



northern  
beaches  
council

**Partnership and Participation**  
Strategic Reference Group

# MINUTES

## **PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP**

**WEDNESDAY 6 MAY 2020**

**Minutes of the Partnership and Participation**

**Strategic Reference Group**

**held on Wednesday 6 May 2020**

**Commencing at 6:00pm**

**ATTENDANCE(via remote audio visual link):**

**Committee Members**

Cr Sue Heins (Chair)	
Mayor Michael Regan	
Cr Penny Philpott	
Tony Hilliger	Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches Inc
Ina Vukic	Northside Enterprise
Antony Biasi	
John Buggy	Belrose Open Space Corridor Association
Craig Susans	
Chris Fulton	
David Hope	North Sydney District Council of P&C Associations
Jane Mecelli	

**Council Officer Contacts**

Jeff Smith	Director, Corporate and Legal
Melanie Gurney	Executive Manager Library Services
Kylie Walsh	Executive Manager Community, Arts & Culture
Deb Kempe	Team Leader, Economic Development & Tourism
Andrew Grocott	Manager, Community Engagement
Tamara Lukic	Governance Officer

## 1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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As a sign of respect, Northern Beaches Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands on which we gather and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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## 2.0 APOLOGIES

**Note:** Denice Smith provided her input for the meeting via email and is attached to the minutes at Attachment 1.

Apologies were received from Cr Ferguson, Denice Smith, Myriam Conrie and Hannah Jamieson.

## 3.0 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Heins declared a less than significant, non pecuniary interest in relation to 6.1 Community Grants Program 2020/21. Councillor Heins chose to remain in the meeting and participated in the discussion on this item. The reason provided by Councillor Heins was:

“Involved with organisations that will be applying for community grants.”

3.2 Ina Vukic declared a less than significant, non pecuniary interest in relation to 6.1 Community Grants Program 2020/21. Ms Vukic chose to remain in the meeting and participated in the discussion on this item. The reason provided by Ms Vukic was:

“Involved with organisations that will be applying for community grants.”

## 4.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

### 4.1 MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP MEETING HELD 5 FEBRUARY 2020

#### RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Partnership and Participation Strategic Reference Group meeting held 5 February 2020, are hereby confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting, subject to the following amendment of the Item 6.3 Suggested Review of Purpose and Practice of the SRG.

*The following was discussed:*

- *The importance of understanding what constitutes a community group so that the Council is less likely to be caught up in responding to “squeaky wheels”. What do we mean by community? What criteria are used when distinguishing between groups?*
- *The importance of looking not only at the way Council informs the community but also at how the Council enables the community to initiate communication with it and recommend action.*
- *The role of the SRG and how it should provide the best input is at times unclear.*
- *The purpose and practice of the group should relate to what the Council is trying to achieve strategically. This should be the priority over any member’s other role in representing the particular interests of one community group or personal issues.*

- Presentations are not always clear on what the issues are. To assist this, the presenter is to clarify and start/end the presentation by clarifying the issues associated with the topic, where it fits in strategically, and why it needs our attention.
- The presenter should clearly identify what the SRG group is being asked to do, e.g. listen and be informed, or provide input into decisions yet to be made, or comment on a strategic direction already taken.
- Information outlined in the agenda should not be presented again at the meetings in the same way. Assuming that information is read, it should allow additional time for discussion.
- A method of commenting, asking questions and seeking further clarification could possibly be managed through Governance prior to the meeting, giving the presenter an opportunity to respond to questions about the topic.
- We need to improve on how to better document/record outcomes of the group discussions in order to measure the group's contribution and the value of their input.

#### **ACTION**

- That the suggested purpose and practice review proposals be shared among other Strategic Reference Groups.

#### **5.0 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING**

MEETING DATE	ACTION	STATUS
5 Feb 2020	K Walsh to follow up on the Draft Volunteer Policy and bring it back to the group in August.	Open
5 Feb 2020	M Gurney to share with other SRG', J Buggy's Suggested Review of Purpose and Practice of the SRG	Ongoing

## 6.0 AGENDA ITEMS

### 6.1 PARTNERSHIPS DURING AND POST COVID-19

#### OVERVIEW OF UPDATE

K Walsh and D Kempe provided a presentation on this topic. A copy of the presentation provided to the group was distributed with the Agenda.

