

Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: 19 June 2019
Time: 4:30pm (meeting opened 4:40pm closed 7:00)
Venue: Newcastle City Hall
Meeting: Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee
Meeting Objective: Advisory Committee

1. Welcome

Attendance:

Eliot Shaw (chair) (ES)
Chris Leishman (CL)
Norm MacPherson (NM) (Arrived 4.46pm)
Nathan Burford (NB)
Joseph Popov (JP)
Margaret Wood (MW)
Tracy Walker (TW)
Cr Matthew Burn (MB)
Brett Smith (Director Strategy and Engagement) (BS)
Steve Warham (Community Development Facilitator) (SW)
Petria Jukes (Community Development Facilitator) (PJ)

2. Apologies:

Kirsty Russell
Cr Carol Duncan
Ashlee Abbott (Manager Corporate and Community Planning)

3. Acknowledgement of Country

The Acknowledgement of Country was delivered by the Chair.

4. Declarations of Interest

4.1 MW outlined her role in a new start up and also Hunter Inc Partners.

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4.2 JP outlined his role as a Customer and Community Representative for Hunter Water

4.3 NB declared that while he has raised an issue about outdoor trading in his local area (Georgetown shops) it relates strongly to his work on the committee and his role for Guide Dogs NSW.

4.4 The chair outlined that individual committee members were to ensure that they precluded themselves from agenda items that raised a conflict.

The group agreed that the above declarations were not conflicts in their own right.

5. Previous Minutes and Business Arising

5.1 MW noted a discrepancy in the Motion outlined on page 5 (meeting ref) 8.8.

Motion should read as:

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.

Agreed. The committee noted the change.

5.2 ES stated that accepting adopted edits, the Chair will sign as an accurate Reflection of the previous meeting. There were not objects noted.

6. DIAP (Disability Inclusion Action Plan) Going Forward

6.1 ES congratulated the committee on coming together and its work since formation in February 2018 to present and encouraged the committee to think about participation and input going forward.

4.46pm NM arrived at meeting.

6.2 SW summarised that the committee has now completed its' initial work on understanding the 4 themes of the DIAP and the associated actions within the existing

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plan. The committee has covered one theme per meeting for the last 4 meetings and this will assist us in developing suggestions for the next plan.

6.3 SW said discussions had commenced with Manager, Ashlee Abbott about the review of the plan and engagement activities going forward, much of which is prescribed by NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014. The current plan expires in March 2020 and it is our aim to have the new plan delivered by then.

6.4 JP encouraged staff to consider digital engagement opportunities for community members. ES suggested the we look at the use of apps and other digital means.

6.5 Staff outlined that CN will, as part of the communications planning, review current digital tools such as social pinpoint, my local, snap send solve etc. The DIAC will be updated and consulted as we develop the next plan.

6.6 SW supplied copies of the CN 18/19 Annual Report pages 112-113 and 114 that refers to outcomes related to disability inclusion. *These are attached at the end of the minutes.*

6.7 ES expressed his opinion that CN should have a framework on how to represent the community on issues related to the NDIS. The NDIS has been a major reform/change and we should be proactive on behalf of citizens.

7. Public Toilet Locking – To Lock or Not to Lock

7.1 In response to a letter from PDA (Physical Disabilities Australia), CN was working through with stakeholders the issue of locking (MLAK or otherwise) of public toilets. A letter was sent to PDA by Adam Vine – CN Manager Property and Facilities stating that all public use toilets will be unlocked in daylight hours, as such the facility managers have made the decision on behalf of CN and the direction set by the correspondence.

7.2 General Discussion opened up. Cr MB stated that it was a matter of case by case basis and required looking at some of the causal effects of anti social behaviour. ES relayed experience of needing facilities for people who otherwise would not be able to leave their homes. JP stated he could see both sides, wanting to limit anti social behaviour but also the need to safeguard the space for people with genuine requirements to use the facility. Suggestions to look at potential online/ digital systems. MW stated that the equity argument of PDA is not accepted. Better

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technology via an Australia wide system would enable people who needed to use the facility the independence to do so. MW affirmed that accessible toilets are often the ONLY toilet in any given location that people with mobility / support needs can use. If its not available, this is problematic. They should still be locked and the system should respond to the needs of people who the facility is designed for.

The committee again discussed potential technology solutions to the problem which could make MLAK redundant and asked CN to investigate. There was a consensus that locking should be on a case by case basis and that the position of PDA was the hard line approach and that facilities should primarily be made available to people with disability. Staff further noted that specialist facilities such as lift and change would continue to be locked, but the general principle going forward is that accessible toilets will be unlocked.

7.3 Motion: Committee requested staff to investigate alternative systems or digital systems going forward, perhaps in consultation with Smart City. Carried.

