



# Balranald Shire Council

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### *Review & Restructure*

Phase 2 sessions, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020

The revised  
Advisory  
Committee  
structure  
'needs to  
be'?

SUCCESSFUL  
OPEN-COMMUNICATION  
REPRESENTATIVE  
ENTHUSIASTIC  
EQUITABLE  
CARING PROUD POSITIVE  
COMMUNITY-FOCUSSED  
HEARD OPEN-MINDED  
PROACTIVE  
TRANSPARENT  
EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK  
RESPECTFUL  
FUTURE-FOCUSSED HONEST  
PRODUCTIVE



# CODE OF CONDUCT

- ✓ We are here to **hear from you**
- ✓ **Respect for all comments** – add positively, disagree politely, do not be disrespectful
- ✓ **Value everyone's thoughts** – different perspectives = a fuller picture
- ✓ Whilst we can **learn from the past we won't dwell there**. We are focussed on making this change positive, achieving the best possible for all residents
- ✓ Ask **questions at any stage** – these will be captured and collated for response at various stages within the session
- ✓ Would you like to add another expectation of behaviour?



# BACKGROUND

- ✓ On the 29 January 2020 Balranald Shire Council went into Administration - Councillors were removed as our elected representatives
- ✓ **BSC remains under administration until Council elections in Sept 2024**
- ✓ During Administration BSC does not have to maintain the existing Advisory Committee model – HOWEVER **leadership at BSC see these Advisory Committees as even more important during this time**
- ✓ To be sure ACs meet the needs of our changing area we need to review the existing structure. The new Advisory Committees – the Committees we develop with you – will stay in operation until the election (4.5 years)
- ✓ Advisory Committees are BSCs most **sustained and formal way of hearing from, and being guided by YOU, the Shire community.** They are ‘Your voice to Council’ now and into the future



# BACKGROUND

- ✓ Council Advisory Committees put forward recommendations to Council regarding important decisions relevant to topic area/knowledge. These **recommendations are considered by Council but could not be enforced**. This principle continues
- ✓ **Opportunities for change include:** the **Committee STRUCTURE** (i.e. the different AC names and focus areas), and the **Committee PROCESSES - when and how committees meet, their membership etc**
- ✓ Council is also renewing its Community Strategic Plan (CSP). Community consultation re the CSP is yet to happen but CSPs tend to have four key focus areas – **Economy, Environment, Governance and Society**. Advisory Committees will have a role in driving the strategic intent of the CSP



**Questions from the group?**



# Last week we asked questions to help us understand - **WHAT Advisory Committees SHOULD EXIST (structure) and HOW they SHOULD WORK (process)**

**To continue to be a place where you wish to live, work and relax – what must the Balranald Shire area and communities:**

- ✓ Look / feel like?
- ✓ Achieve / work towards?
- ✓ Offer you and the people you care about?

**If you are currently a member of a Council Advisory Committee or other volunteer group (or have been in the past):**

- ✓ What factors have ensured your group worked well and achieved?
- ✓ What factors might have prevented you from achieving?
- ✓ For you to want to be part of the new AC structure please share a word or comment about what it 'needs to be' or 'how it needs to work' (e.g. organised, fair, productive.....)

# PROCESS – how to work



There was agreement that Advisory Committees ‘mostly work well’ - the model ‘has good bones, but some areas need work’.

Building on these strengths, honouring the enduring hard work of many members and evolving Advisory Committees to overcome identified challenges and barriers was central to the focus.

# Two-way communication – open, transparent and responsive

Simple 'reporting structure' TO COUNCIL = recommendations captured and 'fed in' AND a structure and commitment that COUNCIL ALWAYS FED BACK. Creation of 'live' document for each AC = can be searched for key words at times of decision making by Council. AC efforts not lost or wasted.

*"Reports back to committees after council meetings detailing decisions/feedback on committee recommendations to council."*

*"Communication! Co-operation! These two factors are how the youth council has achieved success in our events like pool parties and youth week!"*

*"There is a culture of poor communication between Council and the community...  
Advisory Committees should be a conduit, not thwarted or ignored"*

*"When Council overrides a Committee recommendation we need to know why...  
If there is a good reason we can accept that, otherwise we just feel our time has  
been wasted – I mean why ask us if you are not going to listen!"*

*"People make stuff up if there is a lack of communication – the closure of the Interpretive Centre is a classic example of this – this could have all been avoided with good, open communication"*

# Synergy between Advisory Committees (and with community groups)

Importance of Advisory Committees working better together = form an Executive of AC Chairs and a commitment from each AC to send a guest 'deputation' to another AC 'on request'. The new AC structure also needs to show a clear connect to existing community groups = who are the community groups an AC might seek information from / or which AC would a group go to with an idea.

