

Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: 21 August 2019
Time: 4:30pm – 6.30pm
Venue: Newcastle City Hall
Meeting: Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee
Meeting Objective: Advisory Committee

1. Welcome

Attendance:

Eliot Shaw (Co-Chair) (ES)
Chris Leishman (CL)
Norm MacPherson (NM)
Nathan Burford (NB)
Joseph Popov (JP)
Margaret Wood (MW)
Kirsty Russell (KR)
Cr Matthew Byrne (Co-Chair) (MB)
Nathan Burford (NB)
Brett Smith (Director of Strategy and Engagement) (BS)
Ashlee Abbott (Manager Corporate and Community Planning) (AA)
Steve Warham (Community Development Facilitator) (SW)
Petria Jukes (Community Development Facilitator) (PJ)
Kerindy Clark (City of Newcastle)
Bec Meenahan (City of Newcastle)
Andrew Wood (City of Newcastle)

2. Apologies:

Tracey Walker
Cr Carol Duncan
Cr Andrea Rufo

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3. Acknowledgment of Country

The Acknowledgement of Country was delivered by the Chair.

4. Declarations of Interest

4.1 Nil

5. Briefing on East End Renewal (Stage 1)

5.1 The group welcomed Andrew Wood, City of Newcastle Project Manager.

5.2 AW provided an overview of the public domain plan (PDP) to the group and outlined some designed factors taken into consideration such as disability access considerations, CPTED, parking, and street trees. AW highlighted that varying stages of development in the PDP were dependant on private developments occurring in the East End and that matters relating to building works on private land and use of buildings were out of the scope of the PDP.

5.3 JP enquired about a 3D Render of the PDP. It was advised that this is not yet available.

5.4 Specific points raised by the group about design detail were as follows:

- Design features were kept clear of the building line (min 1.8m for compliance), with the exception of where topography does not permit.
- NM noted that on the northern side of Hunter Street (around 200 to 208), there were lips at the building entrance upwards of 20mm and enquired if there were any plans to change. In reply, AW stated that building levels were not in scope, and it was the responsibility of individual owners/occupants to make ramp access available internally. However, the design would try to overcome gradients and lips where possible.
- NB enquired about the use of 'shared zone' on walkways and roadways without any distinction. AW stated that he was working with SW to create clear use of the public domain for all, including cycleways, roadways, and pedestrian areas.
- NM enquired if the Laing Street toilets were to stay and commented that the footpath access width should be widened, and the gradient along Morgan

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Street was difficult. AW commented that these facilities were out of scope at the present time. Toilets to remain. Any existing longitudinal gradients (in the direction the road travels) in the road are generally not able to be changed due to the topography. Footpath cross grades will comply with Council standards of max 2.5%.

- NB enquired about the opportunity for digital wayfinding, and AW replied that there was an opportunity through the emerging Smart City digital wayfinding on a pilot scale. NB confirmed that guide dogs are always willing to be part of the future development of such technology.
- ES suggested that consideration should be given to the introduction of sensory shells for people who require respite in busy urban areas. AW suggested crime prevention would be an issue. However, examples could be scoped and potentially integrated. AA encouraged ES and other to put forward any examples for City of Newcastle to look examine.

5.5 An overview of timings was provided to the group, with Stage 1 through to Stage 4 of the PDP running from 2020 – 2024 and stage 5 to stage 9 yet to be scheduled. The works are programmed to minimise disruption and costs.

5.6 The Chair thanked Andrew for attending.

6. Previous Minutes and Business Arising

6.1 Amendments to names on the attendee list noted and corrected.

6.2 ES put forward that the minutes were true and correct. Moved MB Seconded KR.

7. Count us In – Festival of Inclusion

7.1 PJ and SW provided the committee with an overview of the general concept for the festival, including the festival name, EOI process, promotion opportunities, and timeframe. Some ideas in development were a collaboration with the NSW Business Chamber and an inclusive games day. It is estimated that the EOI will be distributed 29 August 2019.

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7.2 Committee members, JP and MW highlighted some key opportunities, including TINA, the University and Real Film Festival.

7.3 Committee members raised no objection to the concept and general directions provided.

8. Disability Inclusion Action Plan – review

8.1 AA provided a general introduction to the plan review process, outlining that the proposal is to undertake a stand-alone plan with the view to getting more traction towards inclusion outcomes. It has been acknowledged that there is room to have more targeted priorities, with a strong emphasis on outcomes for change and less on business as usual items that Council routinely undertakes.

8.2 An overview of consultation timeline and general concepts was provided to the group from October through to May 2020.

9. CN Diversity and Culture – Introduction to Staff

9.1 Kerindy Clark and Bec Meenahan from the City of Newcastle People and Culture division were introduced and welcomed by the group. KC provided an overview of the CN Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan and the LGBTQI Awareness Plan. A brief overview of EEO targets was given to the group.

9.2 KC and BM highlighted that the recruitment strategy needs a review.

9.3 There was discussion in the group around recruitment targets and the need to reflect diversity in the community, in the recruitment strategy.

9.4 MW put forward that the Council needs to encourage people to apply for positions within the organisation and make it easier for them to do so. Further, the organisation should actively recruit and make volunteering opportunities for people with lived experience.

9.5 KR brought up the topic of disclosure and the impact this has on recruitment. JP added that there is a tendency not to disclose and turn up on merit for the job to avoid any stereotype. ES added that there must be allowances or a program in place for reasonable adjustment. SW and KR added the importance of flexibility in the workplace and normalising a flexible work arrangement.

9.6 BM is in a newly created role working on the workplace wellbeing strategy, tailored to address wellbeing issues. This strategy will interplay with the EEO role

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and other Council inclusion programs. JP added that inclusion and wellbeing are important in challenging the broader community with unconscious bias and stereotyping, and perhaps there was a need for staff training in this area to help address stigma. CL added that, if there is a barrier in place prohibiting people from working, it should be, can we help, as opposed to being up to the person to disclose their disability. ES also added that some disability is invisible. The group added that, when done well and matters around disclosure are ironed out, it can lead to increased productivity, be better for job performance.

9.7 ES put forward that the committee is happy to review any emerging frameworks and provide feedback.

10. LMCC Advisory Committee

10.1 SW followed up with the group about the intention to meet with Lake Macquarie City Council Advisory Committee. The intention is to meet for an additional ½ hour for discussion and then continue the meeting. Transport and logistics need to be arranged. It was suggested by the group that a mid-afternoon meeting is preferable, however, if later finishing by 6.30 pm at the latest. The date and time are to be advised.

MW suggested members compile a list of things to be discussed with LMCC with a view to arranging a joint agenda. The purpose of the joint agenda is to try to articulate mutual interests, learn from each other's experience, and how each group approaches work.

11. General Business

11.1 The Civic Theatre raked flooring trail rubber matting has been installed. These will be trialed for 12 months. At the present time, they are to be arranged upon booking. They are for the main auditorium as access and evacuation from the stalls do not accommodate patrons in a wheelchair.

11.2 BS followed up with the committee about an item discussed at a previous meeting, an app, or digital access to facilities such as public toilets. It was confirmed that there were products available, and these could be investigated as part of smart city technology.

11.3 KR updated the committee about her recent presentation in Singapore, where she was invited to speak at the Asia Pacific Autism Awareness Conference. It was a positive experience and a great way to promote positive special needs parenting, with over 1000 delegates from all over the world at the plenary session.

Meeting closed. 6.21 pm