The group workshopped ideas on the way forward once social distancing measures are lifted. A copy of the responses by the group is provided at Attachment 2.

#### Items Discussed

The Business Support Plan: As part of Council's response to the potential impact of COVID-19 on the local economy and the whole community, more specifically:

- waiving of small business fees
- flexible and pragmatic enforcement and compliance
- applying the Rates and Annual Charges Hardship Policy to impacted ratepayers
- actively collaborating with business chambers and local networks
- provide regular updates to our local businesses, through a growing database of over 16,000 local businesses, including Supporting Local Businesses' section on Council website
- assist to build digital capability of businesses through social channels/webinars
- build a relationship with State Government Agencies.

<https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/local-business-support>

K Walsh provided an update on The Community Care Package, as a part of Council's response to the potential impact of COVID-19 on the community at a time of increased anxiety, social isolation, increasing financial hardship and the impacts to the most vulnerable members of our community.

The key features of this package is:

#### Connecting Community:

- Library2U service
- neighbour support – 80 000 Hello neighbour cards delivered to all households
- connecting via website, EDM, social media
  - online and ongoing webinars, exhibitions, talks, virtual meetings and forums.

Furthermore, since 23 March, the coordination and support of community services also involved:

- contact with over 50 local not-for-profit, charitable and community organisations
- food and essential goods distribution including:
  - connecting providers with potential partners
  - partnership between Council and existing meal / food distribution agencies. eg: Community Co-op, Ozharvest
  - volunteer coordination
  - referral of community members willing and able to volunteer to appropriate community organisations
  - rough sleepers/ crisis accommodation.

Subsequently the group raised number of points and discussed the following:

- to commence collecting data on Library 2U services for businesses planning and a more informed way forward
- the issue of volunteers working with Council and the new Volunteering policy that will streamline a currently complex and frustrating process
- the impact on the local businesses forcing many to alter/expend their services or completely change the nature of their businesses to survive
- the impact on NDIS services where the number of those using the services has dropped by 70-80%
- an increase in home business, new business starting in competition with existing ones, concerns of the legitimacy newly formed, home based food businesses, permissions and food safety certificates
- council to follow the example of UTS Business School exploring the impact COVID-19 on the Australian and global economy, spanning every industry and every sector, and do their own survey unique to Northern Beaches. The intent of the wide and not industry specific survey would be to help identify sectors most affected and to what lengths they had to go, alter their businesses and services during this period.

The SRG members participated in a workshop about ideas and assistance for community organisations post COVID-19 and community engagement post COVID-19. A copy of responses provided by the group is at attachment 2.

The following questions were raised for discussion:

**Businesses:**

1. What partnerships may assist local businesses?
2. Ideas for programs and projects to support local businesses.

**Community organisations:**

1. What partnerships may assist community organisations, including not-for-profit and charitable organisations?
2. Ideas for programs and projects to support community organisations.

**The community:**

1. What partnerships may assist community engagement?
2. Ideas for programs and projects to encourage community engagement.

*The meeting concluded at 8:06pm*

This is the final page of the Minutes comprising 6 pages numbered 1 to 6 of the Partnership and Participation Strategic Reference Group meeting held on Wednesday 6 May 2020 and confirmed on Wednesday 5 August 2020.

## Attachment 1

### Partnership and Participation Strategic Reference Group

Wednesday 6 May 2020

Thank you Councillor Heins for the opportunity to comment by email, rather than my inadequate comms systems and thanks Melanie for your offer of assistance. I actually think I need some real paranormal intervention as my Foxtel remote is currently turning my heater on and off!

#### Comments on the Minutes of the previous meeting, held 5 February 2020

##### 2. VOLUNTEER POLICY – ACTION

That the draft Policy be presented to members at the May 2020 meeting.

