

Disability Inclusion Reference Committee

Meeting Minutes



When: Thursday 15 September 2016

Where: Green Room, COG Building, 45 Mundy St, Bendigo

Time: 2pm to 5pm

Welcome

- Cr Campbell welcomed Committee members, companions and City staff.
- Cr Campbell completed an Acknowledgement to Country recognising the traditional land owners of the City of Greater Bendigo the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people.

Are there any conflicts of interest?

- Cr Campbell asked if any members had a conflict of interest about any agenda items.
- Cr Campbell said that most outcomes of the Committee would benefit members who have a disability so a conflict of interest is only about specific advantages to an individual.
- No members declared a conflict of interest.

Who is here and who is not

Chairperson	Councillor Rod Campbell
Who is here	Tristan Coote, Sara McQueenie, Daniel Giles, Lyn Hartland, Andrew Barrett, Jessica Stone, Helen Reimers, Margaret Harvey, Ann-Maree Davis, Jane Worsley-Allott, Robert Colbourne, Els Viester, Danielle McClure, Andrew Smith, Kerryn Ellis, Director of Organisational Support is at the meeting representing the Manager People & Performance.
Who is not	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trevor Budge, Manager of Strategy was not able to attend the meeting. Els Viester from Strategy is at the meeting in his place.• Andy Walker, Manager of Building & Property was not able to

	<p>attend the meeting. Danielle McClure is at the meeting in his place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brett Martini, Manager Engineering & Public Space was not able to attend the meeting. Andrew Smith is at the meeting in his place.
City support staff at meeting	Jolie Middleton, Cara Smith, Ben Jones

Cr Campbell welcomed Helen Reimers to the Committee. Helen was unable to attend the induction for community members.

What has the City done in the past about disability access and inclusion?

- Jolie Middleton, Senior Disability Inclusion Officer presented on what the City had done in the past about disability access and inclusion. Attachment 1 lists what Jolie talked about.
- Members talked about many built environment access issues in the community.
- Members were asked to make a request through the City’s Customer Request system about individual access issues. This can be done on the City’s website www.bendigo.vic.gov.au, by calling 03 5434 6000 to talk to someone, or by emailing requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au
- Members were also told about the smartphone app called Snap, Send and Solve, that can take photos of issues in the community and be sent to the City with a request to fix it.
- It was noted that training about disability access legislation to staff and people in the community who build buildings, footpaths and streets would be helpful.

Update on the current Community Access & Inclusion Plan progress - Focus area: Access to Council buildings and public spaces

- Daniella McClure and Andrew Smith talked about what has been done on the actions in the Community Access & Inclusion Plan that relates to access to Council buildings and public spaces.
- The Building & Property team have a staff member trained in access auditing of buildings. This person looks at plans and tells staff if external expert advice or an access audit is needed.
- The Public Toilet Strategy 2015-2016 will be reviewed as part of the 2016-2017 budget. It will include an audit on the public toilets in Bendigo. The Building & Property team are looking at what can be done to bring public

toilets up to standard. Allocation of Council dollars for what toilets will be upgraded first will be based on areas of high use.

- Members asked about how it is decided what disability access improvements are done. The Building and Property team have a budget that includes disability upgrades. New toilet facilities and major upgrades are separate budget items. Smaller items \$5,000 to \$10,000 are included through a regular maintenance plan.
- Members talked about the need to advocate for more funding to help. To influence the Council about the importance of disability access so there is enough money to improve access to Council buildings. This is one of the key roles of the committee.
- Maps with planned works in public spaces, such as footpaths and parking bays, in the CBD and surrounding areas were shown to members. Rural towns are looked at as individual requests for improvements come in.
- The Engineering and Public Spaces team have a budget of \$100,000 for access improvements in public spaces. This does not go very far as there are many requests for access improvements. If there was more than \$100,000 it would allow for more work to be done.
- Members were advised that when the new Council comes on board and gets inducted in November it will be a great opportunity to let them know what areas need more funding.
- The committee agreed that they will provide support for any budget bids the Building & Property and Engineering & Public Spaces do to seek more money to complete more access improvements in the community.

Priority areas for the Disability Inclusion Reference Committee

- Cr Campbell talked about the future work of the committee and that it was important for the committee to decide on what their top focus areas will be for the next 12 months.
- The common issues that were raised by people who completed expressions of interest to be a member of the committee were:
 - Lack of funding
 - Educating the public about disabilities
 - Involving young people in the disability sector
 - Supporting friends and families of people with a disability
 - Isolation due to the lack of access to services & support networks
 - Making Bendigo a safer place for people with a disability
- Members shared their top 5 issues or opportunities for disability inclusion. These were:
 - Councillors understanding of disability & legislation

