

# Access & Inclusion Advisory Committee

13 JULY 2020



## Minutes

HELD AT Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre

### Present

John Reynolds	Colin Dunn
Rosemary Oates	Ron Finneran
Jenny Robb	Carol Bunt (BVSC)
Graham Carmody	Anne Cleverley (BVSC)
Chris Sparks	Shelli Reid – Minute taker (BVSC)

### 1 Welcome and apologies

That the apologies submitted by Felicity Gates, Sue Thomas, Jennifer Russell, Wendy MacDonald, Cr. Robyn Bain, Alice Howe, Keith Tull for their inability to attend the meeting be accepted.

Absent: Nathan Johnston.

### 2 Disability Inclusion Action Plan

The Disability Inclusion Action (DIAP) project plan was presented to the Committee for input for the new DIAP for 2021-25. Under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* all public authorities, including local government, are required to have Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAP). The presentation (provided with these minutes) showcased the benefits of a diverse, inclusive community including greater opportunity to contribute productively and build our combined economic wealth as well as driving better health outcomes, better community connections and enriches our lives.

The consultation with this Committee aims to capitalise on the special insights into inclusion and the operations of Council is supporting the community.

Discussions facilitated by Ms Bunt contributed the following to the presentation regarding the four principles of the DIAP:

#### 1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

- Ms Robb said that language is important in supporting a change in attitude.
- Ms Oates said that people with disabilities should be treated equally in all facets of life, especially in employment where the abilities of an individual to do the job may not be measured fairly during an application process, and both the person and the business will miss out on the opportunity. It is preferable to explore people's abilities rather than focusing on what they can't do.

#### 2. Creating liveable communities

- Mr Dunn added that he, Mr Finneran and Ms Robb have been working on the Tourism Access Sapphire Coast document that aims to bring awareness to the businesses in the region of the potential of people with disability to business

growth. Mr Dunn outlined that businesses need to be honest about the disability accessibility aspects of their service. There is a need for more readily available and comprehensible information about accessibility. i.e. accommodation providers need to advertise their accessibility issues or their accessibility options.

- If accommodation provided site plans available as part of its online information, then customers know what to expect when booking and on arrival at the destination.
- Ms Robb commented that an accessibility rating is a deterrent for businesses to participate as it is considered to be a “big stick” approach. Truth in advertising is key to helping people make the choice best suited to them. For example, if there is a small step to get up to see an attraction, this might be overcome with the help of their carer.
- Many people spend hours on the website searching for information about accessibility and this can be avoided.
- All businesses could have an accessibility information tab or logo on their website to avoid having a person turn up and then not be able to get in.
- Mr Carmody commented that based on his observations as an accommodation provider in Bermagui, some businesses have used accessibility icon inappropriately.

### **3. Supporting access to meaningful employment**

- Ms Bunt commented that Council could show leadership in employing people with disability as model employers in the community.
- Ms Robb mentioned that it is important to start with how the job is designed rather than imposing quotas or targets.
- Ms Oates commented that employment should be based on merit and recruiters need to be encouraged to see people for their skills and talents rather than for their disability. Council could be an example through better advertising and job design.
- Mr Finneran endorsed that the application process shouldn't have any inhibiting requirements.
- Mr Sparks said that research has shown that the rates of employment of people with a disability had plummeted and this may be due to the many hoops they need to go through, for example, psychometric testing.
- Ms Robb suggested that a checklist for recruiters might help asking questions such as, is your language inclusive? Have you considered...? To be more inclusive of people with disability (and others).
- Ms Oates mentioned that there are companies that specialise in recruitment of people with disabilities and that could be an option for Council.
- Ms Cleverley suggested that the physical layout of workspaces and workplace practices can be a barrier to employing people with disability. There is opportunity to be found in the flexible work arrangements applied during COVID 19 such as work from home practices. These may reduce barriers for people with a disability.

### **4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes**

- Ms Robb supported the idea of a pre-arrival event document that is used to explain what to expect for people with disabilities. It brings another level of care to attendees and could help to adapt the event to the needs of the group.

Timeframes for this project:

- *July/August 2020* – Drafted plan reviewed by stakeholders and endorsed by working group
- *October/November 2020* – Public Exhibition by Council
- *December 2020* – New plan endorsed by Council.

**New Action:** Committee to review the presentation and provide any further feedback or ideas to Ms Bunt by 31 July 2020.

### 3 Chemist Access Advocacy

Mr Finneran requested the Committee to consider strategies to progress this matter further. Mr Sparks has been a good advocate for this as a member of the Physical Disability Council of NSW. Mr Sparks added that the PDC have included this in their strategic plan as one of their priority items. Ms Oates added that there are ten pharmacies in the Shire, some with access issues and some without. Ms Oates suggested that an individual letter to the businesses could encourage more thought about accessibility and in turn, help those with disabilities access the facilities.

**New Action:** Mr Finneran to send a letter to the pharmacy owners and landlords who are accessibly non-compliant with information and encourage them to apply for Access Inclusion Grants. Ms Oates to provide a list of those who do not comply with the three principles.

### 4 Tourism Access Sapphire Coast

Mr Finneran, Ms Robb and Mr Dunn provided a project proposal from the Tourism Sub Committee to the meeting. The project aims to increase the awareness of the economic benefit to businesses if they are more access friendly. (attached)

The sub-committee propose a collaboration with Destination Marketing to promote the access brand and increase its profile. Businesses could promote their accessible accommodation options through the consistent use of an icon and accurate web-based information. This would make it easy for those with accessibility issues to easily find the suitable accommodation.

There are organisations who already document this information such as auto-mobility.com.au, push.com.au etc. These showcase the accessible holiday experience that could be provided to people with accessibility issues. Discussion was had around the concerns that the Committee have about businesses not wanting to be 'rated' about their access. Many of the businesses require 1:1 assistance and there has not been sufficient funding to do this. Ms Robb mentioned that businesses have not taken on board this concept as yet but it might be worthwhile approaching Destination Marketing to have a tab on their website dedicated to accessible businesses and encourage the businesses one-by-one to get on board.

Ms Oates suggested that it might be good to contact the international organisations like wot-if, NRMA, other accommodation website to identify organisations that have the logo presented on their website guiding those with the accessibility to use these providers.

The meeting noted funding would be required to deliver the project. Potential sources include the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grants, the Business Council of Australia or Mumbulla Foundation. The committee indicated that Council may be required to auspice a grant on behalf of the committee.

Ms Cleverley mentioned that this could be a key project in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

**New Action:** Mr Dunn, Mr Finneran and Ms Robb to initiate conversation with Anthony Osborne of Sapphire Coast Destination Marketing on the integration of the Tourism Access Sapphire Coast proposal with their current marketing plans Ms Robb to organise.

**New Action:** Members consider potential grants which may fund the project.

Ms Oates thanked Mr Dunn, Mr Finneran and Ms Robb for their work on this document.

## **5 Other Business**

Miss Reid mentioned that Wendy McDonald, a recently appointed to the Committee has let the Committee know that she is keen to be actively involved although is unable to participate in our Monday meetings. The Committee expressed her value as a Committee member and welcomed her to continue to remain a member despite this. Miss Reid to inform Ms McDonald of outcome.

## **6 Next meeting – 10 August 2020**

Meeting closed 12:35pm.