

Minutes



Status of Women Advisory Group

Date: 7 September 2021

Time: 4.02pm – 6.03pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

Chairperson: Julie Vaughan, Director Community and Recreation Services

Coordinator: Glenn Cannard, Unit Manager Community and Culture

Attendance

Members:

Margot Castles

Danielle Habib

Sally Jope

Monique Tovo

Sharon Walsh

Julie Vaughan, Director Community and Recreation Services

Status:

Present

Present

Present

Present

Present

Present

Guest

Belinda Field

Present

Staff:

Glenn Cannard, Unit Manager Community and Culture

Present

Zoie Magann, Meeting Support Officer

Present

1 Introduction

4.02pm

The chairperson welcomed the group. Members briefly introduced themselves to Belinda Field, who joined the meeting for consideration of membership. Members were excited to have Belinda join after a long time planning, and thanked her for attending.

The chairperson completed an Acknowledgement of Country.

There were no apologies received for this meeting. It was noted that Sharryn Brownlee resigned from the Advisory Group effective 29 July 2021. The group acknowledged the valuable contributions made by Sharryn over the years and extended their thanks.

Action: Letter to be sent to Sharryn Brownlee on behalf of the group to thank for service.

No disclosures of interest were received for items on the agenda.

2 Previous business

4.13pm

The group confirmed the minutes from the previous meeting as noted below, which were distributed to members via email and uploaded to Council's website:

- [Status of Women Advisory Group meeting held 1 June 2021](#)

The action log was reviewed with updates recorded (see page 6).

3 Update on Social Inclusion Charter and Positive Ageing Strategy

4.17pm

Glenn Cannard (Unit Manager Community and Culture) provided an update on Council's draft Positive Ageing Strategy, including the following key points:

- Public exhibition of the draft Positive Ageing Strategy has now concluded on the [YourVoiceOurCoast page](#).
- The Strategy and Action Plan now sit with a different area of Council (Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities). While the Strategy hasn't changed, the Action Plan is currently being revisited based on resource impacts. This will be brought back to Council once reviewed.
- Members were disappointed they didn't receive notice about the Strategy being on public exhibition, as they previously requested notification about items for consultation.

Action: Staff to check with engagement team about members being included in alert notices for documents on public exhibition via YourVoiceOurCoast.

Action: Project updates and documents on exhibition to be standing item on future agendas.

Glenn also provided an update on Council's draft Social Inclusion Charter, including the following key points:

- Charter was developed in consultation with the Social Inclusion Advisory Committee and is currently being reviewed internally. It will be circulated to SOWAG members at next stage.
- It ties in with Council's other key documents and intends to set clear guidelines for the organisation in alignment with the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and legislative requirements.
- Members would have liked to be consulted on document sooner. Staff acknowledged this and advised it was a key focus for the Social Inclusion Advisory Committee.

Action: Draft Social Inclusion Charter to be circulated to members for input and discussed further at next meeting.

It was also noted Council's draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan is currently on public exhibition until 5pm 13 September 2021 on [YourVoiceOurCoast](#).

Members have significant concerns with Council's financial situation and the impacts, noting Council isn't just a body for economic gain, and social/cultural programs still need to be a focus point of business. Julie Vaughan (Director Community and Recreation Services) advised key deliverable are being met and there is a clear program, but reality is there's no scope for new projects.

The group discussed Council's rejection of SOWAG's request for in-principle support of a Gender Equity Strategy ([link to Council report](#)) at the 27 July 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting ([link to minutes with Council resolution](#)). Members are extremely frustrated with this outcome, noting no commitment of Council resources was requested at this time and only in principle support was requested. Members also noted the rejection of the proposal made it difficult to understand what further initiatives they may be supported to undertake ongoing.

Julie Vaughan reiterated that staff agreed that a Gender Equity Strategy is important, but as per the Council report cannot support the development of one at this time due to other strategies requiring action or completion. Julie discussed the importance of developing a strategy and that it is as important to ensure organisational and community buy in to action plans, which is where the challenge exists with any new strategy. Julie recognised the offer of volunteer work from members and their skillset, but again advised it isn't just about the development of a strategy but equally what we do with it.

4 Discussion on future focus areas for SOWAG

5.08pm

Members discussed the future of SOWAG in light of their frustrations, particularly regarding the Gender Equity Strategy outcome. The responsibilities section of the [Terms of Reference](#) were reviewed to help determine a way forward. It was agreed the Gender Equity Strategy would be addressed again at the December 2021 meeting.

Action: Gender Equity Strategy to be discussed again at December 2021 meeting.

5 General business

5.31pm

Women's Forum

- Members would still like to host a SOWAG Forum, noting that while the Forum may not be linked to development of a Gender Equity Strategy as previously proposed, gender equity should still be a key focus.
- Challenges with COVID were discussed – suggest exploring option of "Zoom Town Hall".

- Aim to host Forum in February 2022 in line with below proposal (derived from Terms of Reference)

One of the responsibilities of the Status of Women Advisory Group is to participate in events, activities and opportunities to bring women together both in formal and informal settings.

