

# Minutes

## Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee Meeting held Monday 4 September 2023

### Venue:

The Harvard Room, Tweed Heads Administration Office and online via MS Teams

### Time:

10:05am

### Present:

Pat Miller (Chair); Suzanne Hudson; Kyle Sculley; Karen Sculley; Colin Usher; (Committee Members); Cr Meredith Dennis; Cr James Owen (Tweed Shire Council delegates); Naomi Searle (Director Sustainable Communities and Environment), Shannon Carruth (Acting Manager Inclusive & Creative Communities), June Cremin (Engagement Officer); Giselle Benitez Hetherington (Community Development Officer Inclusion/Secretariat/Minutes Officer) (Tweed Shire Council).

### Apologies:

Wendy Buckingham; Vanessa Riggs (Committee Members); Emily West (Tweed Shire Council)

### Minutes of Previous Meeting: 3 May 2023

**Moved:** Pat Miller

**Seconded:** Suzanne Hudson

**RECOMMENDED** that the Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee meeting held Wednesday 3 May 2023 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

### Draft Minutes of previous Meeting: 19 July 2023

**Moved:** Pat Miller

**Seconded:** Suzanne Hudson

**RECOMMENDED** that the draft Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee meeting held 19 July 2023 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

### Agenda Items:

**A1. Meeting open and Acknowledgement of Country – led by Pat Miller, Chair.**

#### **A2. Introductions**

Pat Miller welcomed all in attendance and invited Naomi Searle to introduce herself. Naomi provided a brief description of her role and background.

#### **A3. Meeting and Committee objective and agenda overview**

Naomi Searle led discussions about the Committee's role and format of meetings under the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the outcomes that Council is seeking to achieve with

the help of advice from the Committee. Member discussions comprised the following matters:

1. The purpose was clarified - being to provide advice and recommendations to Council about public access issues raised by the community, and importantly, as an advisory to support Council to deliver actions outlined in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DIAP).
2. Meetings are the forum for Committee advice and recommendations:
  - 2.1. The DIAP acts as the framework for the Committee's work. Meeting agenda items should relate to the committee providing advice and recommendations relating to the actions within the DIAP. In addition to Council projects being placed to the agenda when they are ready to seek the committee's advice, committee members may also request that priority projects related to the DIAP are added to a future meeting agenda.
    - 2.1.1. It is important to limit the number of agenda items to be considered at each meeting to provide adequate time to enable all members to contribute to meeting discussions. All members are asked to prepare and review material prior to meetings to allow for productive discussion within the time constraints of the meetings.
    - 2.1.2. Exclusions referred to under item 3 *Role and Responsibilities* of the ToR.
  - 2.2. Between meetings:
    - 2.2.1. To ensure inclusion of all Committee members, while communication about Committee business can be done by email, hardcopies must also be provided to one Committee member who does not have digital access.
    - 2.2.2. There is no obligation for members to be involved in any extra activities outside of meetings, however individuals may choose to undertake minor work when they have capacity on a project-by-project basis.
3. Naomi confirmed that the minuting cycle had been reviewed. Committee members will now receive a draft within 10 business days of the meeting being held, or as soon as practicable, to enable members to endorse them as an accurate reflection of the meeting.
  - 3.1. Draft minutes will then be provided to Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Council for review, comment and/or endorsement.
  - 3.2. ELT and Council will consider Committee recommendations alongside resource requirements and organisational priorities before they are supported to be incorporated into Council work programs.

It is important to publicly celebrate and communicate the contribution the Committee has made to make Council services, programs and infrastructure, and the Tweed more broadly, more inclusive. Naomi thanked members for their input and guidance and acknowledged that some may not seem tangible or immediate. Giselle provided an account of over 25 key projects that the Committee have contributed their advice and recommendations to since 2020. Refer to Appendix A. Members provided feedback about previous and ongoing projects:

- 3.2.1. They feel proud of Goorimahbah Place of Stories Inclusive Playspace and Parks, Tweed Business Chamber breakfast in 2021, International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) Community Fair in 2022 and IDPWD videos produced in 2021.
- 3.2.2. There is interest to continue to work on projects like the Northern Rivers Rail Trail to promote understanding of access experience.

## **A6. Update of actions and achievements (draft Actions Register) – led by Secretariat**

Giselle referred to the draft Actions Register, as a proposed new inclusion to draft agendas and minutes to track progress of actions requested in Committee meetings, evaluate performance and improve accountability. Giselle provided a status update on the following 6 open matters.

