
**DISABILITY INCLUSION & ACCESS COMMITTEE
TO BE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GRIFFITH ON
WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2024 AT 1:00 PM**

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Confirmation of Minutes
- 3 Business Arising
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- 5 Items of Business
- CL01 p6 Suggestions for Dementia
- CL02 p7 MLAK Key and Access for the New Mountain Bike Trail
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DISTRIBUTION LIST

Councillor Shari Blumer (Chair), Laurie Testoni (Councillor - Alternate), Colin Beaton (Community Representative), Patricia Cox (Community Representative), Marilyn Hams (Community Representative), Simone Murphy (Community Representative), Mike Neville (Community Representative), Val Woodland (Community Representative), Jaimee Damini (Community Representative), Erin Fletcher (Community Representative)

Director Sustainable Development, Bruce Gibbs; Principal Planner Urban Design & Strategic Planning, Peter Badenhorst; Project Planner, Melanie Vella; Community Development Coordinator, Melissa Canzian and Minute Secretary, Hannah Hall

Quorum = 3

If you are unable to attend this meeting please notify the Minute Secretary prior to commencement of the meeting by email or by telephoning Council on 1300 176 077.

This Committee meeting may be attended remotely and recorded by audio or audio-visual means for administrative purposes. No other recording is permitted.

Acknowledgement of Country

Griffith City Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters, and their deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community.

Council further pays respect to the local Wiradjuri Elders, past, present and those emerging, for whom we acknowledge have responsibilities for the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of the local Wiradjuri people.

**DISABILITY INCLUSION & ACCESS COMMITTEE
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GRIFFITH ON
WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2024 COMMENCING AT 1:04 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Shari Blumer (Chair), Laurie Testoni (Councillor - Alternate), Colin Beaton (Community Representative), Marilyn Hams (Community Representative), Mike Neville (Community Representative, Via Zoom), Val Woodland (Community Representative)

Quorum = 3

STAFF

Director Sustainable Development, Bruce Gibbs, Urban Strategic Design & Major Projects Manager, Peter Badenhorst, Project Planner, Melanie Vella, Community Development Coordinator, Melissa Canzian, Director Economic and Organisational Development, Shireen Donaldson and Minute Secretary, Hannah Hall

BY INVITATION

Suzanne & Lewis Biondo, Kira Boswell & Craig White (Personnel Group)

The Committee was made aware that this meeting, and future meetings may be recorded for administrative purposes only.

1 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Colin Beaton and Val Woodland that apologies be received from Simone Murphy, Pat Cox, Erin Fletcher & Jaimi Damini.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Colin Beaton and Val Woodland that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2023, having first been circulated amongst all members, be confirmed.

3 BUSINESS ARISING

Nil

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pecuniary Interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared.

Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no significant non-pecuniary interests declared.

Less Than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no significant non-pecuniary interests declared.

5 PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Presentation by Mrs Suzanne Biondo

Mrs Suzanne Biondo thanked the Committee for the opportunity to share Lewis' story and advocate on behalf of those with a disability who are seeking employment opportunities.

Mrs Biondo discussed experiences that she and Lewis have had on his search for ongoing employment which has shed light on a broader issue within our Local Government Area and its approach to employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and the reluctance of employers to participate in funded programs aimed at enabling the employment of individuals with disabilities. It has highlighted the need for employers to incorporate special considerations, or create positions making employment opportunities more accessible for people with disabilities.

Mrs Biondo concluded by saying that Lewis' experience highlights the need for a shift in perspective and policy. She would like to see Council, as they are at the centre of our community, make moves towards creating accessible employment for all individuals regardless of ability.

Kiara Boswell from Personnel Group introduced herself and colleague Craig White to the Committee. Kiara explained that the Personnel Group strive to create equal opportunity through employment, and have recently expanded into NDIS offerings as well. She mentioned that Lewis has recently become a participant of the Personnel Group employment program, and is confident they will be able to assist in securing employment for him in his area of interest.

Craig presented an overview of the Disability Employment Services (DES) and NDIS employment supports which participants have access to. Craig explained that to be eligible for DES, participants will need to be receiving income support from Centrelink, not working 8 hours or more per week and have a disability, injury or mental health condition. Participants are able to register directly with the Personnel Group, or are referred to them by Centrelink if they meet the above criteria or they have an NDIS plan. The team of employment consultants will then assist them in finding a job. They will help with job searching, making sure resumes and cover letters are up to date and are of a good quality. Their team of Employer Relation Coordinators liaise with local employers in hopes of creating opportunities for participants to obtain meaningful work.

Craig advised that Personnel Group provide workplace support for a minimum of 12 months once a participant has secured a position to help them integrate into the workplace and set them up for success.

Personnel Group can offer suitable employers wage subsidies when hiring people with a disability. However, there are limitations when it comes to government funded organisations.

Personnel Group's NDIS Employment Support is similar to the DES, however, they are able to assist a wider range of people, regardless of their Centrelink payment eligibility. They just have to have access to NDIS. The wage subsidy, however, is not available for NDIS employment support.

Councillor Blumer recognised that a lot of organisations have online recruitment portals, and potentially there is no opportunity for people to “tick a box” to say that they have a disability or they need special consideration, or assistance. She asked Craig if he was aware of a service where someone could do a desktop review of our recruitment processes and identify any gaps that Council may have in this area. Craig was not aware of any; however said he would do some research and report back.

Kiara extended the opportunity to meet with anyone from any organisation who may be interested in their support in creating opportunities to ensure that the process is as accessible as possible for both businesses and participants.

Craig White left the meeting, the time being 1:34 pm.

