



## Maroondah Disability Advisory Committee – Minutes

*These minutes are yet to be confirmed. They will be presented to the Committee at the next meeting to be held on the 1 June 2023.*

### **Meeting Details:**

Date: Thursday 30 March 2023      Time: 10:00am - 12:00pm      Location: Maroondah Federation Estate

### **Attendees:**

#### **Councillors**

Cr Kylie Spears (Chair)  
Cr Linda Hancock  
Cr Tony Dib OAM, JP

#### **Council Officers:**

Grant Meyer, Manager City Futures  
Jack Mulholland, Community Access and Inclusion Facilitator  
Rebeccah Penrose, Asset Planner (Open Space)      Item 4.3  
Stefanie Black, Asset Planner (Open Space)      Item 4.3  
Nicole Finkemeyer, Team Leader Asset Planning      Item 4.3  
Emma Hills, Governance Officer (Minute Taker)

#### **Agency Representative:**

Bruce Watson (NEAMI)  
Michelle Egan (EACH)  
Amanda Watson (Villa Maria Catholic Homes)  
Debbie Loke (Vision Australia)

#### **Community Representative:**

Lawrence Seah  
Melanie Adams  
Norma Seip  
Lana Wheatfill  
Matt Haanappel OAM  
Gemma Lewer

#### **Others:**

Sarah Hopkins, Corporate Manager - Customer Experience      Item 4.1

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**Apologies:**

Councillors:	Nil
Council Officers:	Fiona Burridge, Be Kind Maroondah Facilitator
Agency Representatives:	Cara Patterson (Vision Australia) Ellen Clacy (Interchange Outer East)
Community Representatives:	Emily Dive

**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 Spears opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance noting that there are some new members on the Committee.

Cr Spears read the Acknowledgment 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.*

## 2. WELCOME

## 2.1 Introduction by everyone (two new members)

The group went around the table to introduce themselves.

## 2.2 Business arising (MDAC Achievements Report)

Cr Spears noted the MDAC Achievements Report has been provided to all members. The Report is formally written as this will be what is presented to Council.

Cr Spears outlined the projects that were worked on last year and advised that if all members are comfortable, then the report will be presented to Council.

No concerns were raised by members.

## CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2022

ITEM 3

Cr Spears requested the confirmation.

Norma Seip moved the Minutes from 24 November 2022 and Lana Wheatfill seconded them.

The Minutes were confirmed.

#### 4. ITEMS

##### REVIEW OF EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES FACILITIES FROM A DISABILITY PERSPECTIVE

ITEM 4.1

Cr Spears introduced the item and noted that Tayla Davis is an apology.

Sarah advised that she would talk about the Eastern Regional Library (ERL) facilities, collection and service. Sarah noted that libraries expand beyond the physical walls now and are changing rapidly.

While Sarah talked about what ERL are doing now, she was also keen to hear from the group as to what can be done better.

Jack noted that Croydon Library is being redeveloped in the near future and commentary from this committee could be really useful in informing the redevelopment process.

Sarah spoke about the two libraries in Maroondah, Croydon and Realm. She noted that Croydon is a more traditional library with higher loan rates whereas Realm has more people attending but a lower loan rate.

Both libraries have large Storytime programs. She noted that if the programs get too big people stop coming as they can become too overwhelming or noisy. Sarah noted that they run Auslan and Chinese Storytime programs as well.

Bruce Watson entered the meeting at 10:16am.

The Library are piloting a new program called Gently Gently Storytime which will cater for smaller groups as well as people who want to come regularly. Sarah advised that there are a number of requirements needed for the Storytime programs such as a room/space with a door to be able to control noise and staff members that are passionate and enthusiastic to run the programs.

Cr Spears noted that this is something to consider for Croydon Library.

A question was asked whether the staff running the groups are library staff or external and do and if they have experience in the disability space.

Sarah advised that the groups are run by Library staff and that they have just introduced a new position at Realm, Children Support Officer, who has a wide range of experience.

One community member noted that she recently visited Croydon Library and it was a great experience. She said the ambience was calming and made you want to stay.

Cr Spears advised that herself and Cr Hancock sit on the Library Board and Croydon has highest physical borrowings.

Sarah noted that creating a friendly and welcoming space is important but so is having spaces for people who don't want to connect as much.

It was asked whether in terms of growing neurotypical programs have ERL thought about partnering with schools. Sarah advised that they haven't done this yet as they don't have enough to offer at the moment. Gently Gently Storytime is working to facilitate things like this.