*Obviously, this will be deferred for a future meeting OR distributed by email for comments. How will this impact on the implementation of the Volunteer Policy?*

##### 3. SUGGESTED REVIEW OF PURPOSE AND PRACTICE OF THE SRG

ACTION - That the suggested purpose and practice review proposals be shared among other Strategic Reference Groups

*From the revised comments submitted by John Buggy yesterday – great suggestion – agree.*

#### Comments on the Agenda for the meeting to be held 6 May 2020

1. Please accept my apology for not participating in this meeting
2. Item 4 – I agree to the confirmation of the minutes with the above noted.
3. Item 6 –
  - a. “Explore new ways of connecting with special interest communities, such as the arts and environmental communities” – MAGAM are sending great links to interested groups in the art community and these are being shared. Thank you for acknowledging the emotional and mental health benefits of arts and culture now even more important amongst isolated seniors in particular. This is based on feedback from the community art group I am involved with.
  - b. “hello neighbour campaign” – where were these 70,000 cards letterboxed? The presentation (Attachment 6.1 – page 12) states that “Cards delivered to ALL households from 16 April”
  - c. 3. Coordination and support of community services – Thanks to all involved in this co-ordination – there are many examples of this amazing ‘neighbourly’ positive behaviour to people who needed this assistance prior to Covid-19; but the demands have obviously increased and Council and its Councillors play a vital role in this co-ordination.

**WORKSHOP:** Page 14 onwards

- **What partnerships may assist local business?**
  - Ideas for programs, projects to support local businesses – an info sheet with links etc of what is available in simple terms. Small (local) business owners are struggling for survival but still need easy access to what is available for support etc. A Council info sheet would provide accurate info with links that could be updated. It could be via an opt-in link through Council's webpage
  - Council provide advice / support for interactions with the newly appointed small business commissioner (press release on last page) and establish a relationship with Chris Lamont
  - Simplified approvals process or information sourcing i.e. regulations, applications etc especially when cafés, bars and restaurants etc are allowed to reopen – social distancing etc
- **Community organisations:**
  - **Funding grants** – applications are difficult to discuss via email or phone and many do not have access to other comms methods. Gladly accept suggestions as often the best grant applications come from open brainstorming sessions.
  - **Assistance with technology** – eg establishing web pages as many older people in particular are hesitant to use Facebook and groups cannot always fund a platform or associated fees. E.g. a “How to create a webpage for your community group” info page
- **The Community:**
  - **Partnerships** – continue working with the established community organisations and encourage support of these established groups rather than setting up additional smaller groups. Support the volunteers who give an incredible amount of time, energy and often their money for their community involvement. We have a lot of very generous people on the Northern Beaches!

Thank you all again for your patience and look forward to future face-to-face meetings

Denice Smith

## New small business commissioner for NSW

6 May 2020

Minister for Finance and Small Business Damien Tudehope has today announced the appointment of Chris Lamont as the new NSW Small Business Commissioner.

Mr Lamont will lead the Office of the [Small Business Commission](#), which is responsible for advocacy, strategic advice, free to low-cost mediation and support to small businesses across the state.

Mr Tudehope said Mr Lamont's appointment would provide the Small Business Commission with focus and direction at a difficult time for small businesses.

"The Small Business Commission has a strong track record in advocating for small businesses and strives to resolve issues impacting their day-to-day operations," Mr Tudehope said.

"It is a passionate supporter of small business and has played a critical role in assisting businesses during the drought, the recent bushfires and now COVID-19.

"Chris is known for his ability to develop relationships within government, industry and the business community and this experience is sure to be of great benefit and he will be a strong advocate for small business in NSW."

Mr Lamont has more than 20 years of experience, comprising policy development and advocacy, senior government positions, not-for-profit and industry associations, business and the delivery of major government reforms and programs.

Most recently, Mr Lamont has been the General Manager for Capital Projects and Infrastructure with the City of Melbourne where he was responsible for the delivery of the capital works program.

Mr Lamont said he was excited to be taking up such an important role within NSW.

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of their communities and they make up 97.5 per cent of businesses in NSW," Mr Lamont said.

"This is a tremendously challenging time for small business and I look forward to working with the Small Business Commission to assist them over the coming months and on the other side of COVID-19."

Mr Lamont's start date at the Small Business Commission will be 15 June 2020.