Councillor Blumer thanked Mrs Biondo and Lewis for sharing their experiences and invited them to attend the next Disability Inclusion and Access Committee meeting to share with them the recommendations that come out of this discussion.

Kiara Boswell & Suzanne and Lewis Biondo left the meeting, the time being 1:40 pm.

6 ITEMS OF BUSINESS

CL01 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Mrs Donaldson acknowledged Mrs Biondo’s presentation. She went on to inform the Committee of steps that Council have taken in recent time to ensure that Council is providing equal opportunity employment. She advised that Council did an assessment of their employment base, and found that Council do support a number of employees with a disability.

She acknowledged that an online employment process may be difficult for some to use, however, with Council receiving a large number of applications, the most effective way to manage the influx and communicate with applicants is with a software based system. Council have messaging on all job advertisements stating Equal Opportunity process, and recently added a message encouraging people of any ability to contact Council’s Workforce Planning team if they require assistance with the recruitment process. Mrs Donaldson highlighted the decision to advise Council of a disability during the application process is up to the applicant themselves.

Mrs Donaldson asked the Committee to bear in mind that Council is on an award system and that Local Government is a heavily regulated industry. It is also budget driven and an organisational structure is adopted each financial year. Council doesn’t have as much flexibility as the private sector might have in regards to creating new positions.

Mr Neville drew on past experiences working in the employment industry for many years. He said that he knows of multiple people with disabilities that have secured employment with Griffith City Council through work experience placements, with the help of Commonwealth Funded programs. He suggested Councillors review the Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO) Policy and make recommendations to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Mrs Donaldson advised the Committee that SMT have discussed the topic at length, and their recommendations were to bring it to the attention of the Disability Inclusion and Access Committee and also to put a budget submission in to include a 0.6 supported position for consideration in the 2024/25 budget.

Ms Owen suggested a program not unlike the Traineeship scheme to create pathways to ongoing employment for people with a disability.

Marilyn Hams left the meeting, the time being 2:15 pm.

Councillor Testoni agreed that Council should review the EEO policy.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Colin Beaton and Mike Neville that the Equal Opportunity Employment Policy be reviewed by Council outside of the regular Policy Review Schedule.

Councillor Laurie Testoni left the meeting, the time being 2:18 pm.

CL02 NEW APPLICATION FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Val Woodland and Colin Beaton that Mr Soheil Derakhshan be granted membership to Disability Inclusion and Access Committee.

7 OUTSTANDING ACTION REPORT

Due to time restraints, the outstanding action report will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

8 GENERAL BUSINESS

Melissa Canzian advised the Committee that the review of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) has been submitted. She thanked the Committee for their input via Committee meetings.

9 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Disability Inclusion & Access Committee is to be held on Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 1:00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 2:22 pm.

Confirmed:

CHAIRPERSON

CLAUSE **CL01**

TITLE **Suggestions for Dementia**

TRIM REF **24/25696**

Councillor Blumer will lead a discussion on suggestions for dementia.

CLAUSE **CL02**

TITLE **MLAK Key and Access for the New Mountain Bike Trail**

TRIM REF **24/25697**

Councillor Blumer will lead a discussion on the MLAK Key and Access for the New Mountain Bike Trail.

CLAUSE **CL03**

TITLE **Possible Budget Bid and Process for Council Accessible Employment**

TRIM REF **24/25698**

Councill Blumer will lead a discussion on Possible Budget Bid and Process for Council Accessible Employment.

TITLE Outstanding Action Report

TRIM REF 24/25712

RECOMMENDATION

The report be noted.

ATTACHMENTS

(a) Outstanding Action Report [↓](#)

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ACTION REPORT**DISABILITY INCLUSION AND ACCESS COMMITTEE – 7 February 2024**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Action Officer	Comment
6 December 2023	3.2 Request from Helen Dalton	Mr Gibbs advised the Committee that Council had received a letter from Helen Dalton requesting that Council provide an accessible lane at the Griffith Regional Aquatic Centre. Council Blumer suggested that Council obtain more information from Helen Dalton regarding this request. The Committee agreed and Mr Gibbs advised that he would contact Helen Dalton and report back to the Committee in the new year.	Bruce Gibbs	
5 July 2023	CL03 Griffith City Library Accessibility Policy	Councillor Blumer will contact Wagga Wagga City Council to understand their process of engaging with all of their facilities in the hopes of implementing something similar in the Griffith Community.	Shari Blumer	5/07/2023: Mr Badenhorst advised the Committee that he will provide solutions to the Committee at their next meeting.
5 July 2023	CL02 Discussion Regarding digital locks for Accessible Toilets	RECOMMENDED on the motion of Col Beaton and Val Woodland that Council investigate the cost and implementation of digital locks on public amenities.	Peter Badenhorst	
2 February 2023	Adult Change Facilities	Ms Owen to prepare a letter to Griffith City Council and Griffith Sports Council requesting that Adult Change Facilities be installed in at GRSC.	Ms Owen/Ms Damini	3/5/2023: Ms Owen sent a letter to the GRSC asking that adult change facilities be considered for their venue. Councillor Blumer advised that the issue will Councillor Testoni and the Sports Council will progress this matter.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Action Officer	Comment
2 February 2023	Disability Inclusion Action Plan	RECOMMENDED on the motion of Mike Neville and Laurie Testoni that the Committee will investigate and initiate the review process of future Disability Inclusion Action Plans.	Committee	<p>2/2/2023: Current Disability Action Plan to be distributed to Committee Members.</p> <p>Ms Canzian to investigate review date of other Council's Action Plans as to align GCC review with the same date.</p> <p>3/5/2023: The Committee asked that the Committee be consulted when Council conducts yearly reviews of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.</p>