8. Accessible Public Toilet and Carparking Audit

8.1 PJ provided an update of the data collection process of the accessible public toilet and accessible car parking audit. The process was a count only, using standardised data collection fields. The data fields were based on a) National Public Toilet Map and b) accessible car parking spaces (individual) and the safe use of these by people. At the present time, the data is being collated with a view to making available for use and on CNs website. The general count of facilities and spaces audited was 113 toilet locations, 437 individual car parking spaces. Some parking spaces audited were not owned or managed by Council and therefore may not be included in the current data set.

8.2 JP highlighted an example that there is not enough parking spaces in certain areas, such as in the cavity of Disability Advocacy in Devonshire Lane, Newcastle CBD. Staff noted that this was a count only and the data may be used for future planning purposes.

8.3 Motion ES Moved that the committee recognise that the toilet and parking audit project information should be incorporated into public mapping making the data available and then promoted. Seconded NB Carried.

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9. International Day of People with Disabilities.

9.1 SW gave an update on the Committees proposal to present an inclusion festival. The festival (working title) will have a variety of streams to promote inclusive activities and also showcase inclusion to the broader community.

9.2 General Discussion ES suggested this should be a yearly event and be structured to allow the creative industry to invest. MW stated that the event should fly the flag for what is being done and make it more visible and break the stigma around disability. There was consideration about if a working group should now be created to assist deliver this festival with discussion about stakeholders that need to be consulted. It was agreed that CN staff would drive the process and consult the committee as needed.

9.3 JP advised he would liaise with the university to see what can be done to deliver on some of his previous suggestions of events/forums.

10. General Business

10.1 NB Provided a follow up on this continued discussion with CN Director of Governance David Clarke and his teams on outdoor trading matters, the relevant policy and how it is implemented, citing Market Street and Georgetown Road as the example.

6.14pm Cr Matthew Burn left the meeting.

Examples here show obstruction in the shoreline, tables etc pushing into the shared zone and other risks for people when kerbside not kept clear.

10.2 General Discussion MW asked if NB was happy with the response and what the next steps are? ES stated these matters were points of law impacting both pedestrian and business owners. MW noted that compliance is a costly cultural change and the business owners must change also. NB commented that hopefully council has learned from the interaction and the Director is now aware. NB also commented that better pavement marking may be the answer.

10.3 Committee concerned that if concessions have been made for some businesses that impact on people with disabilities, that this not open up a loop hole for businesses to exploit. That while it is great that the Director of Governance has not only attended the meeting, met with Nathan and now responded with clarification, we also need to see some compliance activities. ES raised a motion
Motion: The committee raise a motion to support active monitoring of outdoor trading and an education program for traders structured around good access is good

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business. Further, monitoring is to be undertaken and resourced via application fees. Moved ES Second NB Carried.

6.30pm NM Left

10.4 Committee asked that a meeting with LMCC Inclusion Committee be arranged to support information exchange and ideas. *Motion Committee Request Staff to organise a meeting with LMCC DIAC Moved MW Seconded TW Carried.*

10.5 SW Congratulated 4 committee members for attending the NDS consultation held in Newcastle. The online survey has closed. No formal submission were being accepted as part of this consultation, only feedback gathered from the workshop.

Meeting closed. 6.36pm

See below page 112-114 of the Annual Report referred to in the minutes.

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Council Responsibilities under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014

Provide an update on the progress your area has made in the four focus areas listed below during 2017-18.

Building positive attitudes

Creating liveable communities

Supporting access to meaningful employment

Accessible systems, information or processes

Building Positive Attitudes

On 24 October 2017 Council resolved to establish our Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee. The committee held its' first meeting on 28 February 2018.

City of Newcastle was the first LGA in the state to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

For International Day of People with Disabilities 2017 we produced an internal communication piece for all staff to access where the CEO spoke about delivering services and promoting attitudes and behaviours that represent equality and inclusion. We highlighted some built environment improvements within our recently upgraded Regional Library and also some programming improvements to encourage and assist staff with understanding their role. Additional communication pieces were distributed via our internal e-newsletter including a communication etiquette guide for assisting people with disabilities.

We brought in the New Year with a celebration called Neon New Year. The event was planned to ensure the needs of the whole community were considered to make it as inclusive as possible. As well as the overall focus on accessibility within the event space, two specific areas were provided to assist people with disabilities and their families/significant others.

We developed and delivered in partnership with people with disabilities and professional access consultants our 2018 Disability Inclusion and Awareness Training. The training was undertaken by 119 staff and volunteers offered over three weeks via 19 sessions ranging from an introductory one hour session up to a two day conduct a building access audit. Twenty different business units of City of Newcastle were represented at the training.

We continue to develop programs via our Museum, Art Gallery and libraries that are inclusive of people with disabilities and promote these to the community.