Sarah spoke about issues with finding Realm Library on the map and noted that they are working to try to change the labelling. She also noted that their hearing loop is 7 years old and needs to be updated so it can connect to more modern technology like ear buds and smart phones.

Sarah noted that ERL have a big physical collection of books, CDs and DVDs along with the digital collection that includes ebooks and audio books. The digital collection has 80,000 items which is the biggest digital collection in Victoria.

It was asked if people who are a member of ERL can access the whole digital collection. Sarah advised that yes they can but licensing means that only so many copies are available at a time. She noted that a lot of what they buy can only be used by one person at a time. Some items allow multiple copies to be used at once which is great for users but is hard to manage. There are also some books where audio and print are coming together. These books have inbuilt technology to read the book to a child which can be helpful for parents with low literacy.

A question was asked if there is a strategy or policy regarding the collection of books to ensure that there are stories with people with disabilities. Sarah advised that ERL have an experienced collection librarian who looks at trends and ensures there are all different kind of stories available.

Cr Spears asked whether there is a guideline or framework for what ERL collect. Sarah noted that there is a collection policy that looks at the areas they buy in such as genre and content however, it does not go into the specificity that was referred to.

A member noted that it would be great to show that libraries are including content from a disabilities perspective

It was asked about the family pods and why they were removed from Realm. Sarah advised that the design of the pods created some antisocial behaviour. They were also not soundproof. She noted that there is a new design of pods coming out which are glass and these may be considered as an alternative. It was noted by a member that the pods were very useful as a respite area and were good for families and young children. It would be good to consider these at Croydon too.

Sarah spoke about the What's On pamphlet for Autumn and outlined some of programs such as the Neurodiversity Celebration Week that was held earlier in the month.

Sarah noted that Realm are working on having the month of August dedicated to carers and running NDIS information sessions, mental health support sessions, a morning tea and information regarding navigation the education system for children with additional needs.

It was noted that it sounds like a great program and to make sure it is advertised so that people are aware that it is on.

It was asked whether the carers month in August would including the aged care space in the program. Sarah noted that aged care was not specifically included the August program as it is a more focused event however there are other things held throughout the year that would cater for this area.

It was noted that carers can come from multiple areas and it would be good to make sure others are catered for as well as disability carers.

Cr Spears noted that the more collaborative the program the more it will be shared and the more people are included

It was also suggested that they could consider looking at how to include non-English speaking people in the agenda as they can be the most isolated sometimes.

Cr Spears noted that programs including the Chin language are important too.

Cr Spears advised that if anyone in the group have further questions regarding this topic they can contact Jack or Sarah.

## GROUP PHOTO

ITEM 4.2

The members moved outside to take a group photo.

Break - 10 minutes.

Cr Dib left the meeting during the break at approximately 11:00am.

## CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL'S PLAY AND GATHERING PLACES STRATEGY

ITEM 4.3

Cr Spears introduced the item and noted that this consultation has had one of the largest responses that Council has had.

Rebeccah, Nicole and Stefanie introduced themselves and provided a Powerpoint presentation and overview of the strategy.

Rebeccah noted that they began with an assessment on the existing 127 play spaces in Maroondah and it was around this time that things changed due to covid -19 and people began using the neighbourhood in a way they hadn't before. The aim of the strategy is to have more inclusive play and more gathering places.

With this in mind a vision for the strategy 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.*

Rebeccah provided vision boards and outlined the different types of play that were being considered.

Through the engagement process the team have tried to get as much feedback as possible to understand how the Maroondah community play and gather and where the gaps are.

Rebeccah spoke about the engagement methods including the Your Say survey and interactive pin. She also noted that the team have collaborated with other teams within Council to build on those networks.

Rebecca introduced a brainstorming activity for the group to undertake with two questions.

- What are the current barriers or challenges faced when engaging in play and gathering in open space? And what may be a solution?
- What activities or experiences would you engage in more if these barriers or challenges could be changed?

It was asked whether the feedback for the strategy is only online. Rebeccah advised that the team have attended all of the Celebrate Maroondah events to engage with the community in person and that a paper copy for the survey can be obtained from Council offices.

Cr Hancock noted that she has seen the team engaging at events and they are great at engaging and getting involved in the community.

It was suggested to go to malls on pension day and get a lot of feedback as there are a lot of older community members there that don't have access to the online options.

