

Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: 17 April 2019
Time: 4:30pm
Venue: City Hall
Meeting: Newcastle Room
Meeting Objective: Advisory Committee

1. **Welcome:** Attendance:

Members

Chris Leishman, Margaret Wood, Joseph Popov, Nathan Burford (Acted as Chair)
Norm McPherson, Steve Warham (Committee Facilitator)
Petria Jukes (Committee Facilitator)
David Clarke (Director, Governance) attended part of the meeting.

2. **Apologies:**

Kirsty Russell, Eliot Shaw, CI Matthew Byrne, CI Carol Duncan
CI Andrea Rufo, Tracy Walker

3. **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Acknowledgement of Country was delivered by the Chair.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests.

5. **Previous Minutes**

5.1 A slight change to the draft minutes was proposed and adopted clarifying notes about the *Stevenson Park consultation being poorly attended*, this comment was in relation to the additional meeting that was arranged and held at Warabrook Community Centre, not the overall consultation about the upgrade to Stevenson Park.

5.2 With the above clarification, the previous minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the 20 February 2019 meeting. Moved; M. Wood, Seconded; Chris Leishman. Carried.

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5.3 SW advised that Newcastle had been successful in gaining a \$150,000 grant towards the upgrade of Stevenson Park via the Everyone Can Play Scheme from NSW Government. (Editor's note: Thirty-four projects have been awarded funding totaling \$3,973,720 across 30 councils).

5.4 SW provided an example of an Easy Read Document and a word only format document to demonstrate a couple of various formats to improve access to information for more of the community. Council will continue to work on creating more accessible content and materials.

5.5 SW advised that the accessible parking locations are now all listed on the website across the LGA, not just in local centres as discussed at previous meeting.

5.6 MW queried whether the accessible parking locations listed were in fact compliant with Australia Standards and whether the areas immediately surrounding the parking spaces were included for information (journey planning) purposes?

5.7 PJ and SW clarified that spaces would have been built to the standards of the time and that we have listed all the sign posted spaces. Data collection going forward will be able to provide better information about compliance however even with the collection of information about the toilet assets, the focus on providing improved information is to assist people know what is there, enhancing useability. At present, the priority is a robust data set which can be open and able to be shared.

5.8 SW added that as we gain information, we can populate the locations with a drop-down box or data for that location. Initially we have just got the parking locations up on the web for the public but with information sharing, app developers may outstrip what Council provides and the app may provide better, more comprehensive linked information for the area.

5.9 JP suggested that if the spaces were fitted with sensors, they may be able to monitor if identified spaces were being used by those with mobility permits or illegally. SW said that Smart City are trialling a parking sensor system, but it relates to compliance with timed parking. SW to follow up. (Smart City advises that sensors could be fitted to the accessible parking spaces which would provide information about

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availability, not currently a project, or designed or funded. No identifying information is obtained by the sensor, so not monitoring tool for compliance with mobility scheme)

5.10 CL suggested that providing a picture of the parking space may better assist some people.

5.11 MW suggested that the NSW Government My Community grants may be suitable for Council to pursue building/providing accessible toilets at Stevenson Park as they had accessibility examples within the funding guidelines. SW said that there are actually accessible amenities at Stevenson Park currently, but that the access to these and the location are the issue that mean there is not accessible toilet access for the playground area. This will need to be worked through as the development proceeds and would not be suitable for the My Community grants.

5.12 MW referred the group to a motion of a previous meeting which made a recommendation about auditing the parking spaces for compliance as soon as possible.

Editor's addition

"DIAC recommends that NCC conduct accessibility audits of car spaces across the city and that upon completion of the audits, information identifying the car spaces that comply with current Australian standards is added to the website".

6. David Clarke, Director of Governance at City of Newcastle arrived at the meeting and outlined his area of responsibility. David indicated that advisory committees can provide important input to staff/management to enhance outcomes for our community.

The committee discussed with David the following items;

NM raised concerns about the development of the Signal Box Café and that there was a lack of sheltered walkway in the area for access to toilets.

NB raised issues related to outdoor trading with specific reference to examples relating to commercial premises in Georgetown Road, Georgetown, or more generally with the use of milk crates or small informal seating positioned on the

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building line. The Council policy prohibits this, however, there doesn't appear to be any monitoring or enforcement.