The purpose of this event is to provide workshop activities and talking opportunities to facilitate Central Coast women to:

- *Identify strategies to develop social, economic and personal leadership opportunities for Central Coast women*
- *Identify and promote mentoring opportunities and networks for Central Coast women.*
- *Advocate on and raise community awareness about issues affecting Central Coast women.*

Action: Glenn Cannard to recirculate last email about SOWAG Forum for member info.

Action: SOWAG Forum to be discussed again at December 2021 meeting, with planning updates to occur out of session following Glenn's email.

Membership

- Belinda Field confirmed she is keen to be involved in SOWAG given her relevant experience and value she can add in this space.
- It was noted the group originally had 10 community representative positions, but only six are currently active. The [Terms of Reference](#) provides the following regarding membership:

Community members will be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate on a merit basis, as a result of an Expression of Interest process

Members agreed they'd like to see the four vacancies filled with greater consideration of diversity. Staff will follow up on this process and keep members informed.

Action: Belinda Field to be appointed as a voting member of the Status of Women Advisory Group in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Action: Staff to contact original EOIs and request updated submissions for review by members, and confirm process for inviting new EOIs.

Invitation to Social Inclusion Advisory Committee

- Members discussed the invitation to attend the next Social Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday 16 September 2021. Members of the Social Inclusion Advisory Committee were also disappointed with Council's decision to reject the proposal for a Gender Equity Strategy and wished to discuss the matter further with representatives from SOWAG.

- Margot Castles and Sharon Walsh will attend on behalf of SOWAG.

Action: Calendar invite to be forwarded for the Social Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting.

Round table updates

- It was noted the [National Summit on Women's Safety](#) is running this week and SOWAG members noted the importance of supporting local initiatives that address domestic violence.

6 Close

Next meeting: Tuesday 7 December 2021
 4pm – 6pm
 Location TBC

Meeting closed at 6.03pm

Minutes approved by the Coordinator and Chairperson on 13 September 2021.

Changes to minutes applied following member feedback and recirculated 5 October 2021.

Action log

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Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
92	31/03/2021	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).	Julie Vaughan	Belinda attended 7 September 2021 meeting	Complete
94	31/03/2021	Members to develop project plan for proposed women's forum and forward to staff. Plan should include scope of forum and any resource implications.	Advisory Group members	Plan developed by members discussed at 1 June 2021 meeting. Members sent revised version to incorporate Gender Equity Strategy on 14/6 7/9: Members agree action is complete but further discussion on this matter is required	Complete
97	31/03/2021	Advisory Group Support Officer to share updates about pre-election info sessions and opportunities for women with members as available.	Advisory Group Support Officer	Sessions will be held closer to elections as part of usual business. 7/9: Item is still pending and will be revisited after the Public Inquiry and Referendum	Pending
98	1/06/2021	Positive Ageing Strategy and Social Inclusion Charter to remain standing items on agenda until further notice.	Meeting Support Officer	On agenda for 7 September 2021 meeting	Ongoing

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Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
99	1/06/2021	Members to forward supporting information for Gender Equity Strategy proposal to Glenn Cannard by Tuesday 15 June 2021 for consideration as part of recommendation to Council.	Members	Gender Equity Forum Project Brief and Gender Equity Strategy Proposal documents received 14/6/21. Reported to Council 27 July 2021 7/9: Members agree action is complete but further discussion on this matter is required	Complete
100	1/06/2021	To fulfil their roles and responsibilities, the Central Coast Status of Women Advisory Group is seeking in principle support from Council to initiate and lead the creation and implementation of a Central Coast Council Gender Equity Strategy.	Unit Manager Community and Culture	Recommendation included in Council report to 27 July 2021. Council resolved to reject recommendation 7/9: Members agree action is complete but further discussion on this matter is required	Complete
101	7/09/2021	Letter to be sent to Sharryn Brownlee on behalf of the group to thank for service.	Unit Manager Community and Culture / Meeting Support Officer		Pending
102	7/09/2021	Staff to check with engagement team about members being included in alert notices for documents on public exhibition via YourVoiceOurCoast.	Meeting Support Officer		Pending

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Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
103	7/09/2021	Project updates and documents on exhibition to be standing item on future agendas.	Unit Manager Community and Culture / Meeting Support Officer		Pending
104	7/09/2021	Draft Social Inclusion Charter to be circulated to members for input and discussed further at next meeting.	Unit Manager Community and Culture / Meeting Support Officer		Pending
105	7/09/2021	Gender Equity Strategy to be discussed again at December 2021 meeting.	Meeting Support Officer / Members		Pending
106	7/09/2021	Glenn Cannard to recirculate last email about SOWAG Forum for member info.	Unit Manager Community and Culture		Pending
107	7/09/2021	SOWAG Forum to be discussed again at December 2021 meeting, with planning updates to occur out of session following Glenn's email.	Meeting Support Officer / Members		Pending
108	7/09/2021	Belinda Field to be appointed as a voting member of the Status of Women Advisory Group in accordance with the Terms of Reference.	Director Community and Recreation Services		Pending

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Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
109	7/09/2021	Staff to contact original EOIs and request updated submissions for review by members, and confirm process for inviting new EOIs.	Unit Manager Community and Culture / Meeting Support Officer		Pending
110	7/09/2021	Calendar invite to be forwarded for the Social Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting.	Meeting Support Officer		Pending