*"It would be great to see greater co-operation between committees, committees working together would deliver a greater consensus on ideas, and a wider range of ideas!"*

*"As a parent of a child with a disability I don't feel there is any connection between members of our community who have a disability and our local council and health & disability services."*

*"perhaps we could have an online forum for community ideas so people can have a space to share ideas... it just needs to be easy for people to put up ideas to any relevant Committees"*

# Clear and simple recruitment processes

Increased transparency re recruiting AC members including both the advertised EOI process (occurring post Council elections) and also the process for recruiting and inducting new members mid-term.

Challenges in recruiting members means recruitment must be clear, simple and achievable. Strengthened induction ensures clear understanding of the role and expectations. AC members must have Council's volunteer coverage.

*"There needs to be an easy, simple, streamlined method to enable Community members to join Volunteer Committee's"*

# Clear Mandate and Resourcing

Advisory Committees must understand both their broad mandate (e.g. the weight of their recommendations) and their focus or context mandate (topic area of influence). Clear rules for AC resourcing – monetary and in-kind. Clear governance model, readily available and referenced as needed - notably at key transition points and times of contention.

Council and Committees need to learn healthy productive ways of working together – both sides have responsibilities and roles to play

*"Committees that normally have teeth have been dropped out of the system..... Without Councillors it is more important than ever to have Advisory Committees with teeth"*

*"If the Shire wants this to work then they needs to work at it too – and the crux is communication"*

*"Good governance means Committees are not left to flounder or are 'shut out' from their focus areas."*

# Strategic and Responsive

AC should be guided by a rolling action plan they have developed (with support if needed) and own. Action Plans should be developed by each AC at each new term (post Councillor elections) and have an annual or biennial review to refresh and ensure ongoing currency.

*“In the past the Tourism Committee had a Rolling Action Plan in place which worked really well. This plan provided a clear picture of projects ideas, outcomes, gave a timeline of steps involved with each project, costing etc. It formed a practical working guide between the Council Coordinator for a particular committee and the committee itself. Minute taking was also simplified. Every so often a “Think Tank” meeting of ideas contributed perfectly to the ongoing Action Plan.”*

*“I have also been on many volunteer groups but one of the best is the Motorcross Club. A small group all working with the same vision, cohesive, support each other but biggest plus is strong governance”*

# Hinged to a staff member

ACs clearly valued being connected to a Council staff member who was consistent and knowledgeable. When staff members changed there was frustration regarding 'gaps' in ACs being allocated a new 'support person' and the lack of handover between staff.

*“Advisory Groups need to be hinged to someone within Council that they can go to knowing that that person has the authority that the Committee needs example Viv in Tourism and Community”*

*“There is a high staff turnover within Council and often no handover between staff (because of recruitment gaps or lack of time) – as a result our work and ideas get ‘lost’”*

# Connected and integral to relevant Council plans

ACs expressed a desire to more fully inform the Council planning process, particularly within their focus areas.

*“Council has developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan in the last few years, it’s a pretty document but I don’t feel any changes came as a result of the Plan. I feel as a positive moving forward a platform for people living with a disability in our community via the new advisory committee structure would be a great benefit to Council and our community.”*

# PROCESS – how to work (last thoughts)

- ✓ Promotion & recognition – Advisory Committees will thrive with greater promotion and community recognition. All groups need that. Promotion will have the added advantage of encouraging broader, stronger recruitment.
- ✓ Full and diverse representation – to truly represent our communities Advisory Committees must be representative of our communities.
- ✓ Code of Conduct – for Advisory Committee members and staff representatives. Clear parameters are set regarding behaviour.
- ✓ Building a culture of success and teamwork – Committees need to learn how to work together and succeed. Some do this organically and others need more formal support. Staged ‘Health Checks’ with committees re operation and outcomes. Dedicated training in identified areas.
- ✓ Simplifying ‘red tape’



# STRUCTURE – what to be

We are mindful that not hearing about a certain area of focus or priority does NOT mean it is not key to our Advisory Committee structure moving forwards - as we have not heard from our whole community.

So, in the absence of hearing the full breadth of community voice, we (Council) will continue to advocate in those areas we know to be critical in a Shire that is creating opportunities for individual, group, community, business and environmental health, wellbeing, growth and development.



