

# Status of Women Advisory Group Meeting Record 30 March 2021



Location:	Zoom Meeting
Date:	30 March 2021
Time	Started at: 3.07pm Closed at: 5pm
Chair	Glenn Cannard – Unit Manager Community and Culture
File Ref	F2017/00176

## **Present**

Sharryn Brownlee (left 4.31pm), Margot Castles, Danielle Habib (joined 3.21pm), Sally Jope, Sharon Walsh, Julie Vaughan – Director Community and Recreation Services

## **Council staff present:**

Glenn Cannard – Unit Manager Community and Culture, Belinda McRobie – Section Manager Community and Cultural Development, Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

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

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Apologies received: Monique Tovo

The Chairperson welcomed the Advisory Group and completed an Acknowledgement of Country.

It was noted that Belinda Kimpton resigned from the Advisory Group via email on 26 November 2020.

## **Item 2 Disclosures of Interest**

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Danielle Habib disclosed a less than significant non-pecuniary of interest for Items 5 and 7 regarding promotion of a domestic violence education video, as Danielle was consulted for production of the video.

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

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The Advisory Group confirmed the Meeting Record from 19 November 2020.

The Advisory Group reviewed the Action Log, noting there are still some actions on hold until the Councillors return given their involvement.

Sharryn Brownlee confirmed the Department of Education are still interested in collaborating on school-based leadership programs for young women, and that inclusion of the Love Bites program at primary school level (in additional to high school) is still being considered.

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**Item 4 Update on Global Sisters**

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*Item deferred as Global Sisters representative not available for meeting.*

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**Item 5 Feedback from IWD Event**

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The Advisory Group discussed the International Women's Day event held 8 March 2021 and the feedback received.

The following key points were noted:

- Some guests were disappointed the Panel Q&A didn't involve questions from the audience and was limited to talking between panel members. Members agreed it would have been better to hear from women in the community.
- Also would have been better if questions could be asked of guest speaker, although noted difficulties with livestreaming (audio, tech issues, more challenging to engage with live audience when speaker is remote). Overall, would like more room for questions/comments in future.
- Concerns raised about tone of opening statement from the Acting Chief Executive Officer – some guests felt speech wasn't in line with theme.
- Would have liked for drinks to be provided in addition to food. Noted event had some constraints in current climate (i.e. restricted budget and Covid safety).
- Members agreed event should be planned much earlier (August/September) with goal to finalise by December in the preceding year. Will need to consider future planning further in line with priorities.
- Noted the missed opportunity to share an educational video on domestic violence and bystander behaviour. Danielle initially suggested this be included but other members felt it wasn't in line with event theme – members now wish video had been shown.

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**Item 6 Plan for Remaining Council Term**

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The Advisory Group discussed how they'd like to spend the remainder of Council term, following matters raised at the Council meeting held 23 March 2021 about the group's effectiveness.

The following key points were noted:

- Members feel they have been active with coordination of three IWD events and speaking with other community groups, but have taken feedback on board.
- Discussion about the challenges identified:
  - Issues with membership: barriers with meeting quorum particularly in terms of Councillor attendance, historic loss of members and lack of diverse representation (specifically missing someone from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community – noted frustrations this wasn't previously resolved when ideal candidate was suggested).
  - Meeting frequency: all Advisory Groups now meet quarterly, but members reminded they are welcome to meet 'offline' as they like. Members did previously agree to meet informally more regularly but this didn't happen.
  - Resource constraints: given Council's current financial situation there continues to be significant reduction in resources and any requests require commentary on financial implications.
  - Format of Advisory Groups: confusion around how groups function and what can be done. Staff continue to review processes and revised frameworks are being considered.

**Action:** Director Community and Recreation Services (or delegate) to invite Belinda Field (CEO, Yerin Aboriginal Health Services) to join SOWAG as a member (membership process to be confirmed offline with regard to Terms of Reference).

**Action:** Advisory Group Support Officer to circulate current Terms of Reference to members and ensure correct version is on website.

- As there are only four months left in Council term (before caretaker mode) group would like to use expertise and connections to champion work of SOWAG and outcomes for women. Suggested way forward is to meet with other women's groups to determine priorities and goals of SOWAG for future stability. Would ideally like to see women's forum occur annually to keep focus current.

**Action:** Members to develop project plan for proposed women's forum and forward to staff. Plan should include scope of forum and any resource implications.

- Members discussed that ALGWA NSW are running workshops to encourage women to nominate for the Local Government elections and supporting female staff members in leadership roles within Councils. Elections are in September 2021 meaning there is limited time for events before caretaker mode. Noted that Governance staff have been looking into election info sessions, including the [ALGWA NSW forums](#) and [Women for Election events](#).

**Recommendation:** That Council hosts a forum with ALGWA NSW to promote gender equity in Local Government in preparation for the September 2021 elections, noting this matter is time sensitive and should be prioritised for action. Should this not be possible, it is requested that Council support the Status of Women Advisory Group in hosting supplementary forums for women following any pre-election info sessions held.

**Action:** Sally Jope to forward any info about resource implications associated with AGLWA NSW Forum to staff for consideration.

**Action:** Advisory Group Support Officer to share updates about pre-election info sessions and opportunities for women with members as available.

## **Item 7                    Updates from Advisory Group Members**

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Advisory Group members were invited to share any updates with the group.

The below key points were noted:

- Coercive control has been in media a lot lately, with a bill recently proposed by NSW MP Anna Watson. Believed this bill was declined but is coming back for second read. Domestic violence cases continue to increase, and support services are facing serious issues with housing women in need. Would like to see more forums/workshops about domestic violence.
- Elderslee Foundation recently held Creating Collaborative Housing Solutions Forum as part of IWD events to discuss older women's homelessness. Event was very informative.
- Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre continues to explore fundraising and opportunities to support women.

- Concerns raised about JobKeeper payments being cut and impact on emergency relief services – already seeing effects in community.
- Women in Service Dinner planned for 19 August 2021 – invite was previously circulated to members. Would like to have SOWAG table at event if possible.
- The domestic violence education video coordinated by Council's Community Development Worker, Sharon Moore, has been shared on various social media channels and is a fantastic resource. Members commended the work of Sharon and are fully supportive of a launch of the video.

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

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Concerns flagged again about meeting frequency. Members are committed to working offline to progress actions and will continue to share updates via email between formal meetings.

The meeting closed at 5pm.

**Next Meeting:            June 2021 (TBC)**