

# Employment and Economic Development Committee Meeting Record 14 July 2020



Location:	Zoom Meeting	
Date:	14 July 2020	
Time	Started at: 4.03pm	Closed at: 6.21pm
Chair	Councillor Jane Smith	
File Ref	F2018/00100	

## **Present:**

Councillor Chris Holstein, Councillor Kyle MacGregor (joined 4.21pm), Councillor Bruce McLachlan, Councillor Jane Smith, William Adames, John Asquith, Mike Goodman (left 6.20pm)

## **External Attendees:**

Paula Martin – NSW Business Chamber, Jade Moffat – PTECH (left 4.38pm), Jillian Williams – PTECH (left 4.38pm)

## **Council Staff present:**

Ricardo Martello – Executive Manager Innovation and Futures, Louise Fisher – Chief External Funding Coordinator (left 4.53pm), Christine Jarvis – Business Development Manager, Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

## **Item 1 Apologies, Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country**

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Apologies received: Councillor Rebecca Gale, Councillor Jilly Pilon, Councillor Jeff Sundstrom

The Chairperson, Councillor Jane Smith, declared the meeting open and completed an Acknowledgement of Country statement and Connection to Land Statement.

## **Item 2 Disclosure of Interest**

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The Chair called for any declarations of interest.

Councillor Bruce McLachlan declared a less than significant non-pecuniary interest as he had done previously, as a business owner on the Central Coast.

## **Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Records**

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The Advisory Group confirmed the Meeting Record from 17 December 2019.

The Advisory Group reviewed the Action Log, noting they are still interested in receiving updates for the pending items including constraint mapping, youth unemployment and the Destination Brand.

**Action:** Paula Martin to provide presentation on outcomes of NSW Business Chamber report on youth unemployment with regard to COVID at the next meeting.

#### **Item 4                      Presentation from PTECH (Action 27)**

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Jillian Williams and Jade Moffat from PTECH provided a presentation on PTECH (Pathways in Technology), which is an IBM project to help upskill students and generate employment opportunities with local industry partners.

The following key points were noted:

- PTECH involves a partnership between secondary schools, industry, and government to address skills gaps in technology and promote employment in these areas. The aim is skilled youth being placed in jobs with partnered industries.
- Projected that Australia will need over 300,000 additional tech workers to meet employer demand by 2024.
- There are currently 15 PTECH schools in Australia and 220 globally (across 28 countries). Wyong was one of the first of three PTECH schools established in NSW, and is considered a standout in Australia.
- Three additional schools on the Central Coast will be taking part in PTECH program: Henry Kendall High School, Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College Tumby Umbi, Kariong Mountain High School).
- Industry partners on the Central Coast include Mars, Sanitarium, NSW Health, IBM, Borg, University of Newcastle.
- There are no aptitude tests for students to join PTECH stream, or other barriers such as additional fees. Concept of 'new collar' roles – students are equipped with foundation level tech skills and are expected to undertake ongoing learning and development.
- Noted that PTECH doesn't replace the NSW Curriculum, but compliments it. PTECH works closely with teachers and leaders in schools to ensure holistic approach.

Ricardo Martello (Executive Manager Innovation and Futures) noted that Jillian and Jade will be taking part in the Central Coast Innovation Breakfast for the July topic, Future of Education. More info is available here: <https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/whats-on/council/central-coast-innovation-breakfast-zoom-july-2020>

#### **Item 5                      Infrastructure Priorities Working Group**

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Ricardo Martello (Executive Manager Innovation and Futures) provided an overview of the Infrastructure Priorities Working Group on behalf of Louise Fisher (Chief External Funding Coordinator). The Working Group is an intergovernmental group established to identify infrastructure needs for the Central Coast region and advocate for grant opportunities. Their aim is to ensure the same priorities are held by relevant government bodies to improve outcomes for the Central Coast.

The following key points were noted:

- Data and evidence gathered by the group is building on previously endorsed projects in order to develop a Central Coast Regional Infrastructure Priority List with short (5yrs), medium (10yrs) and long (15yrs) term solutions.
- Stakeholders involved include:
  - Central Coast Council

- Regional Development Australia (Central Coast)
- Regional NSW – Regions, Industry, Agriculture and Resources
- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
- Transport for NSW
- Subject matter experts as required
- Timing of group establishment is important considering current economic crisis due to COVID. Noted that all levels of government have role to play in stimulating economy – involvement in the group puts Council in a good position for this.
- Priority List is currently being drafted and will be brought back to key stakeholders (including this Advisory Group) once ready. State and Federal budgets need to be considered, and there is significant amount of data to collate and review. It is difficult to provide an anticipated timeframe, but staff are hopeful for upcoming months.
- Noted that funding wouldn't necessarily be provided directly to Council, but would be allocated to relevant government body to deliver regional infrastructure (e.g. Transport for NSW to undertake road improvements).
- Central Coast Council was one of two NSW Councils that proactively submitted COVID projects for consideration.

