

Status of Women Advisory Group Meeting Record 2 June 2020



Location:	Zoom Meeting
Date:	2 June 2020
Time	Started at: 3.20pm Closed at: 4.49pm
Chair	Mayor Lisa Matthews
File Ref	F2017/00176

Present

Mayor Lisa Matthews, Councillor Chris Holstein, Sharryn Brownlee, Margot Castles, Danielle Habib, Sally Jope, Monique Tovo, Sharon Walsh, Julie Vaughan – Director Connected Communities

Council Staff present:

Glenn Cannard – Unit Manager Community Partnerships Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

Item 1 Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country, Apologies

Apologies received: Councillor Kyle MacGregor, Belinda Kimpton, Aliesha Carreno – Community Development Worker,

Mayor Lisa Matthews welcomed the Advisory Group and completed an Acknowledgement of Country.

Item 2 Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures were noted.

Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record

The Advisory Group confirmed the Meeting Records from 14 April 2020.

The Advisory Group reviewed the Action Log.

It was noted that regular meetings have been held between key stakeholders (including local police and NSW Health) to address the current pandemic. A focus for police has been dealing with people being forced into isolation and adhering with restrictions. Police reports indicate that domestic violence (DV) report numbers are down, however it was acknowledged these stats may not be an accurate representation. Other organisations have seen a rise in DV report numbers during the pandemic, and noted these cases are not being referred by the police.

It was requested that hosting a march as part of IWD be considered for future planning. It was noted there are challenges in acquiring the relevant approvals with regard to street closures, but staff will follow up offline and the related action will remain pending for discussion.

Item 4 Consideration of Priorities and Action Plan for 12 Months

The Advisory Group were requested to consider their priorities for the next 12 months and identify focus for future meetings. It was noted that one suggestion had been shared via email in that a representative from The Glen be invited to a future face-to-face meeting to discuss the new women's drug and alcohol centre that is being built in Wyong.

Suggested future topics for focus were as follows:

- Scholarships and school education opportunities (note pending meeting with DoE as per Action 58).
- Information sharing and opportunities for women wishing to pursue role in government, in collaboration with ALGWA through women's forums.
- Alternative methods for meetings and distribution of info:
 - Round table discussion with leading community organisations who work with women (face-to-face meetings).
 - Hosting a series of workshops with specific themes e.g. working from home, impact of pandemic on women (professionals and full-time parents/carers), women in leadership, women in local government (consider aligning with Local Government elections in 2021).
 - Email notices regarding current plans/strategies on public exhibition, with view to encourage greater awareness and women's interest in key matters.
- Availability of free resources to support women (most require payment such as membership fee).
- Continue with IWD and Festival of Women as focus and consider areas for improvement.
- Promotion of group within Council as a valuable source of information given the various subject matter experts and organisations represented, and interest of group in reviewing policies/plans etc (noted there are resource and timing challenges with this and may not be appropriate for group).

It was also noted that a Social Taskforce has been developed which is currently considering the role of Council in the pandemic situation, including the level of comms and support systems offered.

Action: Joe Coyte from The Glen to be invited to a future face-to-face meeting to discuss the new women's drug and alcohol centre that is being built in Wyong.

Action: Community Engagement team to work with Advisory Group Support Officer to consider promoting awareness of items on public exhibition by issuing email notices to Advisory Group members.

Action: Mayor Lisa Matthews to follow up with ALGWA board regarding possibility of Central Coast Council hosting a women's forum in the future.

Item 5 Updates from Advisory Group Members

Each Advisory Group member was given the opportunity to share any updates or thoughts they have with the group. The below comments were captured:

- There is a renewed push for a standalone university on the Central Coast (as opposed to campus for University of Newcastle). Still only early days but is an area of interest with regard to autonomy.
- With regard to home-schooling during pandemic, more than 30% of student population did not engage with school at all during online learning. Identified factors include digital divide, lack of technology available, and tensions at home. There was a large push to get students back to school to foster wellbeing and offer escape for those potentially in danger.
- Concerns raised with regard to lease arrangements for groups who work in Council owned buildings – noted draft Facilities Leasing and Licencing Policy is currently on public exhibition at <https://www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/> until Tuesday 30 June 2020. Staff are open to meeting with groups to help understand individual circumstances and impacts of policy.
- Highlighted importance of availability of support resources for children and families (e.g. Camp Magic) and that there is a lack of such facilities on the Central Coast.
- Risk to women is increasing with regard to DV, as some perpetrators are being released from prison early due to pandemic. This is of great concern.
- Noted challenges with providing care to elderly family members during pandemic, and apparent inequity in aged care system.
- Good news story: while impact of pandemic has been large, Council has been able to diversify how programs are provided and improve access to resources. Driver safety, library story time, author talks, and environmental education series are all being offered online through Coast Connect YouTube channel. The Harvest Festival will also be altered this year to provide online workshops.
- There are some concerns about a potential second wave of COVID-19. It was noted that the social implications and effect on mental health are significant (particularly for young people). Important to continue showing support for local business and working together in these challenging times.

Item 6 General Business and Close

Advisory Group members said they would like to continue with Zoom meetings, even once the Council Administration Buildings open again, given the convenience with regard to travel/time and reduction in emissions. It was noted this would be taken into consideration as Council transitions back to the workplace.

The meeting closed at 4.49pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 4 August 2020
3pm – 5pm
Location TBC