
**DISABILITY INCLUSION & ACCESS COMMITTEE
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GRIFFITH ON
WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2024 COMMENCING AT 1:05 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Shari Blumer (Chair), Patricia Cox (Community Representative), Marilyn Hams (Community Representative), Val Woodland (Community Representative), Soheil Derakhshan (Community Representative)

Quorum = 3

STAFF

Urban Strategic Design & Major Projects Manager, Peter Badenhorst, Project Planner, and Minute Secretary, Hannah Hall

ABSENT

Simone Murphy (Community Representative), Laurie Testoni (Councillor - Alternate), Erin Fletcher (Community Representative)

Councillor Blumer welcomed Mr Soheil Derakhshan to the Disability Inclusion and Access Committee.

1 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Val Woodland and Marilyn Hams that apologies be received from Colin Beaton, Mike Neville, Jaimee Damini, Melissa Canzian, Melanie Vella & Bruce Gibbs.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Val Woodland and Marilyn Hams that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 February 2024, 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 ITEMS OF BUSINESS

CL01 SUGGESTIONS FOR DEMENTIA

Councillor Blumer thanked Ms Hams for her suggestions for inclusivity regarding people living with dementia.

The Committee discussed multiple initiatives including way finding signage and purpose built dementia parks, similar to the dementia park which was recently opened in Ashfield, Sydney. The Committee asked that Council investigate the elements of such parks and report to the Committee. Mr Derakhshan suggested that the lessons learned from the Ashfield dementia park be studied to gain insight into what worked and what didn't.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Pat Cox and Val Woodland that Council:

- (a) Investigate the elements of dementia parks.
- (b) Prepare a report to the Committee with such elements.

CL02 MLAK KEY AND ACCESS FOR THE NEW MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

Councillor Blumer raised the issue of access through the front gate of the new Mountain Bike Trail recently constructed. Mr Badenhorst explained that the gate has been designed in such a way that doesn't allow access for motorbikes. A solution that Council are currently investigating is installing a 1m wide gate to the side which has an MLAK key for accessible access. This will only allow access for people with a disability who hold an MLAK key. MLAK keys are available from Council, free of charge.

Mrs Donaldson took the opportunity to advise the Committee of the Council's history regarding the MLAK system. Currently, Council do not lock the accessible toilet facilities throughout the Griffith LGA following litigation. The Committee raised concerns with this stating that the toilets are being used for activities which are not acceptable.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Soheil Derakhshan and Val Woodland that:

- (a) The MLAK system be used at the Mountain Bike Trail.
- (b) Council reinstate the MLAK system throughout the Griffith LGA.
- (c) A map be created and displayed on Council website and social media platforms identifying locations of accessible facilities with the MLAK system.

CL03 POSSIBLE BUDGET BID AND PROCESS FOR COUNCIL ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT

Mrs Donaldson advised that following the previous meeting of the Disability Inclusion and Access Committee, Council have begun reviewing their recruitment process and have so far identified areas for improvement. These include:

- All Council job adverts will now include the following statement:

“Council is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Child Safe Organisation. We are committed to building a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion, and welcome applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, workers of all ages, people with disabilities, people who identify as LGBTIQIA+ and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. People with disability are encouraged to reach out so they can be supported in recruitment processes, to enable them to demonstrate their skills and capabilities to meet the requirements of the job”.
- Council are working with the recruitment program provider to include a field in job applications where applicants can notify Council of a Disability Recruitment Agency who is advocating for them during the recruitment process.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy is being reviewed. It is currently an internal policy, however, staff will be recommending that it be made a Public Policy. A further report will be presented to the Committee with the Draft Policy once reviewed.

Councillor Blumer advised the Committee that she has submitted a budget bid for the 2024/25 budget for a supported employment position for people with a disability. She has proposed that the budget not be fixed to a particular position, and be available where the need arises.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Marilyn Hams and Soheil Derakhshan that:

- (a) The Committee note the information received from Council’s Workforce Planning department.
- (b) The Committee note that Councillor Blumer has submitted a budget bid in the 2024/25 draft budget to fund a support position for people with a disability.
- (c) A further report be presented to the Committee for the Draft Equal Employment Opportunity Employment Policy.

6 OUTSTANDING ACTION REPORT

Mr Badenhorst advised the Committee that an adult change facility will be installed in the new toilet block planned in the Lake Wyangan Foreshore Improvements project.

The Committee noted the Outstanding Action Report.

7 GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 Local Government Elections 2024

Councillor Blumer advised the Committee that the last meeting of this Committee before the Local Government elections will be 4 September 2024. However, this will be within caretaker period and no recommendations of significance can be made to Council. Therefore, the last meeting where recommendations can be made will be 7 August 2024.

7.3 Regional Disability Advocacy Service

Councillor Blumer asked that the Committee invite Kirsty Girling from Regional Disability Advocacy Service to the next Committee meeting to provide insight into the Self-Advocacy Inclusive Learning Sessions they are currently delivering.

7.3 Introduction from Soheil Derakhshan

Mr Derakhshan introduced himself to the Committee. He advised that he is employed by the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA) which is a NSW State Government funded program which works to protect and secure the rights and interest of people with a disability, particularly focusing on culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The MDAA advocate for people on matters such as medical issues and problems with the law.

8 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Disability Inclusion & Access Committee is to be held on Wednesday, 3 April 2024 at 1:00pm.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 2:04pm.