Source [https://www.nsw.gov.au/news/new-small-business-commissioner-for-nsw?utm\\_source=miragenews&utm\\_medium=miragenews&utm\\_campaign=news](https://www.nsw.gov.au/news/new-small-business-commissioner-for-nsw?utm_source=miragenews&utm_medium=miragenews&utm_campaign=news)

## Attachment 2

### Workshop – Partnership & Participation SRG – 6 May 2020

Business Ideas	Community organisations and community engagement ideas
Welcome to our local business community sign or sticker with Council logo for local businesses to put on their door or near it.	<p>The library 2U program is great, what do the "new" customers look like?</p> <p>Are users people who were previously members.</p> <p>Post COVID-19 it is important to keep any new "customers" engaged.</p> <p>This could be by highlighting</p> <p>E-platforms (Audible has shown over 40% increase in clients since COVID-19).</p>
Better transparency through current Facebook. Council to have ongoing involvement with these active, local types of groups, such as Northern Beaches Mums ( a Facebook group)..	Organisations based on or funded for the Northern Beaches to have one free month listing (as a one off) on the council website, linked via Social media.
Also look at leveraging relationships with organisations with strong community presence.	The neighbour support cards are fantastic. It would be great to highlight further "neighbour engagement" post restrictions. For example: place some milk crates across our court entry and all wheel our bbq's out to the court on Australia day for a big court bbq and the kids all play in the street. I'm not suggesting everyone do this, but highlighting any relationships made during this crisis would be nice.
Ways to access what new skills may be needed by businesses resulting from changes they have made during the lockdown.	Neighbourhood cards on asking if people want to volunteer. List of programs on the card that need volunteers.
Still need to look at and consider mail box drop as there is a significant amount of community members reliant on mail and reluctant to be online.	A post COVID-19 "walk" would also be a great community activity. perhaps replicate the Dee Why to Manly fun run as a "Post COVID -19 Amble"
Acknowledging the contribution of those businesses that provided community support such as the Harris Farm.	Video on council website on how to access webinars. STEP BY STEP.
Rotary and Lions are probably underutilised but they have good organisational expertise and have insurance.  Bus campaigns	<p>There are various bodies which have members such as Northern Beaches soccer, rugby, league, tennis etc; that will be coming alive as sports get going again. They are insured and used to co-ordinating stuff with their members.</p> <p>There's Men's Shed and RFS etc.</p> <p>A big source of energy in the community is young people, both school age and in their 20's and 30's.</p> <p>Good opportunity to start something there in these times when there are real needs. An organisation that I've been heavily involved with in the past, the Australian Water Association, has been saved from disappearing by the energy of the Young Water Professionals over the last 20 years.</p>

<p>Webinars on psychological strategies to support businesses when interacting with customers.</p>	<p>Assistance with technology - eg establishing web pages as many older people in particular are hesitant to use Facebook and groups cannot always fund a platform or associated fees. E.g. "How to create a webpage for your community group" info page"</p> <p>Webinar on Funding grants - applications are difficult to discuss via email or phone and many do not have access to other communication methods. Gladly accept suggestions as often the best grant applications come from open brainstorming sessions.</p>
<p>Encourage businesses to collaborate and partner with each other to create an excitement in their industry to attract more clients back to their sector. For example: Coffee shop with a barber shop and get a haircut and a coffee.</p> <p>Council grant to cover some costs of delivery through Uber Eats and others to ensure properly registered food businesses continue to thrive?</p> <p>Entertainment book for beaches businesses only? Vouchers with \$5 off.</p> <p>Free input in to the 'voucher book' for businesses and consumers to pay a small cost to be donated to perhaps homelessness or something of the like.</p>	<p>Partnerships – continue working with the established community organisations and encourage support of these established groups rather than setting up additional smaller groups.</p> <p>Support the volunteers who give an incredible amount of time, energy and often their money for their community involvement. We have a lot of very generous people on the Northern Beaches!</p>
<p>"FoodiesTrail" / "OpenGardens" style events, not just for food, but perhaps in other industries, People having a bit of a day out, talking to others whilst becoming aware of what local businesses are doing.</p>	
<p>Council provide advice / support for interactions with the newly appointed NSW Small Business Commissioner (press release on last page) and establish a relationship with Chris Lamont.</p> <p>Simplified approvals process or information sourcing i.e. regulations, applications etc especially when cafés, bars and restaurants and still comply with social distancing.</p>	