

Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday 10 March 2021

Venue:

Harvard Room, Tweed Heads Administration Office

Time:

10.00 am

Present:

Karen Sculley (Chair); Suzanne Hudson (Deputy Chair); Kyle Sculley, Vanessa Riggs; Colin Usher, Wendy Buckingham (Community Representatives); Robert Noakes, Helen Carter, Giselle Benitez, Gabby Arthur (Minutes) (Tweed Shire Council)

Apologies:

Tarhnee Wilson (Community Representative); Cr Warren Polglase, Tracey Stinson, Joanne Watters (Tweed Shire Council)

Guests:

Alana Brooks (Road Safety Officer), Peter Mitchell (Program Leader Digital and Design, Tweed Shire Council)

Agenda Items:

A1. Welcome, Introduction and Acknowledgement of Country

Karen welcomed the members and opened the meeting with the Acknowledgement of Country. Each of the community representatives and council officers provided a brief introduction to their role on the Committee.

A2. Administration

(a) Agenda - Members are invited to submit additional items for discussion

- (i) Suzi noted she received an email advising that the rail trail will be accessible in sections.

Action: *Suzi Hudson to forward email regarding rail trail to CDO-Aged & Disability for distribution to the committee.*

Action: *CDO-Ageing & Disability to extend an invitation to Council's Rail Trail Coordinator to attend a future meeting.*

- (ii) Council has been contacted by Transport for NSW regarding the *Tweed Place-based Plan*. The Plan is currently being designed and will be launched for consultation in November 2021. Transport for NSW would like to consult with the EAAC.

Action: *CDO-Ageing & Disability to extend an invitation to Transport for NSW to attend an upcoming EAAC meeting.*

(b) Welcome and Induction of new members

New members requested to sign an acknowledgement or send an email confirming that they have read and understood the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct documents previously provided to them.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, and now that COVID-19 meeting restrictions have eased, future meetings will be held between 10am to 12pm. Following discussion, the committee agreed to alternate meetings between Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah, with the next meeting to be held at the Murwillumbah Civic Centre.

Giselle advised that the Council elections are scheduled to be held on 4 September and Council will go into caretaker mode from Friday 6 August. As a result, the meeting scheduled for 11 August will not proceed. The committee agreed that it was preferred that the two remaining EAAC meetings be held on 12 May and 14 July 2021.

(c) Review of previous actions of 16 December 2020.

(i) Ideas to promote the EAAC role to the community

Giselle advised that there was an article in the Tweed Link on 24 February 2021 announcing the appointment of the new EAAC members and featuring disability advocate, Tim Morrissey. Karen and Giselle have also been interviewed by the *Northern Rivers Times* and the feature is expected to be published shortly. The members were encouraged to pass on any other ideas to promote awareness. The members agreed to Giselle taking their photographs at the end of the meeting for promotional use of the EAAC role.

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to share Tweed Link article of 24 February 2021 with members.*

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to liaise with Northern Rivers Times re publication timeline of feature on Karen Sculley.*

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to take photographs of the members at the conclusion of the meeting for promotion and use on social media.*

(ii) Terms of Reference

Giselle advised that Council's Governance Unit is currently reviewing the Terms of Reference for all committees of council. The members were encouraged to review the Terms of Reference and pass on any feedback and ideas for changes relevant to the EAAC. An invitation will be extended to past members to contribute any feedback on Terms of Reference and their experiences.

Action: *EAAC members to review Terms of Reference and provide feedback and changes relevant to EAAC to CDO-Aged & Disability.*

(iii) Appointment of new EAAC members

Council adopted the new EAAC members at its meeting on 18 February 2021. The new members have been provided with a copy of the Council resolution; further copies are available if required.

(iv) Notice of Motion: Casuarina Town Centre Beach facilities and disabled access

Giselle provided an update regarding the Notice of Motion: *Casuarina Town Centre Beach Facilities and Disabled Access*. Council resolved at its meeting on 18 February 2021:

...3. As an alternative to the Casuarina Viewing Platform, that Council progresses with a master planning process for the Kingscliff Voluntary Marine Rescue tower and surrounding beach access, shower facilities and car park to improve accessibility and amenity, and the State Government be approached to consider funding the master plan and resulting infrastructure upgrades with advice and input from the Equal Access Advisory Committee and consultation with the local community...

In accordance with the resolution, Parks & Active Communities will progress the master planning process for the Kingscliff Voluntary Marine Rescue tower and will consult with the EAAC.

3. Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021 - overview and current priorities

Giselle advised that Council's *Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021* was adopted by Council in 2018 and is scheduled for review in the coming year. It is a requirement under the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* that Council has a Disability Inclusion Action Plan, which is the function of Council's Access and Inclusion Plan.

(a) Prepare new Plan for July 2022

Giselle provided background and advised that the new Access and Inclusion Plan needs to be developed, adopted and implemented by 1 July 2022.