1. 16 November 2022 A2. Membership – to conduct an EOI process to fill vacant member position.
  - This process will occur in 2024 for the whole Committee. The action is moved to closed items.
2. 16 November 2022 A3. Chair Election.
  - The ToR do not provide for the role of Deputy Chair. The role of Chair is to review draft agendas and run meetings in line with ToR. If the Chair is not available, it is likely the meeting will be moved, or the Committee may vote on a member to the Chair role in the meeting. The action is moved to closed items.
3. 16 November 2022 A5. Pottsville Masterplan and Burringbar Memorial reserve and Masterson Park Plan.
  - Updates have been provided to members for May and July meetings, for member review and feedback. The project is currently on exhibition until 19 September 2023, which members can make submissions as individuals. Members may consider inviting staff to present at next meeting.
4. 5 April 2023 A2. Governance a) Terms of Reference recommendation endorsed by Council at 22 June 2023 meeting.
  - This action is scheduled to be completed prior to the new call of all committees, likely at end of 2024, as part of the review process.
5. 19 July 2023 A7.d. Mid-term evaluation - Chair's mid-term evaluation of the progress of the Committee is not conducted.
  - An end of term review will likely occur in 2024 and will involve a confidential self-assessment by members. The Secretariat will draft questions for member approval, and then compile data and provide scores and feedback, once received.
6. 19 July 2023 A7.d. Meeting minutes – as per discussions above (A3.3) The action is completed and moved to closed items.

## **Action Items:**

- 1. Members agreed to adopt the Action Register as a new inclusion to draft agendas and Minutes, for the purposes of enabling members to review and discuss priorities.**
- 2. Members to provide feedback about the format structure and accessibility.**

## **A7. Draft Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan (DIAP) – led by June Cremin and Giselle Benitez Hetherington**

Members discussed the results of the pre-meeting activity, which asked members to answer the question: Which focus area should we start working on first?

1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable and accessible communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes

The results showed the Focus Areas (FA) of highest priority were 1, 2 and 3. Members acknowledged there was much work done on FA 2 to improve access to the built environment. Members agreed that the description for FA 2 (as set by NSW Government guidelines) was confusing and suggested changing to be: “Building liveable and accessible communities” to distinguish from FA 1.

Members discussed messaging and the use of terms like “people with disability” or other language, that may have a negative impact on people’s perceptions. It was recognised that legislation and policy definitions use “people with disability”. Giselle referred members to page 4 of the draft DIAP which provides a discussion acknowledging language conventions and preferences may differ and have an impact on the way people with disability feel and are perceived in society.

Members expressed interest in working on projects that increase representation of people with disability in community, including by sharing stories and showcasing achievement, through videos and face-to-face meet and greet activities, such as libraries.

Giselle provided an overview of the draft engagement plan during exhibition of the draft DIAP, subject to Council approval. Members discussed the following activities being considered:

1. Survey and Easy Read version
2. Media promotions through Tweed Link media and social media
3. Community Conversation events: face-to-face and online sessions
4. In-person focus group activities targeting intersects of community, including women, children, LGBTQI+, CALD members.

Members discussed ideas such as sending postcards to all households in Tweed, recognising cost implications and the broader challenges of engaging with community who are fatigued by consultation and may feel their feedback is not heard. Members agreed it was important to demonstrate to community that their voices were heard by Council and supported the initiative to celebrate this year’s International Day of People with Disability

by showcasing the achievements of the current DIAP and the Committee. Further discussions of options were deferred to General Business.

**Action items:**

- 1. Giselle to provide feedback to NSW Government on the description of Focus Area 2, and suggested revision.**
- 2. Giselle and June to provide information to members about the DIAP engagement activities.**
- 3. Members to provide feedback about DIAP engagement activities they are interested to participate in - noting this is non-obligatory work between meetings.**
- 4. Members to provide feedback to Giselle on the revised full document and summary document, in particular, discussion of the following:**
  - a. Language such as “Words Matter” section (refer to page 4)**
  - b. Values and guiding principles (refer to page 6)**
  - c. Ideas for actions to be delivered as integrated projects (refer to page 8-12)**
  - d. Performance indicators and what their measures of success look and feel like (refer to Table from page 15).**

**General Business:**

**GB1. Options for celebrating International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD)**

Members discussed two options for celebrating the event this year, noting the limited timeframe:

1. Celebrating current DIAP and Committee achievements
2. Coordinating with the Tweed Business Chamber to deliver a breakfast, focussing on IDPWD and the DIAP Focus Areas 1 and 3.

**Action items:**

- 1. Giselle to share links to the Reconciliation Action Plan tool as the basis to promote the DIAP achievements for IDPWD 2024.**
- 2. Members to review the tool and share feedback, before discussing at next meeting.**
- 3. Colin to coordinate an enquiry with the Tweed Business Chamber and liaise with members.**
- 4. Colin and Giselle to raise with Tweed Disability Network to invite speakers.**

**GB2. Altering meeting dates**

Members were asked to consider changing the meeting schedule to enable Naomi Searle, Director Sustainable Communities and Environment to attend.

