

Social Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting Record 10 June 2020



Location:	Zoom Meeting	
Date:	10 June 2020	
Time	Started at: 4.05pm	Closed at: 6.03pm
Chair	Councillor Kyle MacGregor	
File Ref	F2019/00090	

Present:

Councillor Chris Holstein, Councillor Kyle MacGregor, Jackie Klarkowski, Joshua Maxwell, Glitta Supernova, Deb Tipper (left 5.30pm)

Council Staff present:

Julie Vaughan – Director Connected Communities, Glenn Cannard – Unit Manager Community Partnerships, Kerrie Forrest – Section Manager Community Planning and Services, Jacqueline Svedas – Business and Economic Development Manager (left 5.35pm), Celia Pennycook – Social Planner Community Planning and Funding, Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

Item 1 Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and Apologies

Apologies received: Councillor Jillian Hogan, Colette Baron, Bert Cotte, Belinda McRobie – Team Leader Community and Cultural Programs

Councillor Kyle MacGregor welcomed the Advisory Group and completed an Acknowledgement of Country.

Item 2 Disclosure of Interest

No disclosures were received.

Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record

The Advisory Group confirmed the Meeting Record from 13 February 2020, noting frustrations about the delay of the draft Social Inclusion Policy had not been captured, but would be included as part of this Meeting Record.

The Social Inclusion Policy is part of a suite of documents which need to be reviewed internally before being shared. Staff acknowledged frustrations that the draft Policy had not come to the Advisory Group yet and confirmed it would be shared as soon as practicable.

Regarding Josh Maxwell's previous resignation, Josh had since decided to remain a member of the Advisory Group following discussions with staff. The Advisory Group acknowledged the unfortunate events that led to Josh's resignation, being comments made in the Council Chamber, and reiterated their support for Advisory Group members and their associated organisations and communities.

The Advisory Group also noted concerns with how Council communicates the work they are doing. Some members feel there is a lot of great work being undertaken by staff, but issues of inaccessibility and lack of inclusion hinder the reach it has.

The Advisory Group reviewed the Action Log. It was noted there are a few actions still pending but updates would be brought back to August 2020 meeting.

Item 4 Feedback on Education Programs Surrounding Natural Disasters

Glenn Cannard (Unit Manager Community Partnerships) provided a verbal update on community programs with regard to natural disaster recovery. This is a large project that spans across different units in Council, which has been delayed given the current pandemic and restrictions.

It was noted that Council acquired some external funding to run events in local communities affected by the recent bushfires. The intent is to build a strong base of resilience in the communities by developing asset-based projects that have long-term benefits. Staff are currently finalising the scope of works and considering how communications can be improved to enable optimum outcomes. A further update will come to the next Advisory Group meeting.

Two grants went to Council on 9 June 2020 – one regarding bushfire recovery infrastructure and promoting agritourism in the hinterland region, and one regarding a project called 'Front Yard Fridays' which involves community engagement as part of a broader resilience program. The current conditions make it difficult to bring groups of people together, however are good examples of programs being implemented to support the Central Coast region.

Advisory Group members made some further suggestions about how to support the community during natural disasters:

- Offer first aid workshops for both physical and mental health to promote awareness and ability to help others.
- Consider body of work completed by Amanda Howard (University of Sydney) regarding recovery from disasters and the 'Walk With' program.
- Promote a 'buddy system' to encourage connections and accountability for community. It was noted that a community group was established by local residents in Killcare to provide support during the pandemic, particularly to the elderly and those in greater need.

Staff confirmed they have looked at existing projects such as those in Victoria, Canada and New Zealand. Need to consider the sustainability of projects and enable groups to ultimately become self-sufficient. It's anticipated that projects will vary in approach, but the goal is to strengthen existing groups and support establishment of new groups.

Staff also noted there was a community centre open for flood support when the pandemic first started. Many people in the community have still been trying to recover from floods/bushfires during pandemic.

Item 5 Update on Economic Development

Celia Pennycook (Social Planner, Community Planning and Funding) provided a presentation on economic disadvantage.

