



Maroondah Access Inclusion and Equity Advisory Committee – Minutes

Meeting Details:

Date: Friday 31 March 2023 Time: 10:00am - 12:00pm Location: Realm

Attendees:

Councillors

Cr Suzy Stojanovic (Chair)
Cr Marijke Graham
Cr Kylie Spears

Council Officers:

Grant Meyer, Manager City Futures
Chris Riseley, Team Leader Community Development
Annette Degenhardt, Free from Violence Project Officer Item 4.2
Rebeccah Penrose, Asset Planner (Open Space) Item 4.3
Nicole Finkemeyer, Team Leader Asset Planning Item 4.3
Stefanie Black, Asset Planner (Open Space) Item 4.3
Emma Hills, Governance Officer (Minute Taker)

Agency Representatives:

Jane Threader (Eastern Domestic Violence Service)
Avega Bishop (Women's Health East)
Lauren Kampus (Wellways)
Jessica Bishop (Migrant Information Centre)

Community Representatives:

Philip Hughes
Jacob Matthew

Others:

Apologies:

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers:	Heather Burns, Manager Community Services Andrew Fuaux, Director Strategy and Development
Agency Representatives:	Angie Dimech (Orange Door), Viv Cunningham-Smith (EV Inc), Angelo Talidis (Wellways), Gerardine Daniels (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing), Vicki Bryce (Uniting), Shona Bass (EV Inc), Kerry Williams (MMIGP), Kate Gibson (Eastern Community Legal Centre), Hilary Bird (Glen Park Community Centre)
Community Representatives:	Cara Hudson

Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers:	Nil
Agency Representatives:	Nil
Community Representatives:	Nil

Items Discussed

1. OPENING OF MEETING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Cr Stojanovic opened the meeting and read the Acknowledgement of Country.

Maroondah City Council, in the spirit of Reconciliation, acknowledges the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered today, where Indigenous Australians have performed age-old ceremonies. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging

Cr Stojanovic outlined emergency procedures and advised that if anyone needs to leave the room at any point for any reason, please feel free to do so.

2. WELCOME

Cr Stojanovic welcomed all in attendance.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2022

ITEM 3

Cr Stojanovic request the confirmation of the previous meeting minutes.

The minutes were moved by Jacob Matthew and seconded by Avega Bishop.

The minutes were confirmed.

4. ITEMS

SELF-INTRODUCTIONS BY ALL MEMBERS

ITEM 4.1

Cr Stojanovic invited all members to go around the room and introduce themselves.

Annette advised she is a presenter for today's meeting and works in the community development team at Council.

Avega works at Women's Health East and is working to prevent violence against women with disabilities.

Jessica advised she works at Migrant Information Centre and is working with diverse communities.

Jane works at FVREE which was previously known as EDVOS. She works closely with Orange Door and the integrated team's risk assessment management panels.

Cr Graham advised that she is Maroondah Councillor.

Lauren works at Wellways and is currently focussing on the Pathways to Home program for rough sleepers.

Grant is Manager City Futures at Council which includes the areas of community wellbeing and community development.

Cr Stojanovic noted that she is a Councillor for Maroondah and the chair of this Committee.

Chris advised that his role is Team Leader Community Development and he is this Committee's lead. The aim of the team is to build capacity of community organisations to more effectively help our most marginalised community members, and to assist these organisations to network with each other.

Cr Spears noted that she has been a Councillor since 2016 and is new to this Committee.

Philip said he is a community representative and works with Maroondah Interfaith Network.

Jacob advised that he is a qualified access consultant.

Cr Stojanovic noted that the Committee's Terms of Reference have been provided today for people to look at and provide feedback if they would like.

FREE FROM VIOLENCE PROGRAM

ITEM 4.2

Cr Stojanovic introduced the item.

Annette Degenhardt provided a powerpoint presentation and Acknowledgement of Country. She also acknowledged the impacts of family violence and thanked those who have shared their stories. She also paid respect to those who haven't survived.

Annette noted that as Cr Stojanovic mentioned at the start of the meeting, if anyone feels the need to step out of the room or to not contribute, that is perfectly fine.

Annette advised that the information that is gathered today will be used to inform community-based actions by Council over the next 12 - 24 months.

Annette advised that the Royal Commission into Family Violence was completed in 2015 and one of the 227 recommendations was to “Consider how Local Council performance measures can encourage family violence prevention”. The Free From Violence Program was then developed as a result of this.

15 Councils in Victoria were funded to pilot the project. The Councils were specifically chosen as being different with regard to their demographics and previous primary prevention work.

Annette outlined the domains of influence of the Free from Violence Program, noting that one focus area of the Program is developing and implementing community actions, to increase awareness, commitment and action for primary prevention.

The Program will look at how primary prevention strategies can be embedded into the community, including families, schools and small businesses.

Annette spoke about primary prevention and provided examples of what a primary prevention strategy is. She noted that this Program is different in that it is entirely a primary prevention approach, whereas much of the work to date has been focused on responding to incidents of family violence.

Annette spoke about the people that are primarily affected by family violence. Jacob drew attention to the fact that only women with disabilities were mentioned. Annette thanked Jacob for his input and advised that the information is based on available statistics on over-represented groups, and clarified that anyone can be affected by family violence.

Annette spoke about the drivers of family violence and outlined the four key drivers:

1. Condoning of violence
2. Control of decision making
3. Rigid gender roles
4. Cultures of masculinity.

Annette noted that gender inequity is linked to family violence, and overwhelmingly the violence is perpetrated by men towards women and children; however this is not to say that only women are affected.

Annette spoke about the three-year action plan and outlined the Program’s objectives.

