

# Minutes

## Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday 5 April 2023

### Venue:

The Harvard Room, Tweed Heads Administration Office and online via MS Teams

### Time:

10:08am

### Present:

Pat Miller (Chair); Suzanne Hudson (Deputy Chair); Kyle Sculley; Vanessa Riggs; Karen Sculley; Wendy Buckingham (Community Representatives); Cr Meredith Dennis; Cr James Owen (Tweed Shire Council).

### Ex-officio:

Helen Carter (Manager Inclusive and Creative Communities Unit), Giselle Benitez Hetherington (Community Development Officer Inclusion/Secretariat), Emily West (Minutes Officer) (Tweed Shire Council).

### Guest:

Mat Greenwood (Coordinator, Governance and Information, Tweed Shire Council).

### Apologies:

Colin Usher (Committee Member), Tiffany Stodart (Manager Destination Communication & Customer Experience, Tweed Shire Council).

### Minutes of Previous Meeting:

**Moved:** Pat Miller

**Seconded:** Suzanne Hudson

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Committee meetings held 27 September 2022 and 16 November 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

### Agenda Items:

#### A1. Meeting Open and Acknowledgement of Country

Pat Miller opened the meeting with a welcome to all present and paid respect to Elders past, present, and emerging.

#### A2. Committee Governance

##### a) Terms of Reference

The Chair raised the need to clarify the purpose of the Committee and the accuracy and relevancy of the current Terms of Reference (TOR). Officers confirmed that in accordance with Council's policy, the correct procedure for Committee members to engage with Council officers to obtain information is for all communication to be through the Secretariat.

As Secretariat, Giselle's role is to facilitate and support Council officers seeking members' advice on their different experiences and perspectives of access and inclusion as they may relate to a service or program. The EAAC was referred to the draft Guide (Item A4) to support this process. The challenges that staff and members have faced over the past 2

years, and their adaptability to overcome these and continue to deliver outcomes for the community was acknowledged. Giselle welcomed members' feedback about what was working and what was not, regarding how they function.

The EAAC discussed the proposed TOR and queried Item 3: Role and Responsibilities – Exclusions *a) Issues such as road infrastructure, traffic management, parking compliance, maintenance of footpaths, lighting, tree lopping or other access issues for which Tweed Shire Council may be responsible should be raised with Council Customer Service staff in the first instance.* Mat clarified the purpose of this clause is to set out clearly that single issues being experienced by community members need to follow the Customer Service Request (CSR) system in the first instance. Broader policy issues and strategic trends may be raised and discussed as part of a policy review or a project under development that may be brought to the EAAC. The EAAC requested that the Secretariat bring a general summary of arising CSR issues relating to accessibility to each Committee meeting.

**Action:** *EAAC Secretariat to consider bringing a general summary of arising CSR issues relating to accessibility to each Committee meeting.*

Members raised their interest in taking responsibility for the development, monitoring and implementation of the Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan as part of the Committee's TORs. Helen clarified that this is the responsibility of Council officers and extends beyond the role of the EAAC. The Community Development Officer Inclusion will work with the EAAC on specific actions of the Plan.

Members discussed TOR Item 6.2 Attendance and Meeting and Quorums: *Membership will be reviewed if absence is recorded at three consecutive meetings.* It was suggested that this clause was originally included in reference to Councillors, not Committee members. Mat noted there were governance implications of changing the clause to work through, considering that Councillors may have external work commitments which causes them to be unable to attend daytime meetings.

Mat also clarified the official procedure for making changes to the TOR - that is, for the proposed changes to be resolved by the EAAC and referred to the Manager Governance and if approved, they are referred to Council for adoption.

Members discussed accessibility of committee meetings and acknowledged the great work done by the Secretariat to ensure all members get accessible communication. TOR Item 6.1 Meetings: *All meeting venues will be accessible* was discussed. Members requested the clause be included in the TORs of all sub-committees of Council.

**Moved:** Pat Miller  
**Seconded:** Kyle Sculley

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Equal Access Advisory Committee recommends that Item 6.1 of the Terms of Reference be amended to read: "All meeting venues will be accessible as per the needs of members" and be included in the Terms of Reference for all sub-committees of Council.

**Action:** *Coordinator, Governance and Information to review and provide advice in relation to the proposed changes to the TOR including Items 6.1 and 6.2.*

## b) Meeting Frequency

Members discussed the disruption to EAAC when meetings are postponed. The EAAC requested that all 2023 meetings currently scheduled be confirmed by the Secretariat and that if the Secretariat is not available, that another Council Officer act in that role, rather than rescheduling the meeting.

Council Officer remarks: An alternate Community Development staff member may be sought to act as Secretariat, if available, and where impacts on other services and programs are minimal.