# STRUCTURE – what to be

**Highly valued focus areas** – including tourism, beautification, employment and economic development, the importance of supporting our children and young people, the importance of community growth and connection (and the human and physical infrastructure to support connection), equity in service delivery (benefits to all in terms of access, safety etc includes factors such as roads and footpaths, access to all community facilities)

*“it would be great to see with the advisory committee restructure that a committee could be created in the form of say social and community welfare that could link all our services together.”*

# STRUCTURE – what to be



AC Structure must connect to community needs, values and passion (broadly understood and represented)

*“Efforts should be central to the things we care about, our identity  
– arts, culture, football, motoX”*

*“.... it would be great if residents with disabilities could have a platform where their needs and concerns could be voiced.... I feel as a positive moving forward a platform for people living with a disability in our community via the new advisory committee structure would be a great benefit to Council and our community.”*

*“The mental health of our communities is just so important....”*



# STRUCTURE – what to be

**Group Structures need to be fluid enough to be responsive to evolving needs** – some ideas / topics go across a range of ACs. For example, an idea for public art could be considered within Beautification, Arts & Culture, Tourism, Youth. ACs need a clear vision and purpose but flexibility to respond.



# STRUCTURE – what to be

Structure needs to reflect natural synergies, be logical

*“the Tourism Committee should interact with the Caravan Park Committee, it should be interacting with the Beautification Committee....”*

*“Beautification is more than rocks and roses, it should be working with Tourism....”*



# STRUCTURE – what to be

- ✓ The DRAFT structure below is a FIRST attempt
- ✓ It is based on everything you have said to us AND
- ✓ What we know about our community members who have not yet been involved in this process
- ✓ We expect you to think critically about this draft – in fact we need you to
- ✓ THINK - to create the best possible Shire FOR ALL RESIDENTS  
what must the Advisory Committee structure BE and DO

Community Strategic Plan 2020-2029 (DRAFT)	<u>Suggested</u> BSC Advisory Committee Infrastructure	<u>Alignment to Current</u> BSC Advisory Committee Infrastructure
<p><b>GOVERNANCE (CIVIC LEADERSHIP)</b> VISION - ASPIRE TO AND DELIVER THE BEST GOVERNANCE AND DECISIONS POSSIBLE IN ALL ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT BALRANALD SHIRE</p>	<p><u>Executive of Chairs</u> (strategic visioning group formed from leadership of each Advisory Committee)</p> <p><u>Youth Leadership</u></p>	<p>Youth Council Advisory Committee</p>
<p><b>ECONOMY</b> VISION – STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ECONOMY</p>	<p><u>Business (&amp; Asset) Leadership and Growth</u> (existing and new businesses inc. Tourism, brand and marketing, physical and knowledge infrastructure) Including cultural and heritage elements in ‘Assets’.</p> <p><u>Enabling Industry</u> (capitalising on the Region’s mineral and solar endowments, skilled local trades and employment potential and encouraging environmentally responsible development) Importance of equity in wealth accumulation and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Balranald Tourism Advisory Committee</p> <p>Euston Beautification and Tourism Committee</p> <p>Cultural Advisory Committee</p> <p>(previously Council Committees of Economic Development and Infrastructure Development??)</p>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b> VISION - ACHIEVE OUTSTANDING RESULTS IN MANAGING, ENHANCING AND IMPROVING AND NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p><u>Environment-led Growth &amp; Development</u> (understanding, protecting and optimising land and water assets, awareness of climate change, environmental impact and strategies to circumvent)</p> <p><u>Public Spaces, Amenity, Identity and Safety</u> Including Recreation, Connection and Leisure</p>	<p>Balranald Beautification Advisory Committee</p> <p>Euston Beautification and Tourism Committee</p> <p>Community Safety Advisory (precinct) Committee</p> <p>Cultural Advisory Committee</p>
<p><b>SOCIETY</b> VISION – BALRANALD SHIRE IS THE BEST-POSSIBLE COMMUNITY TO LIVE, WORK, INVEST AND VISIT</p>	<p><u>Health, Wellbeing, Education, Equity and Inclusion Collective</u> (reps from MPS, Hostel, Schools, TAFE, key visiting health and wellbeing services [RDHS??], FWAHS ..... Working Group for Australia Day committee</p> <p><u>Hostel Management and Development</u> (Chair sits on above group)</p>	<p>Australia Day Advisory Committee</p> <p>Balranald Retirement Hostel Advisory Committee</p>



# CLOSING COMMENTS & WHERE NEXT

- ✓ We now have your thoughts from sessions on the 6<sup>th</sup> and today
- ✓ People have also followed up with Gavin & I via emails and phone calls
- ✓ The Survey will soon be live – watch Council website and fb page for the link
- ✓ We have a growing sense of both WHAT Advisory Committees there SHOULD BE (structure) and HOW they SHOULD WORK (process)
- ✓ You can continue to comment on the fb feeds, email or call us and /or jump online and complete the survey
- ✓ All your knowledge, experiences and insights will be used to continue drafting the AC Structure and Processes – these will go to Council for endorsement at their May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting
- ✓ Public comment on this Structure will occur between late May and mid-June – again you can comment on what looks right and might need to change

**Once again - thank you for sharing your knowledge to create the 'community voice' infrastructure critical in guiding Council decisions for the next 4 years**