DC said that he would welcome information from NB and the committee generally to address compliance and monitoring of these issues. He added that retailers/businesses may need some education/awareness raising to improve the situation.

7. Correspondence

A letter from Physical Disabilities Australia regarding the use of the MLAK system was distributed to the committee and discussed towards the end of the meeting.

8. Feedback from Working Group on proposal for International Day of People with Disabilities

8.1 The working group for IDPWD met to develop innovative ways the group could champion and promote IDPWD in Newcastle. MW outlined the proposal to the DIAC, a summary of which was circulated with the agenda (See end of these minutes). MW spoke to the proposal which puts forward a way of raising the flag on accessibility across the LGA.

8.2 Margaret raised the question as to how does the committee take this matter to the Council to drive it forward? Should the recommendation be more ambitious or more modest? After discussion, there was consensus that the group is keen to recommend something that is more meaningful which increases awareness of disability matters in the community and raises the platform for which people with disability participate in community.

8.3 PJ and SW outlined the Seniors Festival approach as a potential model as this involves Council bringing together the various partners in the community and promoting what is happening in a broad sense rather than Council running an event.

8.4 MW suggested that Council needs to lead on this and perhaps the Seniors Festival approach does not provide the resources that may be needed for Council to deliver more of a leadership role.

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8.5 Potential partners were talked about, the Interagency, the University as suggestions. The aim is to challenge the medical model of disability and promote the social model of disability. It was noted that varying teams within Council are already undertaking activities on or around International Day for People with Disability and this can be built into the program.

8.6 CL outlined a Lake Macquarie City Council activity that was recently held, 'games in the park' with dominos, chess and other games on grassed surfaces which allowed game players and carers to play in an inclusive environment. It was held at Rathmines and they had an all ages Easter. This is better than an isolated indoor event.

8.7 As this proposal is for October, it is assumed that there would be existing product that could be included from external partners – Screen Hunter, Create NSW, Reel Film Festival etc, however the festival may bring all this together.

8.8 It was suggested that the proposal be discussed with management and a decision made, potentially allocating budget. MW moved a motion

The Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC) recommends that the City of Newcastle celebrate the UN International Day for People with a Disability by establishing an annual Festival of Inclusion and Access in 2019.

Seconded NB and carried.

Action: *The proposal be reviewed by Council staff*

8.9 The committee, including committee members not present may have further suggestions to add to the proposal and further ideas about the level of resources needed to deliver the festival, please forward to SW for consideration.

9. General Business

9.1 NDS – consultations in May. SW encouraged committee members to register to attend.

Royal Commission. No additional information for committee at the present time.

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9.2 Question without notice from MW; Does Council lodge submissions to parliamentary enquiries etc? SW and PJ indicated that this depends on resources there is nothing set in place.

The chair suggested that people can submit their own submission even if Council does not to relevant forums.

9.3 SW advised that Ian Rhodes has left Newcastle and is taking up a new opportunity elsewhere, so we have a vacancy in the Community Planning Team Coordinator role. The new Manager (replacing Jill Gaynor) is Ashlee Abbott and will commence shortly, our new Director is expected soon as well. Ken Liddell and Jeremy Bath have been acting in this role as well as their substantive positions.

10. Accessible Toilets -To lock or not to lock

How should toilets be managed out of day light hours? What response should Council make to Physical Disabilities Australia regarding these assets?

It was agreed that due to time constraints further discussion online might be preferred to include those who are not here tonight. SW to follow up.

11. DIAP-Where are we up to

Postponed due to a lack of time.

Meeting closed 6.40

11. Next Meeting 19 June 2019 Wednesday 4:30pm-6:30pm

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DRAFT

City of Newcastle Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee

The Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC) recommends that the City of Newcastle celebrate the UN International Day for People with a Disability by establishing an annual Festival of Inclusion and Access in 2019.

Proposal

DIAC is of the view that an annual festival involving diverse events across the Local Government Area over a period of 2 weeks is a more meaningful way of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion. An annual festival will establish the city as a leader in providing accessible and inclusive events for both residents and visitors.