Annette provided two discussion questions for the group.

Question 1 - Rank the following methods of delivering primary prevention activities from most effective least effective:

- Providing funding and/or resources to community groups and organisations
- Community education/awareness raising initiatives
- Information dissemination
- Community partnerships
- Other ideas

Question 2 - Identify the target audience for each method of delivery.

Examples:

- Schools
- Individuals
- Families
- Small business

Cr Stojanovic asked whether this Program is what Council is going to do, or is Council looking to partner with other organisations to achieve these goals. Annette advised that the focus currently is on what Council's role is and what Council can do over the next 12 - 24 months; however if partnerships develop, they will be considered.

The Committee members broke into two groups to discuss the questions and write down answers.

Grant spoke on behalf the first group and advised that with regarding to ranking, point number one (providing funding and/or resources) was the top.

From a Maroondah Interfaith Network perspective in more recent times, there has been more of a desire to speak about family violence.

From a Wellways perspective, raising awareness among men and education is very important as it is hard to change behaviours as children get older. It is important to focus on schools but to also look at other spaces to educate young people.

Grant noted that the group spoke about the scope for community partnerships and options for people to speak to staff at neighbourhood houses.

The group noted that it is important to focus on perpetrators as the people returning to violent relationships may have no other options.

The group also spoke about signage and provided the example of Knox City Council where they have signs that read "you are now entering a family violence free zone".

Jessica spoke on behalf of the second group.

She advised that, from an organisational perspective, community initiatives or partnerships should look at what is happening in the community so as not to undermine programs that are already in place. It is important to look at the reach of the current programs to see if they are effective in reaching the intended target group.

Providing funding and resources to community groups is important, and looking at where the gaps are.

Avega added that there is information out there regarding primary prevention. There are state wide and national resources.

She noted that having a slogan or statement isn't the catalyst that leads people and organisations to make changes. Evidence suggests that one-off training is not enough to make sustained changes for individuals and relationships.

The work planned in Year One, which involves Council staff, is very important and carrying that that into Year Two will be important. It will be good to look at what enables Council to be a "connector".

Jane noted that finding out what strategies are already in place and building on that is what has the biggest influence. Trusted areas for people such as community and religious groups may be a good way to connect with people. She noted that sporting groups are also a safe or familiar place for people.

Annette thanked all the members for their contribution to the Free From Violence Program.

Break - 20 minutes.

PLAY AND GATHERING STRATEGY

ITEM 4.3

Cr Stojanovic introduced the item.

Rebecca Penrose provided a Powerpoint presentation along with Nicole Finkemeyer and Stefanie Black.

Rebecca provided some background information regarding the Strategy and advised that an assessment was completed on the existing 127 play spaces and they identified a need to expand provisions to include inclusive play and gathering opportunities.

From this, a vision statement was created:

“To provide inclusive places within our open spaces that aim to cater for all cohorts within our community. Places that promote gathering, interaction, connection, wellbeing and liveability, that are thoughtfully and sustainably planned to honour Maroondah’s natural environment and culture.”

Rebecca then shared “vision boards” which identified different types of play and gathering spaces and equipment.

Rebecca spoke about the engagement methods used to date, including the online Your Say survey and interactive mapping tool. The team also attended all of the Celebrate Maroondah events and have worked alongside internal groups to reach as many community groups as possible.

Rebecca provided two questions for a brainstorming activity:

1. What elements from the vision boards (or others) will better support an accessible, inclusive and equitable experience when playing and gathering in Maroondah’s open spaces?
2. Are there any specific barriers/challenges to access, inclusion and equity within open spaces that Council should be aware of?

The Committee members broke into two groups to talk about the discussion questions and write down answers.

Lauren spoke on behalf of the first group and advised that pathways to get to the calm areas would be helpful for people with wheelchairs, walkers and prams. Also spacing for wheelchairs in the yarning circles should be provided as well as space beside benches.

She noted that the group liked the idea of incidental exposure to art. They also liked the inclusion of Braille for signage.

They noted that covered sitting areas to provide protection from the sun or rain are important to encourage gathering. Covered play equipment is also important so that it can be enjoyed in different types of weather.

Avega spoke on behalf of the second group. They also noted that welcome signs in different languages and Braille are inclusive. They thought boards with pictures rather than words might be more accessible for people who speak different languages or have low literacy.

The group thought that it would be good to take into account different age groups, especially teenagers, and to look at what makes them comfortable as well.

Cr Graham noted that some teenagers may be trying to spend less time at home if their home environment isn't healthy and they may need somewhere to go.

The group also thought facilities for children with mobility issues are really good. The example of the Liberty Swings at McAlpine Reserve was provided, noting how the swings are integrated with the other swings and not separated in their own area, which is more inclusive.

They also advised that having undercover areas helps to encourage people gathering outside. The group liked the idea of having spaces for someone to sit in a quiet place to feel safe and relaxed.

They also noted the posts in the presentation that were painted with indigenous art were great and it would be great to have accompanying information as well. This could also be a way to promote local artists.

Rebecca advised that they will be collecting the information provided today and it will be collated with all the other feedback regarding this Strategy. She also noted that if any members want to share further information, they can use the postcards provided which include the QR code to the Your Say survey.

Cr Graham noted that the consultation period closes on Thursday 6 April.

Cr Stojanovic noted that the next meeting will be held on 12 May 2023 and invited Committee members to submit any agenda items they wish to cover to Chris. She also noted that feedback can be provided regarding the Terms of Reference.

Avega advised that there is an event being held at Maroondah Federation Estate on 18 April 2023. It will be an in-person event regarding preventing violence against women across the lifespan.

The meeting concluded at: 11:59am.