

PRESENT

Members:

Councillor Rob Turner (Chair)
Councillor Geoff Hawkins (Deputy Chair)
Paul Dawson
Anthony Thorne
Kate Wood-Foye
Ross Cargill
Peter Halliwell
Jane Evans
Michelle Love
Kellon Beard

Other Attendees:

Craig Swift-McNair (PMHC General Manager)
Jeffery Sharp (PMHC Director Strategy and Growth)
Liesa Davies (PMHC Group Manager Economic & Cultural Development)
David Archer (Senior Economic Development Officer)

The meeting opened at 8:34am.

01 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Acknowledgement of Country was delivered.

02 APOLOGIES

CONSENSUS:

That the apologies received from Hadyn Oriti and Kelly King be accepted.

03 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

CONSENSUS:

That the Minutes of the Economic Development Steering Group Meeting held on 11 March 2020 be confirmed.

04 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest presented.

05 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

CONSENSUS:

That the information provided be noted and items closed with any further updates to the Group to be provided as appropriate.

06 SUBMISSION - CLIMATE CHANGE AS A MATTER OF ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Group Manager Economic and Cultural Development and General Manager talked to the submission from Ms Rachel Sheppard "Climate change as a matter of economic significance" and other representations on climate change and sustainability more broadly. The General Manger noted the draft 2020-2021 Operational Plan which will be considered by Council on 17 June 2020 includes the development of a Port Macquarie-Hastings Sustainability Strategy and the recruitment of a new Sustainability Officer.

The Group considered and discussed the submission and shared varying views on the submission, Council and the EDSG role, potential consideration of climate change and sustainability matters by this and other levels of government (in various frameworks), and potential further engagement with the community on these matters. There was broad agreement that the EDSG is not the appropriate Group to be taking such matters forward to Council but that the Group was a stakeholder when Council is looking to develop a framework for decision making around climate change and sustainability ie the development of the proposed Sustainability Strategy.

The Chair read an email (attached to the minutes) from Hadyn Oriti whilst considering the matter and prior to reaching consensus.

CONSENSUS:

That the Group note future engagement will occur with the EDSG during the development of Council's Sustainability Strategy, which is planned as part of the (draft) 2020-2021 Operational Plan.

07 COVID IMPACT - INSIGHTS TO DATE

Council's Senior Economic Development Officer presented an overview of data gathered on COVID impacts at a State and local level and that this will continue to be monitored and updates presented to the Group, as appropriate. Whilst the implications are severe in some industries, the data shows business confidence has improved since the initial impact. Potential reasons for positivity were also noted as potential 'bounce back' in regional tourism; opportunity for relocators to bring their job and work from home; the ability of local businesses to change their business model successfully; and our regional is well-placed for significant infrastructure investment.

The Director Strategy and Growth noted recent conversations regarding around COVID-19 recovery and whether Council should also be considering business incentives to support business growth, investment and relocation. Members were invited to share their views on what would be appropriate/effective in this regard via email and will discuss at the next EDSG Recovery Sub-Group meeting.

CONSENSUS:

That the Group:

1. Note the impacts of COVID-19, as understood at the present time.
2. Provide input on potential Council-offered business incentives via email to the Group Manager Economic & Cultural Development.

08 LOCAL ECONOMIC/BUSHFIRE RECOVERY UPDATES

The Director Strategy and Growth noted the progress in allocation of State and Federal bushfire funding to a diverse range of Council and community-led projects, including those by local Chambers of Commerce and community groups. He also flagged the likelihood of additional funding linked to priorities in the Hastings-Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy, for which a post-bushfire addendum was recently completed. The General Manager noted the ongoing operation of the Mid North Coast Recovery Committee and the release of the Charles Sturt University-Mid North Coast Joint Organisation scholarships (59 in total) in leadership and community resilience and encouraged members to consider the opportunity which closes on 18 June 2020.

CONSENSUS:

That the Group note the update provided by staff regarding bushfire recovery priorities and progress.

09 2020 PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

CONSENSUS:

That the Group note planning for the 2020 Port Macquarie-Hastings Business Confidence Survey.

10 GENERAL BUSINESS

10.01 RESIGNATION OF GENERAL MANAGER

On behalf of the Group, the Chair thanked the General Manager for his support and commitment to the Economic Development Steering Group and noted the value he had added over many years.

The meeting closed at 10:01am.