

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES REFERENCE GROUP

Meeting Date: Monday, 12 March 2018
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 4.10pm

The following members were present:

Ms Linda Windley – Acting Chairperson
Clr Nina Cheyne - arrived 4.24pm
Ms Leisa King
Ms Cathy Ryman
Mr Ian Patrick
Ms Tracey Porter – Cullunghutti Representative

Others Present:

Jessica Rippon – Executive Manager - Communications
Melissa Andrews – Coordinator Community Development
Liliana Hutchinson – Social Infrastructure Planner

Election of Chairperson

RESOLVED (By consent)

That Linda Windley be appointed as the Acting Chairperson for the meeting of the Children's Services Reference Group Monday 12 March 2018.

CARRIED

Apologies / Leave of Absence

An apology was received from Clr Gartner, Julie Parkinson, Tara Leslie, Kim Stouse-Lee, Michelle Wozatka and Melissa Wicks.

Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLVED (Clr Cheyne / Leisa King)

That the Minutes of the Children's Services Reference Group held on Monday 16 October 2017 be confirmed.

CARRIED

Declarations of Interest

Nil

PRESENTATIONS

CS18.1 Berry District Park Detailed Concept Plan - Liliana Hutchinson HPERM Ref: D18/3361

Liliana Hutchinson provided a presentation in relation to consultation for the proposed Berry District Park.

Council is working with the Berry Community and Rotary to create a beautiful nature based play area on North St. Attached to the minutes you will find the invitation for a Children's Consultation and the current concept plan.

On Sunday 25 March 2018 between 10am and 12pm at the Berry District Sports Fields on North St, Council is hosting a consultation for children ages 0-18. There will be refreshments (coffee and sausages) provided.

Once this consultation is over, Council will complete the detail design process, exhibit the design and launch construction.

The park design will be nature based, all access and community driven. The more children that attend the consultation, the better informed the design will be.

REPORTS

CS18.2 Applications for Membership - Loretta Walton and Christina Barrett HPERM Ref: D18/2683

Recommendation

That Loretta Walton and Christina Barrett be appointed as community members on the Children's Services Reference Group.

RECOMMENDATION (By consent)

That Loretta Walton and Christina Barrett be appointed as community members on the Children's Services Reference Group.

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

CS18.3 Children's Services Reference Group Consultation Process - Update and Request for Further Direction HPERM Ref: D18/74097

Melissa Andrews addressed the meeting and provided a background for this action.

Note: This is to advise the Group of progress made towards developing a process for consultation between Council and the Children's Services Reference Group (CSRG) and request further direction from the Group.

Jessica Rippon addressed the meeting in relation to her role within Council and enhancing the community engagement with the Community, Council staff and Councillors. The following comments were made:

- We are looking across the board about how Council engages. Looking at how effective the engagement is.
- We need a coordinated approach and to make sure we are targeting the right stakeholders.
- Council is coordinating a strategic overview. We have started with our CCBs including what guidelines and framework will be best for an overall approach
- Then we will be looking at the Advisory Committees and Reference Groups and how Council can engage in an effective manner. We will be doing consultation with the Advisory Committees and Reference Groups prior to finalising a consultation plan. We are trying to gain an understanding of what the Committees want to be involved in.

The Committee discussed community consultation and the following comments were made:

Cathy Ryman – The need for consultation to be on the agenda all started at the planning day in 2017. Things were happening in the community that the Children's Services Reference Group (CSRG) weren't aware of. Cathy suggested sharing information on Council's Facebook page.

Linda Windley – One of the challenges is that early childhood is so diverse. Wanting to make sure that the rights of the child are being upheld. Does it align with the Community Strategic Plan? The CSRG started planning around this at the Planning Day in July 2017. We are keen to have working parties to feed back information to Council as there are also families that don't know what is available in the Shoalhaven. Discussion may be required to be revisited again in the future regarding the involvement of schools and whether it is within the scope of the CSRG to have them represented. In relation to staff and councillors; staff do a great job and take information to Councillors and then the group hears about it. It highlights the fact that this group has a lot of expertise. There needs to be an understanding of how the sector works and being aware of the services within Shoalhaven. Our Group covers 0-5 well, but 5-12 needs more of a voice – We are a voice for the families. It is important to make an affect and get a children's voice heard in Council.

Leisa King queried what is the future planning for Council? Children who are affected in the community need to be given a n opportunity to provide feedback and be given representation. We need a to be a children's voice. It could be a bridge or a playground that requires consultation with children, if the information was made available we wouldn't want to exclude a project as some services may affect one area of children's services and a different project may affect another. We can't really give a definitive answer, Council need to ask the question: could a child be affected by a particular project/service, if so then undertake targeted consultation or consult with the Childrens Services Reference Group, utilise their expertise. and ability to be a conduit of information to children and families. The services represented on the CSRG have a wealth of expertise and also provide a direct link for Council to get information out to Children and Families.

Melissa Andrews Suggested that perhaps we need to consult the children about what kind of Council projects are of interest to them.

Jessica Rippon – Council pushes out a lot of information to the community and we need to know what project is relatable and what is not. Council needs to develop relationships with preschools and childcare centres (within reason). There are certainly ways we can engage with centres to reach families and children. Council is setting up a consultation framework that is across the board. There is a need to have mutual agreements between Reference Groups and Council. The role of the information that Council communicates should be to inform about Council projects and availability of Council services. Council has a "Get Involved" webpage and Facebook, and we need to promote those avenues in a better way so that people can access and provide input. Also look at other ways of doing engagement or focused engagement on general matters that relate to Council. For example a targeted children's consultation once a month or couple of months, roundtable discussions.

It was requested that consultation for the Children's Services Reference Group be undertaken when Council is making decisions around asset management, building leases, toilets, beach access and library services and how services are being charged.

Tracey Porter – We would also like to have choice and be able to choose what to get involved in.

Jessica Rippon requested all email addresses from the Members of the Childrens Services Reference Group to get feedback on their views for consultation in their area and/or specific field of expertise. Jessica would like to know how the Children's Services Reference Group would like to lend their expertise to Council.

CS18.4 Additional Item - International Children's Week

Melissa Andrews advised that International Children's Week is in October and is seeking feedback on how Council can get involved. It could be a launching point for Council's Communication strategy involving the voice of the child and what the Childrens Services Reference Group is trying to achieve.

Thoughts were to invite a number of early childhood groups to Council for an excursion, however, it would need to be interesting and relevant i.e. Waste, Roads, Playgrounds etc.

It was advised that 'A Caring World Shares' is the theme for International Children's Week.

It was advised that it would not have to be that week, however would be a good start going forward.

Linda – advised that Early Childhood Australia has arranged for the Chair of Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to attend an event in Kiama 23 April, 5.30-7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 5.46pm.

Linda Windley
Acting CHAIRPERSON