CITY OF PARRAMATTA

MINUTES

Meeting Name	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee	F2017/00358
Date	Tuesday 26 October 2021 (FINAL MINUTES)	**Time 6.07pm**
Venue	Online - Microsoft Teams	QUORUM 5
Participants	John Robertson (Chairperson) Bruce Gale (Deputy Chairperson) – arrived 6:12pm Lyn Leerson OAM – left 7:36pm Phil Russo OAM Mick Scarcella Elizabeth Sheppard	
Present	COUNCILLORS Councillor Phil Bradley STAFF (CITY OF PARRAMATTA) Rodrigo Gutierrez (Community Capacity Building Manager) David Moutou (Group Manager Social & Community Services) Stephen Pearson (Administration Support Officer) Steven Ross (Community Capacity Building Officer – First Peoples Engagement & Strategy) – left 7:47pm Tarina Rubis (Community Capacity Building Officer) GUESTS Mathew Cornwell (Managing Director, Ngurra Advisory) – left 7:43pm	
Leave of Absence	Donna-Lee Astill	
Chaired by	John Robertson	

1. CONFIRMING ACCESS TO MICROSOFT TEAMS WITH PARTICIPANTS

2. WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS – THE DARUG PEOPLE

John Robertson, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

John made an Acknowledgement of Country, recognising that participants may be coming to the meeting from different lands but that the land upon which the meeting is usually held is Burramattagal and he paid his respects to Darug Elders past, present and to those under instruction who will be Elders in the future.

3. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and noted from Committee Member, Doug Desjardines.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBER, DONNA-LEE ASTILL

At this stage, the Committee considered a request submitted to the last meeting on 28 September 2021 for LEAVE OF ABSENCE from Committee Member, Donna-Lee Astill for all meetings for the remainder of the Committee's term.

The request could not be determined at that meeting considering that a quorum was not present. It was therefore agreed to circulate the request to Committee members as an out-of-session item.

Committee Convenor, Tarina Rubis reported that Donna-Lee Astill's request for Leave of Absence has been circulated to all members as an out-of-session item, and as a result, the request has been granted.

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. RESULTS OF TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW GUEST SPEAKER: MATHEW CORNWELL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, NGURRA ADVISORY

Mathew Cornwell, Managing Director, Ngurra Advisory joined the meeting for consideration of this item. He firstly acknowledged Country, indicating that he is standing on Gadigal and Bidjigal land. Mathew indicated that he is a proud Wiradjuri man from Cootamundra, South Western New South Wales and he acknowledged Elders past, present and emerging, and also the ongoing connections that the Dharug people have with Country waters and skies.

Mathew gave a presentation to the Committee on the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee Terms of Reference Review undertaken by Ngurra Advisory.

The Review was commissioned to apply a critical lens to the structure, operation and influence of the City of Parramatta Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee as the formal body of Council reflecting the needs, issues and concerns of First Nations communities. The Review was also required to ensure the Committee provides the most appropriate platform to foster effective engagement between First Nations communities and Council.

Mathew outlined key considerations for best practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committees. He provided an overview of the review and community engagement processes undertaken and then explained each of the findings and recommendations.

The review process drew out two distinct forms of recommendations:

1. Recommendations that related directly to the Terms of Reference and/or key governance arrangements of the Advisory Committee, including:
    - Limits to the number of consecutive membership terms
    - Membership criteria being amended to only include First Nations people
    - Subcategories to support diverse membership
    - Sitting fees for members
    - Rotating meeting locations across the LGA and opportunities for community information sessions
    - Subcommittees to carry out in-depth work
    - Annual strategic planning processes
    - Renaming of the Committee
    - Local First Nations input into the selection process.

2. Strategic recommendations that relate to either the operations of the Council or the support mechanisms that wrap around the Advisory Committee that are considered critical to its ongoing success, including:
    - Developing processes for meaningful Councillor engagement
    - Merging functions of the Committee with the Dharug Reference Panel (which no longer meets)
    - The Committee's role in driving the First Nations Strategy
    - The Committee being supported by a strong Aboriginal staffing structure
    - Reviewing the membership's understanding of Council decision making
    - Cultural Protocols being central to the Committee's governance and purpose
    - An extensive communications campaign required to promote changes to the Committee among the Parramatta First Nations community.

Tarina Rubis, Community Capacity Building Officer, thanked Mathew Cornwell and the team at Ngurra Advisory for undertaking the Review and working with staff on this important piece of work. Tarina said that it was a good process and showed a real commitment to and an understanding of both Council and community. Tarina informed the Committee of Council staff's proposed responses to the recommendations but noted that any changes to the Terms of Reference will need to be approved by Council in the new year.

Committee members were then given the opportunity to make comments and raise questions as follows:

- there has been a lack of success over the years in recruiting Dharug people to join the Committee (*Mathew suggested that an approach be made to the Dharug Strategic Management Group, which is an overarching body made up of three individual groups*);
- it was suggested that a member of the Advisory Committee attend Council Meetings when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters are being considered by Council with Council granting permission for the Committee member to speak if necessary;
- there is a disconnect on the part of most Councillors from being involved with the Advisory Committee;
- there is a need for the City of Parramatta to endorse the Uluru Statement;
- the work of the Advisory Committee needs to be aligned with Council's First Nations Strategy;
- it is considered critical that First Nation's people lead the Committee and in this regard, there should be a really strong social media campaign implemented to encourage expressions of interest;
- high schools in the LGA could be approached with a view to seeking nomination of an Aboriginal student to sit on the Committee – Council could sponsor them;
- Clr Phil Bradley indicated that the Committee is presently unable to make a direct recommendation to Council and this needs to be addressed, and that there should be an opportunity provided to Aboriginal people to participate in meetings on-line;
- there is need for self-determination and a unified voice for Aboriginal people - engagement from the community on the Advisory Committee is limited when they find out that there are non-Aboriginal people on the Committee. Encouragement of Dharug involvement would be an important part of the recruitment strategy for the Committee;
- it is desirable that Aboriginal staff support the work of the Committee, including in the role of Convenor;
- it is considered important to build connections between community members and the Committee and to have informal meet and greet conversations from time to time so that the community gets to know the Committee members *(it was suggested that these 'meet and greets' take place prior to formal Committee meetings*);
- an Aboriginal person should be engaged to manage Strategic Planning Sessions (*Elizabeth Sheppard advised that she can suggest the name of an appropriate Aboriginal person who could lead the Sessions*);
- the need to recognise cultural expertise of Advisory Committee members was identified as a high priority *"Elizabeth Sheppard requested that it be noted in the Committee's Minutes that the prior cultural accreditation and experience of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee Members, that we supplied to Council in our Expression of Interest, has not been recognised or respected during our term of office. Aboriginal Council Staff helped to assess our experience and qualifications before we were appointed. We were taught by authorised Aboriginal Elders, and our prior qualifications and our ongoing involvement with Aboriginal communities, are not possessed by non-Aboriginal trainers. All governance training supplied either to Councillors or Advisory Committee Members, should be delivered by Aboriginal qualified Aboriginal instructors, and should show respect for Aboriginal protocols and languages."*

- Clr Phil Bradley indicated that Councillors cultural competency training should be compulsory during induction and seen as a standard component of induction.
- there is a need for future ongoing liaison between staff responsible for the Strategic Plan and the Advisory Committee.

In regard to *an extensive communications campaign that is recommended to be undertaken to promote the changes made to the Advisory Committee to the broader Parramatta and Dharug communities*, Mathew suggested that Council engage an Aboriginal Communications Specialist to do this work who understands community and who understands how Aboriginal people access information.

Tarina Rubis indicated that the review has been undertaken as an internal Council process and Council will make further decisions on its response from this point on. The feedback of Committee members is most welcome.

In conclusion, Tarina advised that at the last meeting of the Committee to be held on 23 November 2021, that opportunity will be given to members to reflect on the activities and achievements of the Committee during its term. Elizabeth Sheppard indicated that she has prepared some appropriate material which she will share at the next meeting.

Mathew Cornwell left the meeting at this point, the time being 7.43pm.

6. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES – TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2021

Tarina Rubis, Community Capacity Building Officer, reported that she has been able to obtain acceptance of the Minutes of the following meetings from either a quorum or 100% members who attended inquorate meetings, namely:

- Tuesday 22 June 2021
- Tuesday 27 July 2021
- Tuesday 24 August 2021

The Minutes of these meetings have therefore been confirmed.

A copy of the Minutes of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 28 September 2021 had previously been forwarded to each member.

RESOLUTION (Russo OAM/Robertson)

That the Minutes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 28 September 2021 be received and noted as a true record of the meeting.

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Passing of Uncle Richard Green (Russo OAM/Sheppard)

That the Committee acknowledge Uncle Richard Green's passing with sadness, and the Committee's condolences be conveyed to his family and the wider community, acknowledging Uncle Richard's marvellous contribution to the Dharug peoples and particularly to his knowledge of the Dharug language.

8. REPORT OF STEVEN ROSS, COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING OFFICER – FIRST PEOPLES ENGAGEMENT AND STRATEGY

Nil

Steven Ross reported that the internal First Nations Strategy Working Group is meeting this week to progress some of the framework for the Strategy.

Steven also reported that he recently gave a presentation on the First Nations Strategy to:
- Dharug Strategic Management Board; and
- Parramatta Koori Interagency

Steven proposes to report to the November meeting of the Committee on the milestones for 2022 and proposed engagement activities, including engagement with the Committee.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Myall Creek Commemoration Service

Phil Russo OAM informed the Committee that he recently attended the Myall Creek Commemoration Service to remember the Indigenous lives lost as a result of an assassination which took place at Myall Creek Station on 10 June 1838. He said that the Service was a very moving and spiritual experience and that it was very well attended.

B. Views of Heritage Advisory Committee on waterhole at the junction of Darling Mills Creek and Toongabbie Creek

The possibility of heritage listing of this site was discussed at the last Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Advisory Committee, when the Committee felt that the site should not be listed, but that there could be some recognition given to the site in the way of signage and interpretation. Paul Kennedy indicated at that meeting that he proposed to take the Committee's comments back to the Heritage Advisory Committee.

Clr Phil Bradley reported that the Heritage Advisory Committee has since considered the matter at its meeting held on 21 October 2021.

Stephen Pearson, Administration Support Officer, reported on the resolution of the Heritage Advisory Committee as follows:

A. The Committee noted the views of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, but nevertheless, it sees the site as important from the European heritage point of view and it still pursue the possibility of listing, with consultation continuing with the ATSI Advisory Committee.

B. That in light of the recent work that Committee member, Chris Betteridge, has been speaking about, the Committee, through Paul Kennedy, ask Council's Heritage Advisor to review the decision to not list this site.

10. REQUESTS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

Nil

11. NEXT MEETING

6:00pm Tuesday 23 November 2021 – Hybrid Meeting (In-Person & Remote)

The Meeting closed at 7.55pm.