trail equally, and this was unacceptable.

The Committee repeated earlier requests for information detailing the program to deliver accessible features and amenities along the trail. That is, an itemisation of the access feature, its location, prioritisation/timeframe for delivery.

Pat suggested the Committee write to the Project Director asking for these details of the timelines and issues and asked for advice as to whether the Committee could do so under its own letterhead. Giselle advised that, to date, EAAC comments and recommendations were conveyed to Council and senior staff through the Committee meeting minutes only.

Action: *Pat to prepare a Committee response regarding the Rail Trail project with a request to forward to relevant staff.*

Action: *Giselle to seek advice from Corporate Governance to confirm acceptable forms of Committee communication to staff on project matters.*

A5. Pottsville Masterplan and Burringbar Memorial reserve and Masterson Park Plan – Tarra Martel

The *Pottsville Masterplan Equal Access Advisory Committee Meeting 16.11.2022 v2* was tabled.

Tarra introduced the two projects, which were both just commencing, with the intent to develop draft concept plans. Tarra confirmed that these plans would then form the basis of future funding applications as there were currently no Council financial resources for their delivery. Community engagement for the draft Burringbar Memorial reserve and Masterson Park concept plan is starting in December 2022 with a survey on Your Say Tweed and with a hard copy form also being available.

The Pottsville Master Plan design concept was under review, with 2 spaces being proposed for activation being the Pottsville Memorial Oval and Phillip Street Reserve.

Members suggested the project scope consider:

- Early childhood activities and equipment to be provided
- Provision of accessible bathrooms at Pottsville Environment Centre. Tarra would confirm and advise of the current standard of the existing facility
- Provision of accessible bathrooms at Hardy North Park

Action: *Members are invited to provide any further ideas to Tarra Martel, via Giselle.*

Action: *Tarra to check about toilet accessibility at Pottsville Environment Centre.*

Action: *Tarra to advise of the date for a Co-design Workshop with key stakeholders will be held in 2023.*

A6. Review of current projects

A6.1 International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) Fair update - Saturday 3 December 2022 at Kingscliff Community Hall and Rowan Robinson Park

Giselle gave an update, referring to the draft program, media release and accessible features information circulated to members.

Giselle thanked Kyle Scully for nominating as Master of Ceremonies, and confirmed that volunteers have come from community groups, including Cudgen Surf Club. Suzi suggested contacting Rotary or Apex if more volunteers were needed.

Public Transport is based on the Surfside Bus timetable and information will be provided at drop off zone areas. Giselle noted all accessible event resources were published to Council's website and promoted through media channels, stakeholder networks and the event was registered on IDPWD website.

A6.2 Goorimahbah Inclusive Park and Playspace - Opening proposed for December 2022 with a formal opening in March 2023

Giselle updated members on the Wayfinding and signage component of the project:

- The project is working with DotDash wayfinding consultants, Autism Advisory and Support Service, Vision Australia and Braille House on the signage concept designs and technical specifications.
- Signs would be located at the playspace entry points and at each play element. They would include visual communication boards, braille elements and QR codes that activate audio content. An audio hearing station is also planned to enable access to the indigenous seasonal calendar cultural heritage information.

Action: Giselle to send official opening invitation to members when available.

A6.3 “Leave Nobody Behind” - Research project with Associate Professor Michelle Villeneuve and Parvathi Subramaniam of the Centre for Disability Research and Policy, The University of Sydney, includes Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning (DIEP) forums and Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Education.

Giselle and Helen gave members an overview of the *Leave Nobody Behind Project*, as an introduction for the upcoming project in 2023. The aim would be for Council and University of Sydney to host a community forum in early 2023, which will bring together agencies involved in emergency response and recovery. Giselle handed out hardcopy workbooks to members and advised she would share the [website links to access digital resources](#).

Members discussed the importance of the services working in partnership with people with disability to develop tailored emergency response and recovery plans. Members expressed interest in participating in the upcoming forum.

Action: Giselle to keep the EAAC updated as the Leave Nobody Behind project progresses.

A6.4 Communications and social media promotions

Leah Burgess provided an updated on the promotions completed and programmed, including:

1. Variety Activate Sports Day, with a short event rundown on Council's website and social media.
2. IDPWD event, with a post-event media release and social media, TweedLink article and internal Staff Weekly.
3. Let's Reconnect Together Tweed event series, about the participant feedback survey results.
4. Goorimahbah soft opening December and formal opening in early 2023
5. Leave Nobody Behind project in early 2023

Leah discussed the proposed launch of a quarterly newsletter on Inclusion Matters for 2023 that would include media on the above events and introduce the EAAC members and new Chair, Deputy Chair, and upcoming projects included the preparation of the new Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Members expressed interest in participating in the development of the quarterly publication. Pat asked whether the Committee would have access to its own media resource to promote the Committee's work and advocate to community on issues.

Giselle and Helen clarified that Council's communications and customer service staff support the promotion of programs and services being delivered by Council and may invite Committee members to participate.

Action: Giselle to clarify the Committee's access to Council media resources to promote to and advocate for community on access and inclusion issues.

Wendy Buckingham left the meeting at 12pm as her transportation had arrived.

Giselle asked members if they wished to continue the meeting or to conclude items. Members expressed interest to continue with final items, noting the quorum requirements were being met.

Minutes

General Business:

GB1. Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

Giselle reminded members that the adoption of the new DIAP was a priority for Council in 2023, and asked members to review the material to date, and to consider any other projects they have an interest in prioritising for 2023 (subject to resources).

Action: *Members to review draft DIAP material.*

GB2. Closed EAAC email group and media releases

Pat asked if a closed email group could be created to enable in-between meeting discussions and if the EAAC could do its own media releases. Giselle reminded Pat that Wendy did not have digital access and would need to be included in any communications about Committee business.

Action: *Giselle to liaise Corporate Governance to confirm the possibility or feasibility of a closed email group, the Committee doing its own media releases and any legislative or governance matters that will need to be considered.*

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Equal Access Advisory Committee will be held in early 2023 following the development of the 2023 meeting schedule.

The meeting closed at 12.20pm.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

Nil.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Nil.