The aims of the festival would be:

- Celebrate the diverse experiences of the community and its' creativity
- Promote cultural change in the City of Newcastle through community wide participation in accessible and inclusive events.
- Promote the City of Newcastle as an inclusive and accessible place to live and visit.

The City of Newcastle would host, partner and support events for the Festival. Collaboration with community-based groups and local businesses would be vital. The City may develop partnerships with other organizations who can provide the necessary skills and resources to run major/signature events.

The City would facilitate access to events by providing information on accessibility across the CBD and other locations where events are located.

Partnership with the business community

Local cafes, restaurants, bars and hotels should be invited to demonstrate their accessibility so that they can be promoted by the City as accessible destinations during the Festival. This is likely to generate new business opportunities and provide essential information to users.

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Businesses which provide accessible spaces and are inclusive employers should be recognized. The City could explore the viability of a business award.

Events hosted and managed by the City

Some events will be small and local and will utilise existing programs in libraries and the regional cultural institutions to introduce themes that support the aims of the Festival.

Libraries:

- Book clubs meeting at regional and branch libraries during the Festival would read a book that explores the lived experience of disability.
- Library based programs for children incorporate books and activities that would explore the lived experience of disability.
- the Newcastle stories program at the Newcastle Regional Library would include stories relevant to the aims of the Festival.

Events created specifically for the Festival will require close engagement with community groups.

For example:

Living Books: this event was held at Newcastle Regional Library to celebrate the UN Day for PWD in December 2018. Individuals living with disability were introduced with a brief summary of their interests, their work and achievements. Attendees were then invited to go and speak to each person about their lived experience. Living Books events could be held in October 2019 at the Newcastle Regional Library and Wallsend Library.

Regional Cultural Centres:

Centres such as the Regional Art Gallery and the Newcastle Regional Museum should also host events for the Festival. Some of these events can build on existing inclusion strategies.

The Regional Art Gallery has an Access Program which consists of guided tours undertaken at the request of a community-based group and community access workshops which are designed to support a group during a visit to the gallery. It is recommended that the Gallery offer these resources to community groups and organize a tailored program in consultation with those groups to be run as part of the Festival.

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Major Events

Larger festival events will require partnerships with other organizations unless the City already has the skills and resources to host the event (for example the Regional Art Gallery). The City's role in major events is likely to be one of providing a venue, promoting the event to the wider community and assisting with funding. The City's partners would be responsible for creating the event and may take the lead role in managing and resourcing the event.

Art Exhibition:

The Regional Art Gallery should explore the potential for an exhibition of work created by artists with a lived experience of disability. The launch of the exhibition could become one of the major events of the festival. An exhibition would celebrate diversity and creativity and engage the broader community. If it is not possible to hold an exhibition at the Gallery, the City should explore possible partnerships with other organizations that manage gallery space and are closely connected to the Hunter creative community.

Film Festival:

There are a number of organizations in Australia that are already involved in creating and promoting films which depict the lived experience of people with a disability or are made by individuals or groups with lived experience of a disability. There are many examples of international film festivals showing feature films, documentaries and short films by and about people with a disability. Film has the potential to effect significant cultural change.

There are several opportunities that the City should explore.

Wide Angle Film Festival

Bardic Studios run the annual Wide-Angle Film Festival and a short film competition. Their mission is to build empathy in the Australian community through film production and screening. The organization provides short films to councils and not for profits, free of charge, to be screened in accessible venues using inclusive technologies. Bardic Studios also runs a short film competition within Australia.

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The City of Newcastle screened films provided by Bardic Studios to mark the UN Day in 2017 and 2018. The films were of high quality and were screened at the Wallsend Library in 2017 and Newcastle Regional Library in 2018. Attendance at the screening in 2018 was limited because of short time frames.

Bardic Studios make their films available for screening from November until May so it is unlikely that a Wide-Angle Film Festival can be run during an October Festival of Inclusion and Access. However, libraries could decide to show the films as part of their usual programming.

Focus on Ability Short Film Festival

This is an annual short film competition and festival where filmmakers are asked to focus on the ability of people with a disability and tell a story on film. Each film must be 5 minutes long. The competition draws entrants from both Australia and internationally. In 2018, 298 films were entered from 26 countries. The Festival had screenings in Los Angeles, New York, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Auckland, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Ten of the films were screened by SBS and 100 films were screened on one of Foxtel's channels. Nova is apparently planning to increase the number of screenings in 2019.