**Action:** Update on Infrastructure Priorities Working Group and list of identified projects to be brought back to Advisory Group once ready.

## **Item 6                    Update on Economic Development Strategy (Standing Item)**

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Ricardo Martello (Executive Manager Innovations and Futures) provided an update on Council's Economic Development Strategy (EDS).

The below key points were noted:

- Draft EDS and Economic Recovery & Resilience Framework endorsed by Council for public exhibition on 9 June 2020. Submissions close 20 July 2020. Info here: <https://www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/all-projects/public-exhibition-central-coast-economic-development-and-recovery-plans>.
- Graphs showing key social and economic data for the Central Coast were displayed using stats from the National Cities Performance Framework.
- Economic impact of COVID can be seen in stats. As at end of May 2020, there were around 22,000 applications for JobSeeker payments on the Central Coast. Numbers are now declining – reduction suggests casuals who were stood down and applied for payments are now returning to paid employment.
- JobKeeper applications submitted have been largest for businesses registered in 2250 postcode. Noted that large industrial businesses in area contribute to this significantly.
- Good news story: Bigger Backyards Program has been successful tool for promoting local economy through pledges between local businesses.
- Noted that household internet connections are a priority for State and Federal governments, given current climate and increase in people working from home. Working from home offers significant economic value to Central Coast as there is reduced number of people commuting outside of area for work. Also potential for people to make lifestyle change and move to area given flexibility of working arrangements.

**Action:** Staff to provide further info on Active Transport data from the National Cities Performance Framework, with view to better understand what stats mean for Central Coast.

**Action:** Staff to investigate if National Cities Performance Framework data for comparable cities of Logan (QLD) and Casey (VIC) is available for Advisory Group review.

**Action:** Staff to review and provide presentations to Advisory Group members.

**Action:** Paula Martin to provide closing report on Bigger Backyards Program at next applicable Advisory Group meeting.

## **Item 7            Terms of Reference and Future Focus for Advisory Group**

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The Advisory Group considered their progress to date and proposed way forward to actively support economic development and employment opportunities on the Central Coast.

The following key points were noted:

- Frustrations from members feeling they had been bombarded with information, and hadn't actually achieved much over the past few years.
- Group needs to identify key issues to focus on and have active role in these matters (i.e. workshoping issues and coming up with solutions). All want to see more action/outcomes achieved. Some suggestions were as follows:
  - COVID investigations – impact and effective recovery.
  - Continue with key economic updates.
  - Focus on systemic solutions not individual projects – outputs of strategic conversations can feed into the projects.
  - Consider short, medium, and long-term solutions for region, not just the quick wins.
  - Explore working from home opportunities and diversification of local economy.
  - Support of local small businesses, including non-traditional models like co-operatives
  - Ongoing consideration of sustainability – members have skills and knowledge from economic, social and environmental perspectives
- Important to have measurable outcomes so that group can track progress and manage expectations. Suggestion that group identifies 3-5 drivers for economy, and use these as report card (Tasmania provides good example).
- Adoption of Economic Development Strategy will help guide group by identifying focus areas, Members can then provide input into key projects. Noted importance that projects are considered with COVID in mind.
- Good news stories: group previously advocated for increase in staff resources for Economic Development team, which has since been implemented. Knowledge sharing from group has been beneficial for some members in their external roles.
- Interested in exploring working from home as avenue to stimulate economy on the Central Coast. Noted that Sydney surround areas will similarly be looking to capitalise on this opportunity, so timing is important. Staff have been considering conducting a survey to investigate what people need to work from home successfully and how this can be best accommodated.
- Requested that any data for consideration/discussion at meetings is provided in advance so that members can sufficiently review. Meeting would then provide time for questions and clarification, rather than delivery of the data.

**Action:** Staff to investigate providing list of potential opportunities related to working from home to Advisory Group members before next meeting for consideration.

**Action:** Advisory Group members to review Terms of Reference in preparation for discussion at next meeting, as well as considering stakeholders who may be invited to meetings moving forward to respond to identified priorities.

**Action:** Reminder to be sent to Advisory Group members with Meeting Record about suggesting projects for staff consideration. (Members have one week to provide feedback)

## **Item 8                    General Business and Close**

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The Advisory Group agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting in August 2020 (or next available date) to workshop focus areas. Group will continue to consider meeting frequency and adjust as necessary.

The meeting closed at 6.21pm

**Next Meeting:**                    **1 September 2020 (Extraordinary)**  
   **4pm – 6pm**  
   **Zoom Meeting (TBC)**