Provided internal resources to staff via internal newsletters to assist with using appropriate language and demonstrating positive attitudes towards fellow staff with disabilities and the community.

Consulted people with disabilities and stakeholders in relation to new draft of Outdoor Trading policy.

Heightened awareness of the need for accessible documents via staff training and begun the development of more accessible formats made available for the community. Example, Community Strategic Plan also being delivered in an easy read format.

Promoted and delivered screenings of an Accessible Film Festival in November 2017.

Developed a partnership with Community Disability Alliance Hunter, and provided resources to assist in the development of a Disability Awareness Training product that can become an employment opportunity for local people with a disability.

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Developed a resource that promotes inclusive sports and activities in Newcastle promoting mainstream inclusion as well as programs that are targeted at increasing participation levels.

Won the tender to co-host the 2022 Deaf Games with Lake Macquarie City Council and held a launch announcement to celebrate and promote financial benefit of such events.

Attended Accessible Tourism event hosted by Newcastle Now focussed on tapping into accessible tourism.

Attended Inclusion Forum in October 2017 focussed on improving Human Resources connections and understanding of creating more disability inclusive workplaces.

Supported and attended meetings of the Disability Employment Advisory Group that City of Newcastle was a founder of over 12 years ago and continues to support today.

Assisted with planning for Hunter Disability Forum.

Creating liveable communities

Planning the delivery of an adult lift and change amenities in key locations across the LGA. Nobbys lift and change is underway with Newcastle Museum the next location to be upgraded. A Local Government NSW grant was obtained to assist with the Nobbys location.

Undertaken accessibility inspections related to local centres upgrades and considered in pre-design the needs of people with disabilities utilising these locations. This has resulted in improvements in street furniture choice, materials selected, width of pathways, crossing locations, curb ramps, accessible parking and other design elements.

Undertaken assessment of locations within the CBD to deliver tactile wayfinding to assist people with vision loss or impairment to better negotiate the street. Planned roll out of tactile signs within the CBD.

Considered accessibility in relation to the construction of the Bathers Way coastal development and implemented above-compliance width to share pathways. Further enhancements to be implemented.

Facilitated specialist training for identified technical staff for auditing and compliance with relevant codes and standards.

Delivered building and infrastructure upgrades to improve accessibility, for example at Newcastle Region Library, in relation to street crossings, at beach locations (Cooks Hill, Nobbys, Newcastle) and via various other projects. Improved ability of people with disabilities to take part in playground activities by improving the choice of materials and also play equipment, for example installing carousals in parks that can be used by people who use wheelchairs for mobility and other at-grade play equipment.

Undertaking mapping project to assist and provide better information about accessible parking locations.

Improving website information about parks and playgrounds to better inform the community of accessibility features and facilities.

Attended consultation with Kelios Downer (Bus and Ferry Operator) and Transport for NSW to provide comment on accessibility concerns about network redesign.

Promoted community transport to assist people's access to door to door accessible transport services.

Enhanced our ability via education and education of event organisers to deliver more inclusive events. Promoted New Years Eve as an accessible event and directed resources towards developing an inclusive VIP sensory zone.

Included Disability Inclusion section within training program for NewCrew volunteers.

Invested in Smart technology in the street scape in the CBD which will assist with people with disabilities using smart technology to assist them to navigate and access services, businesses, events and other opportunities.

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Supporting access to meaningful employment

Provided funding assistance to support the development of a Disability Awareness Training Program by a Newcastle based peer run disability advocacy service, Community Disability Alliance Hunter. This is set to be trialled in 2018/19 and provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities as trainers.

Provided training for Human Resources staff related to creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Provided people with disabilities the opportunity to volunteer with the Newcastle Museum and in other locations to enhance their ability to obtain employment.

Attended Disability Employment Advisory Group to continue to build relationship between City of Newcastle and Disability Employment Service providers funded by the Federal Government.

Identified within our Workforce Management Plan that we need to become a more inclusive employer and roll out more flexible workplace arrangements to better assist with carer needs and for people with disabilities needing a more flexible work place.

Accessible systems, information or processes

Participated in the National Relay Service to assist with customer service for people with a disability or those who only use text.

We provided the service of an Auslan Interpreter by the Deaf Society for any community engagement.

Training has been provided to assist staff with inclusive community consultation and engagement as well as how to develop accessible documents web and social platform content.

Our officers can now access the newly formed Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee to consult on a wide range of issues and to provide information through a network of organisations.

The e-newsletter produced by our community planning team includes a focus on news, events and training opportunity for people with disabilities and those who are service providers in this space.

Promoted the community funding program to the Disability Services Sector.

Provided accessibility audit resources to various business units and provided training to assist in the identification of accessibility improvements.