The process will include:

- Revision and evaluation of the current plan.
- Reviewing issues, continued and emerging.
- Carrying over actions that are still important, discussing which items are not relevant, or new actions to respond to new issues.
- Internal consultation on service delivery.
- Council approval to publicly exhibit and seek feedback of the draft Plan. The timing will need to consider Council elections in September 2021.
- Engagement with the community and targeted stakeholders.
- Review of feedback and submissions received.
- Refining of the Plan – may need to re-exhibit if major changes.
- Council approval to adopt before 30 June 2022, with implementation on 1 July 2022.

Discussion regarding targets set for employment and the main barriers. Council has not set a target however the State government quotes '10,000 more staff with disability working in NSW Government by 2025 – that's 5.6% of our total workforce'. In February 2021, Council and EAAC representatives met with the Minister for Disability Services who confirmed employment is a focus for government. Practical changes will be required including support, access, types of employment/roles, information and communication.

(b) Review of foreshores and waterways access audits

The foreshore and waterways access audit is a priority project in the Access and Inclusion Plan and will identify the current need, existing features, ways to improve access and where Council can best place facilities and resources. Once all sites have been audited, a priority

list can be prepared considering feasibility, risk and access features, cost and funding sources.

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to progress the foreshore access audit with the EAAC.*

(c) Inclusive parks and play-spaces

A concept design is being finalised for Goorimahbah at Tweed Heads following targeted engagement and public exhibition period in 2020. The Committee discussed wayfinding and tactile factors in the park. It was noted that developing a Wayfinding Policy is a commitment of the Access and Inclusion Plan. Robert is involved in wayfinding at the new Tweed Hospital and may be able to use that experience to come up with some common standards or recommendations. The rail trail may be another option for wayfinding consideration.

Council is consulting with the community and seeking feedback by 26 March 2021 on the following parks, with further information available on Council's website:

- Banora Point Community Centre Park and Inclusive Playspace
- Upgrade for Coral Street Park, Bilambil Heights
- Upgrade for Clarrie Englert Park, Tweed Heads West
- Tyalgum Memorial Park public toilets upgrade

Colin requested an update on the master plan for Jack Evans Boat Harbour.

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to request an update from Recreation Planner, Jodie Hewett on the master plan for Jack Evans Boat Harbour.*

(d) Tweed Active Transport Plan – Alana Brooks, Road Safety Officer, Roads and Stormwater Unit

Alana advised that the Tweed Active Transport Plan will replace the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) and Bike Plan. Alana provided an overview of the Plan including the objectives. The engagement plan is currently being developed and Alana is seeking feedback and participation from the EAAC.

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to distribute a project summary and engagement plan for the Tweed Active Transport Plan to the EAAC seeking their feedback and inviting participation.*

(e) Council's website redesign project with improvements to accessibility and plain language / content - Peter Mitchell, Program Leader Digital and Design, Communications & Customer Experience

Peter advised that the project team in Communications & Customer Experience is working on the redevelopment and redesign of four websites, including Council, Tweed Regional Aquatic Centres, Tweed Regional Museum and Tweed Regional Gallery. Council is seeking input from the EAAC to ensure that the website is accessible and it is easy to find / understand information. Some of the benefits of the project include:

- improved customer experience
- easy to find, plain language
- content optimisation across all devices.

OpenCities has been appointed for the web platform. *OpenCities* uses an easy to use platform including predictive search, in-built accessibility features and a web form builder. Vision Australia has commended *OpenCities* for the '*considerable effort they have invested in creating a technically accessible platform*'.

Suzi enquired whether the platform includes voice commands such as turning on the screen reader with voice commands. She explained it would be best if the voice commands automatically came on when the website opens and can be clicked off by the user rather than vice versa. It is also best for the accessibility link to appear at the top of the page with a drop-down of features that can be easily identified including turning off the screen reader, adjusting font size and styles, improving luminous contrast, deactivating moving windows etc.

Giselle advised she will share the *OpenCities* website link with the EAAC members for their comments and review at the next meeting on 12 May 2021. Peter asked Suzi, and all members, to provide him with website links and examples of good access features like the website that provides good voice commands. Peter advised he will research the access features discussed and provide a summary in the coming weeks on how they could be presented on Council's website.

The content will be migrated over the next 6-8 weeks and the next stage will be user acceptance testing (UAT) towards the end of May. The Communications team is seeking to engage with the EAAC during the testing phase and will be looking for comments and feedback. During the UAT phase, the project team will seek direct feedback and will provide a testing environment of script and questions for members to complete either at home on their own devices or at Council in a facilitated session. Peter will work with Giselle to confirm UAT arrangements.

Action: *Suzi Hudson to provide CDO-Aged & Disability with the details of a website that provides good accessibility including voice commands to open the screen reader.*

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to share the OpenCities website link with the EAAC members.*

Action: *Program Leader Digital and Design (Peter Mitchell) to research accessibility features and provide a summary to the EAAC in the coming weeks on how Council could incorporate them on the website, or to present and demonstrate at next EAAC meeting.*

Action: *CDO-Aged & Disability to work with Program Leader Digital Design on user acceptance testing session dates and details.*

General Business:

Nil.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Equal Access Advisory Committee will be held Wednesday 12 May 2021.

The meeting closed at 11.32am

Minutes

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

Nil.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Nil.