The City of Newcastle should consider the option of screening the Focus on Ability Film Festival in October as part of the City's Festival of Inclusion and Access. Any screenings should occur at multiple venues and should be widely promoted.

Real Film Festival

This is a local initiative run by Screen Hunter and has been held annually in October since 2012. The Festival was created to foster and develop the art of storytelling real events through film. The Film Festival includes 3 short film competitions, industry development workshops, master classes. The festival screens the winners of the short film competitions as well as feature length films. One of the criteria for the short film competition is that film makers must take inspiration from living with a disability.

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There are several ways that the City could partner with the Real Film Festival.

- Promote the short film competition and the screening of the short films as part of the Festival.
- Provide sponsorship/grants to filmmakers with a disability who have a proposal for the short film competition.
- Support Screen Hunter in making the Real Film Festival accessible to everyone.

Screen Hunter is a division of the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils. The City of Newcastle should explore the potential of a closer partnership with Screen Hunter in relation to the Real Film Festival and the annual Festival of Inclusion and Access.

Screenability NSW (Create NSW)

The Screenability Filmmaker's Fund provides funding for the making of short films that are 5 to 15 minutes in length. The team of filmmakers must have at least one key creative identifying as having a disability and they must intend developing a career in screen content creation.

In 2018 the Sydney Film Festival showcased three new Australian short films funded by the Create NSW Screenability Filmmakers Fund. The Festival also showed some overseas feature films under the Screenability banner.

The City should explore the possibility of screening these films and other short films funded by Screenability as part of the City's Festival of Inclusion and Access. A partnership with the Real Film Festival may be the best platform for showing the films in Newcastle and the region.

Signature Event

The City should investigate the viability of developing a signature event for the Festival, such as a music festival. This type of event requires substantial resources and it is recommended that Council identify possible partners for the management and funding of the event.

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The inaugural Ability Fest music festival was held in Melbourne last year and will be back in 2019 with a large line up. The City could explore the possibility of partnering with Ability Fest organisers (the Dylan Alcott Foundation) to bring the festival to Newcastle. If the City is able to develop a partnership, support could be provided to the music festival via the Events Sponsorship Program.

Other Types of Events

The festival could include events which have a specific educational/legal focus. These events would be led by organizations with the necessary legal and educational expertise to deliver workshops/seminars.

The City could approach the University of Newcastle Faculty of Law to run a seminar or workshop, with a focus on the obligations of employers and service providers under the Disability Discrimination Act. Seminars/workshops could be targeted at small businesses and not-for-profits.

Other University of Newcastle events could take place on campus, for instance forums on broader disability/social justice issues. These events would be targeted at students

It is important that any events with an educational/legal focus are consistent with the broader aims of the festival.

Information about accessibility in the City of Newcastle

The City will need to provide information about the location of accessible parking spaces and accessible toilets, as well as information on the accessibility of venues. The location of accessible car spaces managed by the City across the CBD is already available on a map on the website. The City could expand the information to identify spaces that are compliant with Australian Standards. Information about accessible spaces at commercially owned parking stations is available on an App (Parkopaedia). Information about accessible toilets managed by the City could be updated and provided to the National Toilet website with a link

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from the City's website. Information on accessible public transport and the accessibility of venues should also be placed on the City website.

Outcomes

The City may want to measure whether the Festival has achieved its aims. Baseline information needs to be obtained from the first festival. Measuring attendance at each event will provide some indication of the success of the Festival in 2019. More importantly, this information can be compared to attendance figures at subsequent festivals. Measuring cultural change is more complex. However annual surveys of attendees' responses to a festival event and attitudes towards disability and inclusion should measure cultural change over time.

Conclusion

The City of Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan seeks to create an inclusive community. In order to demonstrate the City's commitment to this goal the City should be seen to be actively promoting social inclusion, equitable access and community connections. An annual Festival of Inclusion and Access would demonstrate that commitment and raise the city's profile as an inclusive and accessible place to live and visit. The whole community, including business, will benefit.

DIAC Working Group

12 April 2019