**Action:** *Secretariat to confirm meetings currently scheduled for 2023 and forward meeting invitations to EAAC.*

The idea of more formal committee member introductions was raised and agreed by members.

The process for the minuting and approval of Committee meetings was discussed. Members asked for a summary or recap of previous minutes, where there were long gaps between meetings.

**Action:** *For formal committee introductions and a recap of key points of previous meeting to precede the Agenda for each EAAC meeting.*

## c) Budget

Members asked whether the Committee had access to any budget for purpose of Committee management. Helen confirmed that there is no budget for the EAAC, as it is an advisory committee with no operational authority, therefore there is no need for a budget. The Community Development Officer – Inclusion has a budget for programs such as International Day of People with Disability, and the plans for this Day are discussed with members in advance of any arrangements being made.

## A3. Openings of Goorimahbah – Place of Stories and Fingal Foreshore playgrounds

The Committee acknowledged the Council officers involved in bringing the Goorimahbah – Place of Stories and Fingal Foreshore playgrounds projects to fruition.

**Action:** *Secretariat to pass on appreciation to the Council officers involved in the successful project delivery of Goorimahbah – Place of Stories and Fingal Foreshore playgrounds.*

## A4. Engaging with the Equal Access Advisory Committee

Helen tabled the draft Guide for Council officers and guests wishing to engage with the EAAC. She advised it aims to help them prepare the information and content in the format needed to enable the EAAC members to consider their advice before a meeting. The EAAC agreed with the contents of the guide.

Cr James Owen commented on a related matter, concerning the Northern Rivers Rail Trail project, that he had invited Director Corporate Services - Warren van Wyk to the next EAAC meeting to discuss the access issues raised by members.

The EAAC requested that the Council officers managing the Rail Trail provide information in relation to:

1. the status of access barriers for people with disability and universal amenities at key access nodes that were in place when the Rail Trail opened; and
2. a delivery program and funding opportunities for the inclusion of accessible amenities to the Northern River Rail Trail.

Further discussions in relation to the Rail Trail were agreed to be deferred until relevant Council officers could attend an upcoming Committee meeting.

**Action:** *That the Secretariat invites the Council officers managing the Rail Trail to attend the next EAAC meeting and adds the Rail Trail as an Agenda Item.*

#### **A5. Proposal for 'Ageing' to be added to the brief of the Committee via the TOR**

The EAAC discussed the issues surrounding ageing noting the similarities to disability and suggested there may be merit to adding 'Ageing' to the Committee's TOR. The EAAC agreed to discuss this option at the next meeting and requested that Cr Nola Firth be invited to the next meeting to join in the discussions.

**Action:** *Council staff to consider the proposal that 'Ageing' be included in the EAAC TOR and add as an Agenda Item for the next EAAC meeting. Cr Nola Firth to be invited to the meeting for the discussion.*

#### **Business Arising:**

##### **BA1. International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) Event**

Kyle thanked Council staff and the EAAC for allowing him to act as Master of Ceremonies at the 2022 IDPWD event and suggested the 2023 event be a more formal event with an awards ceremony like the event held at Seagulls 5 years ago. The members agreed to further discuss the 2023 event at the next meeting and to provide any ideas to the Secretariat or Chair prior to the meeting.

**Action:** *International Day of People with Disability event to be added as an Agenda item for the next EAAC meeting.*

**Action:** *EAAC invited to send any ideas for the 2023 IDPWD event to the Secretariat and/or Chair prior to next meeting.*

##### **BA2. Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning forum**

Following the major flood event in February 2022, an upcoming Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning research project is being run in conjunction with the University of Sydney. Given the lessons learned in the floods, the members expressed their interest to be kept informed of the project outcomes.

**Action:** *Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning forum to be added as an Agenda item for the next EAAC meeting.*

### **BA3. Process for Setting of Agenda**

Mat clarified the process of setting the Agenda for Committee meetings as follows:

1. Secretariat to draft preliminary agenda, including a recap of key points and Action Items from previous Minutes
2. Chairperson to review as per Committee objectives in relation to the TOR
3. Chairperson to raise changes with Secretariat where needed
4. Secretariat to generate a final draft agenda and distribute to Committee members one week prior to the meeting.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Equal Access Advisory Committee will be held Wednesday 3 May 2023.

The meeting closed at 12:02pm.

### **EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:**

#### **A2. Committee Governance**

##### **a) Terms of Reference**

Noted.

### **EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **A2. Committee Governance**

##### **a) Terms of Reference**

**That the Equal Access Advisory Committee recommends that Item 6.1 of the Terms of Reference be amended to read: "All meeting venues will be accessible as per the needs of members" and be included in the Terms of Reference for all sub-committees of Council.**