**Action: Chair and Secretariat to consider tabling item at next meeting, for adoption as 2024 meeting schedule.**

# Minutes

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Equal Access Advisory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 15 November 2023, to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 12:10pm.

**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:**

Nil.

**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Nil

## Appendix A: Committee achievements from 2020 to 2023

The following represent projects under the Tweed Access and Inclusion plan 2018-2021 that the Committee has worked on with Council, contributing advice and perspectives as per the Terms of Reference, and continuing to maintain skills and knowledge in Council.

### 2020 – 2021

The Committee convened 5 times from July 2020, following a renewal of membership and adjustment to the COVID-19 pandemic health and safety requirements.

1. COVID-19 pandemic emerging issues, impacts and support responses. On member feedback, Council developed and published information to Council's website about what accessible features and services existed for people with disability.
2. Review of Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021 – members gave feedback on emerging priorities.
3. Findings of access audits conducted in 2015 informed the draft masterplans developed for Casuarina and Pottsville.
4. Goorimahbah Place of Stories – Inclusive play space concept design - members contributed to project initiation discussions with Council staff, Variety Children's Charity and landscape architect.
5. Terms of Reference – members gave feedback to inform the review.
6. Inclusive events – Members gave feedback about the collaborative partnership with the Murwillumbah Show in 2019, which informed the Let's Reconnect event series in 2022-2023.
7. Local bus timetable publications were redesigned to be more accessible to vision-impaired patrons.
8. International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) celebration involved a morning team, with past previous members from 23 years in operation recognised, meeting COVID-19 requirements.

### 2021- 2022

1. COVID-19 pandemic public health measures and impacts on community and support services sector.
2. Goorimahbah Place of Stories – Inclusive Park and Playspace draft concept plan – members gave input to:
  - a. inclusive elements of the design including the central circuit and high contrast points to enable navigation, water play features, main gate proximity to accessible parking space and toilets.
  - b. Community engagement activities and Easy Read and screen-device accessible documentation for the public exhibition of draft concept design.
  - c. Media release promoting announcement of funding and in support of the project.
3. Council's new redesigned websites – members participated in user acceptance testing to ensure information and functionality of features was optimal for people using assistive technology or with limited computer skills.
4. Draft Norries Headland Masterplan – members considered and discussed the proposed changes to formalise car parking and provide more accessible parking bays, toilets and playspace, continuous pathways between amenities. Members gave feedback about optimising safety and viewing experiences for people with disability.



5. Draft Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and Bike Plan – members received presentation from Council staff and consultants and gave feedback.
6. Accessible car parking options at Fingal Beach – members gave feedback on options presented.
7. Draft Tweed Transport Plan – member received presentations from Transport for NSW and gave feedback.
8. Draft Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026 – members:
  - a. workshopped priority issues, consultation strategies and preliminary draft actions.
  - b. Reviewed and tested Easy Ready community survey.
  - c. Facilitated and participated in presentations delivered to community advocacy groups and the Tweed Business Chamber.
9. International Day of People with Disability 2021 – members collaborated in the design, production, and starred in three videos, which were highly successful in community reach.

## **2022 – 2023**

Committee membership was renewed in July and inaugurated in September 2022.

1. Inclusive wayfinding and signage at the Goorimahbah Place of Stories – Inclusive Park and Playspace. Members contributed:
  - a. Input on vision-impaired information strategies such as braille with QR codes and audio wheel to convey visual information on cultural heritage.
  - b. Connections with expert colleagues in testing GoCommunication boards for non-verbal people.
  - c. Attending the official opening and media release in February 2023.
  - d. Feedback about the flying fox and swing harnesses and audio wheel.
2. International Day of People with Disability 2022 Community Fair held on 3 December – members gave feedback and advice on key elements to ensure all-inclusive event:
  - a. 'Fair' style activities, including COVID-19 safe face painting, interactive dance workshops led by groups run by people with disability, and Disc Jockey.
  - b. Half-day timeframe and location
  - c. Workshop registration portal, testing of screen reader accessible information.
  - d. Provision of braille programs and recycling / waste bin cover stickers.
  - e. Member performed MC duties, supported by Auslan interpreter.

### Ongoing projects include:

3. Draft Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan – discussion of priority issues, consultation strategies and preliminary draft actions.
4. Northern Rivers Rail Trail – discussion of accessible facilities at key nodes.
5. Pottsville Draft Masterplan and Burringbar Memorial reserve and Masterson Park Draft Plan.
6. Review of governance arrangements to improve Committee function:
  - a. Suggested amendments to Terms of Reference
  - b. Input to a staff guide on how to present/provide updates (April 2023).
7. Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning workshop, 28 June 2023 – members participated at the event and gave feedback post-event.