The members broke into three discussion groups to speak about and write down answers to the activity questions. The three groups each shared some key points that came up in discussions.

The first group advised that they thought that amenities need to be considered and if there is a BBQ area then there should also be a public toilet and access to drinking water.

The group also noted the importance of the use of shade, consideration of a park's function from day to night with things such as lighting and that having paving that leads to different areas creates broader access for people with prams, wheelchairs or walkers.

The second group advised that they liked the idea of low sensory spaces, commented on the importance of picnic slabs and making sure they are large enough to fit a wheelchair with relevant. Cr Spears noted that this is similar to discussions surrounding ramps vs stairs, everyone can use the ramp but stairs are limited.

The third group noted that tanbark is a barrier as it is not good for wheelchairs or walkers. They also advised that bins always being on grassed areas makes them hard to access and about the importance of a social story for spaces and promoting the story.

It was advised that having things available for all ages is important, disabled parking for people who exit their vehicles from the side needs to be considered. It would be good to have designated areas for assistance dogs to relieve themselves as the owners aren't able to pick up after them. Airports have pet relief areas

Debbie Loke entered the meeting at 11:42am.

Cr Spears noted that there could be a hierarchy of parks to show which parks have what facilities.

It is important to make sure it is communicated that there are spaces for many different needs that make people feel connected and included. Rebeccah noted that it will be important that the social story lists things like the feel of the space not just the amenities.

Melanie left the meeting at 11:47am.

Cr Spears noted that every playground can't cater for every need but we need to have specific parks that cater for certain needs.

The Tim Neville Arboretum on Dorset road is a great example of having different spaces.

Rebeccah advised that the sheets that the groups have written on today will be submitted with the feedback for the strategy along with the online feedback already received. She also provided Postcards with information in case any one wishes to provide further feedback.

## UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

## ITEM 4.4

Cr Spears introduced Debbie from Vision Australia who is replacing Cara Patterson who has moved to Perth. Debbie advised that she is the Acting Manager at Vision Australia.

Cr Spears asked if there is anything people want to raise from their sector.

Amanda provided an updated from VMCH who are working on affordable housing for the elderly and are also starting to do cross generation housing which includes people with disabilities. She also spoke about a social procurement project which is trying to gain employment for people with disabilities. They are working with Boroondara on this project. VMCH are also looking at allied health hubs to make it easier for people to access services.

Amanda also noted that there are big changes happening in the Home Care Package space. The model is changing to Home Support Program which will replace the old support programs so that there is one access point for all services and individual plans will be created by and independent assessor.

Matt advised that AUSTSWIM have received a grant for scholarships for swimming teachers to increase their knowledge in the disability space so that they are able to support more participants in swimming programs.

Bruce advised that NEAMI national are going through a change and the collaborative recovery model is changing to a collaborative relationship practice. The objective is to support people from diverse backgrounds and look at what has happened to change their mental health. Cr Spears asked about the timeframe of this changes and Bruce advised that it will be ongoing. Amanda asked if people wanting to access this service can do so if they are on another service. Bruce advised that not if they are on NDIS but they can if they are on a Home Care Package.

Gemma advised that she had been to an information night regarding the train station upgrade at Croydon and discovered there are not going to be any ramps only a lift for disabled access. Gemma noted that this is concerning as in the event of an emergency there needs to be a safe way to leave the station.

Cr Spears advised that she will speak with Andrew Fuaux a director at Council to raise this at a higher level.

Jack advised that the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) didn't have people equipped to answer questions regarding this matter at the information night. Jack also advised that he has spoken with people involved in the Mooroolbark Station upgrade and their comment was that they have a backup generator for the lifts in the case of power issues.

Cr Spears advised members that Council are a stakeholder just the same as the committee members. She encouraged all to email the LXRA regarding this matter as it will take a community drive to ensure concerns are heard.

Cr Hancock left the meeting at 12:02pm.

Michelle provided an update regarding EACH. She advised that EACH will be a pilot site for a women's centre which will focus on endometriosis and will be a point of contact for information and referrals.

Michelle also noted that there is funding available for people that need allied health support prior to becoming NDIS participants.

Michelle advised that there will be a Carers Centrelink Information Forum being run by EACH and Council on 10 May 2023.

Jack noted another event, Talking about Mental Health which is a free workshop for carers being held on 5 April 2023.

CLOSE OF MEETING

ITEM 4.5

Cr Spears thanked all the members for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at: 12:13pm.