- Accessible parking - lack of bays in Bendigo and compliance and safety of parking bays (x 4); temporary or different permit types; and policing of use of bays at shopping centres
- Clear paths of travel e.g. sign in the way
- Taxi & Uber issues - Disability advocacy (x 2)
- Community education about disability to break down barriers and raise awareness to businesses and medical services (x 4)
- Inclusion of people with a disability in sports and education of coaches and clubs
- Employment opportunities – supporting the City to employ people with a disability and set a percentage target (x 2)
- Support for carers and aging carers (x 2)
- Active community participation to influence Council
- Accessible housing – setting a percentage of houses in new subdivisions that are to be accessible homes and providing and a concession or incentive for developers that do (x 3)
- Civic participation. Ensuring people with disabilities can vote.
- Level access to shops – raising footpaths to meet front door steps and changing Council regulations to allow temporary access solutions.
- Advocacy for accessible bus stops
- Communication Access – the City leading and encouraging other businesses
- Events accessibility
- Ambassadors to welcome people to Bendigo and help people with disabilities at events and around the City – trained and paid
- Access to and availability of equipment
- Include access considerations in City strategies
- Education for City staff
- Safety for people with a disability in Bendigo - safe space with lighting and seats etc. where people can wait for a taxi (x 3)
- Mental Health awareness

Action	Action No.	Responsible person
Disability Inclusion staff to review all the issues and opportunities raised and bring the top 5 common themes back to the next meeting.	1	Jolie Middleton

The City’s Disability Inclusion staff; what is the current situation and plan, and how can the Disability Inclusion Reference Committee help?

- Steven Abbott, Manager of Community Partnerships, talked about the future of the City’s Disability Inclusion staff.
- The Disability Inclusion staff are currently funded by State Government. This funding is expected to stop on 30 June 2017. The City currently does not have an allocated budget for disability inclusion staff.
- The City needs to find the money to continue to have disability inclusion staff. There are two ways to do this:
 1. By trying to work with the State Government to get more funding.
 2. By writing a business case to Council to seek Council money.
- Members agreed that getting money for the City’s disability inclusion staff to continue is a high priority.
- Ann-Maree Davis suggested that the committee write a letter to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing and the Victorian Disability Advisory Council asking for State Government funding to continue. Plus a letter to Council stating the importance of keeping disability inclusion staff in the City. (Motion seconded by Sara McQueenie). All members voted for this to be an action of the committee.

Action	Action No.	Responsible person
Write 3 letters to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, • Victorian Disability Advisory Committee, and • Greater Bendigo City Council asking for funding and support for the City to keep the disability inclusion staff.	2	Jolie Middleton to provide support to members to draft letters

NDIS information sharing

- Ann-Maree Davis showed a video on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and shared information about the NDIS and what it means for people with a disability. The link to the video is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF-IWW2i5Zk&feature=youtu.be>
- The NDIS will roll out in Bendigo in May 2017.

Information about what is available to people with a disability when voting and enrolling for elections and how this could be communicated within the local community

- Tristan Coote talked about what he learnt at a session run by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) about voting for people with a disability.
- People with a disability who cannot vote can fill in a form to say so and they will not be fined for not voting.
- People with a disability can fill in a form to ask for a voting form in a different format.
- There is an app for iPads that gives information about how to vote, called Voters Voice.
- The Council elections are coming up on the 22nd October and it is important that committee members share information about how people with a disability can vote to the community.

Member vacancy: would the committee like the position to be filled?

- Cr Campbell said that the committee has one member position that is empty.
- Members agreed to fill the position.
- Sara McQueenie suggested that the same panel that was used to select the committee members be used select someone. The person must be connected to an organisation that is not already represented on the committee. (Motion seconded by Robert Colbourne). All members voted for this to be an action of the committee.

Action	Action No.	Responsible person
Selection panel to meet and select a new member to fill the one empty position.	3	Jolie Middleton

Chairperson update: how will the Council elections affect the chairperson position?

- Cr Campbell said that after 8 times as a Councillor that he has chosen not to be a Councillor next time. (The new Councillors are chosen in November 2016).
- The committee's Terms of Reference say that the chairperson must be a Councillor for the first 12 months. This was decided at a Council meeting. Because Cr Campbell will not be a Councillor he cannot be the chairperson of the committee in the future. A new Councillor will be chosen for the committee.

- The Terms of Reference also say that the chairperson should be a person with a disability.
- Members agreed that it is more important that the chairperson be a person with a disability.
- Members said that they would like Cr Campbell to continue as the chairperson.
- Members asked if the Terms of Reference could be changed to remove the condition that the chairperson is to be a Councillor for the first 12 months.
- Cr Campbell said that this was something for the City to look in to and report back to the committee.

Action	Action No.	Responsible person
To find out if the Terms of Reference can be changed to remove the condition that the chairperson is to be a Councillor for the first 12 months and if Cr Campbell can remain as the chairperson.	4	Jolie Middleton

Should disability awareness be a part of the induction process for a new Council?

- Ann-Maree Davis said that disability awareness is not part of the induction for new Councillors. She said that it is important for the committee to have a say in this now.
- A working group was made up of: Andrew Barrett, Tristan Coote, Daniel Giles, Ann-Maree Davis, Helen Reimers, and Jessica Stone.

Action	Action No.	Responsible person
Meeting of working group to be arranged. Working group to meet and discuss what they want covered in the induction and report this to Council.	5	Jolie Middleton Working group members

Feedback about the meeting

- Cr Campbell asked members to let the Disability Inclusion team know if they have any feedback about the meeting.
- Daniel Giles suggested more time be allowed for discussion of agenda items.

Finish of the meeting

- Councillor Campbell closed the meeting at 5:08pm.