The following key points were noted:

- The 'Dropping off the Edge Report 2015' reveals that Central Coast is one of most economically disadvantaged areas in NSW.
- The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Disadvantage shows the northern area of LGA as more disadvantaged than southern area.
- While the average household income is lower in the northern LGA, there are slightly more low-income households (<\$650/week) in the southern LGA (ABS, 2016).
- The Central Coast has higher levels of schooling complete in comparison with Greater Sydney for all years except for completion of Year 12.
 - Tertiary education (Bachelor or higher degree) completion rates (14%) are lower than Greater Sydney (28.3%) and NSW average (23.4%).
 - Vocational qualification rates (24.4%) are higher than Greater Sydney (15.1%) and NSW average (18.1%).
 - There are more people with no qualifications (41.8%) than Greater Sydney (37.3%) and NSW average (39.1%).
- Current data regarding employment/unemployment show impact of pandemic. The Central Coast usually has a higher unemployment rate, but this has declined to 4.9% in comparison to 6% for NSW as of April 2020.
 - Anticipated loss of 9,998 local jobs in June 2020 quarter (not withstanding JobKeeper recipients – estimated total would be 18,171 if included).
 - Youth unemployment is still high (9.7%).
- For children aged 0-19 years in LGA, there were over 15,000 reports of child abuse and neglect, and over 4,000 at risk of significant harm
- During period March 2019 – March 2020, Central Coast LGA had second highest number of Domestic Violence Apprehended Violence Orders of all LGAs in NSW.
- The need for assistance due to disability is higher in northern LGA but highest in Peninsula area.
- Housing stress is greater on Central Coast than in Sydney, and highest in northern LGA.

Jacqueline Svedas (Business and Economic Development Manager) provided a presentation on the draft Economic Development Strategy and Economic Recovery and Resilience Framework.

The following key points were noted:

- The draft Economic Development Strategy and Economic Recovery and Resilience Framework went to Council on 9 June 2020, and was approved for public exhibition (opens 15 June for 28 days).
- Accommodation and Food Services has been industry most impacted by pandemic.
- Under 20 years and over 70 years age groups have been greatest affected in NSW, given type of employment.
- There are over 24,000 registered businesses on the Central Coast – 97% of these have less than 15 employees and are classified as small businesses.
- All groups are affected differently by COVID-19, which has transformed from a public health crisis to an economic crisis. Unable to use historic data to address current situation as unprecedented times.
- The aim of the Economic Recovery and Resilience Framework is to reduce impact of pandemic and promote local economy.

- Good news story: a 'Business to Business' platform has been developed which as of today resulted in \$14 million in pledges (from local businesses to support one another by purchasing local etc) equating to approximately \$400 million in boost to local economy.
- Noted it's important to balance economic reality with public confidence moving forward.
- There are challenges in interpreting data given the forever evolving situation and changing restrictions.

It was noted there has been an increase in demand for support services, particularly for families with many children and older children. This has significant impact on charities, especially considering that fundraising opportunities are currently limited. Moreover, people who have previously not had to access support and resources are now needing help. It was commented that support and programs for youth should be prioritised moving forward.

Action: Presentations provided by staff to be circulated to Advisory Group members.

Action: Update on Social Task Force to be brought back to Advisory Group.

Item 6 Rainbow Community (LGBTQI+ inclusivity in everyday consideration)

The Advisory Group discussed the importance of the Rainbow Community and LGBTQI+ inclusivity in everyday considerations.

The following points and suggestions for improved inclusivity were noted:

- Need to identify and challenge entrenched biases to make safe spaces a reality (both formal spaces and the general idea).
- Consider options for gender identity on forms/surveys (issue with forms only offering 'Male' or 'Female' and not recognising other gender identities).
- Acknowledge there is no 'norm' or 'one size fits all' (e.g. family structures, gender identity).
- Need strong workplace inclusion policies that filter through to procedures. Ensure there are consequences for non-compliance to disarm negative behaviours and establish an inclusive culture.
- Current Council policies include Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy, and Equity Diversity and Respect Policy. Noted these documents are not all encompassing and further work is needed to ensure true inclusivity.
- Commended Council's Cultural Plan as a quality document, but noted the draft didn't include any reference to Rainbow Community which was very disappointing.
- Highlighted importance of the 'little things' as they build over time and become part of everyday considerations.

Action: Representative from People and Culture to be invited to next meeting to discuss current policies and procedures, and how these may be improved to promote inclusivity.

Item 7 General Business and Close

Action: Advisory Group Support Officer to send updated Action Log and Terms of Reference to Advisory Group members. Advisory Group members to consider documents and suggest priorities for next 12 months, with a view to clarify intent and purpose of the group.

The meeting closed at 6.03pm

Next Meeting: **Tuesday 11 August 2020**
 4pm – 6pm
 Location TBC