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## Minutes of the Billilla Advisory Committee Meeting

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held at Billilla Mansion  
26 Halifax Street, Brighton  
on Wednesday 13 December 2023

The Meeting commenced at 5.00pm

### 1. Welcome and opening of the meeting

The Chair, Cr Alex del Porto welcomed members and officers to the meeting and declared the meeting open at 5.00pm.

### Acknowledgement of Country

The Manager Governance read the acknowledgement of the original inhabitants of this land:

- ◆ Bayside City Council proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging as well as any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community members with us today.

### 2. Present

#### Councillors

Cr Alex del Porto (Chair)  
Cr Hanna El Mouallem

#### Community representatives

Barry Smith	Margot Burke
Adam Dunning	Ruth Bain
Theodora Jenkin	Peter Kharsas
Charles Reis	Gayle Wilson
Ms Kate Harman	Louise Cooper-Shaw

#### Officers

Terry Callant – Manager Governance  
David Nankervis – Acting Manager Arts, Culture and Libraries  
Giacomina Pradolini – Arts and Culture Coordinator  
Nicole Reuben – Coordinator Capital Developments

### **Quorum for the meeting**

Fourteen members have been appointed to the Committee. The quorum of a meeting is a majority of members plus one Councillor representative must be present. Therefore a quorum is 8 members.

A quorum for this meeting was reached with 10 community members, and 2 Councillor representatives present.

### **3. Apologies**

An apology was received from Mr Craig Jackett.

**Moved: Cr El Muallem**

**Seconded: Mr Reis**

That the apology of Mr Craig Jackett be received and leave of absence be granted.

**CARRIED**

*It was noted that Mr Thomas Stamp was not present at the meeting and did not submit an apology to the meeting.*

### **4. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest of any Councillor**

There were no conflicts of interest submitted to the meeting.

### **5. Adoption and Confirmation of the minutes of previous meeting**

#### **5.1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Billilla Advisory Committee Meeting held on 26 October 2023.**

**Moved: Cr El Muallem**

**Seconded: Ms Cooper-Shaw**

That the minutes of the Billilla Advisory Committee Meeting held on 26 October 2023, as previously circulated, be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings subject to an alternation to the minutes to reflect that an apology was received from member Gayle Wilson.

**CARRIED**

## 6. Reports

### 6.1 OUTSTANDING BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD

Corporate Services - Governance  
File No: PSF/23/167 – Doc No: DOC/23/338237

The Acting Manager Arts, Culture and Libraries presented the business brought forward report. And outlined some of the responses pertaining to the actions.

The Committee discussed the previous Planning Permit conditions for Billilla when it was a reception centre. The Committee require further research on the current existing permit conditions of Billilla as a School for education purposes.

The Committee also expressed a desire to be more informed of all activities undertaken at Billilla.

**Moved: Mr Smith**

**Seconded: Mr Dunning**

That the Billilla Advisory Committee noted the summary of outstanding actions.

**CARRIED**

### 6.2 BILLILLA GARDENS ACTIVATION - PROGRAM REPORT

Community and Customer Experience - Libraries, Customer and Cultural Services  
File No: FOL/23/255 – Doc No: DOC/23/352309

The Arts and Culture Coordinator presented a report on the activation of the Billilla Gardens for 2024 including proposed activities for the period January to June 2024:

The 23/24 annual budget for programming at Billilla is \$25,000. The budget covers all programmed activity by the Arts and Culture team including the Jazz Concert, and all upcoming events. There have been some savings identified in the 23/24 Billilla Activation Budget which will be diverted into programming, providing a once-off boost to funding for 2023/24 FY.

#### Opera Under the Stars (working title)

Building on the success of Opera in the Gardens at Kamesburgh held earlier this year, Parlour Opera will delight audiences in the gardens at Billilla in February 2024. *The Parlour's* principal artists will perform a variety of opera highlights to thrill and enchant audiences. The songs and arias are introduced by the singers themselves as they share fun and entertaining anecdotes from the operatic world and their experiences on stage.

#### The Art Arboreum (working title only)

Taking its inspiration from the Garden Party held at Billilla in 2022, this event will be held on Saturday 13 April 2024. Themed around the gardens and the magnificent trees of Billilla, this event promises to once again welcome the community back to the gardens and celebrate the rich heritage of the property. Artists from diverse genres and styles will be located throughout the gardens and gazebo, but particularly under the trees. There will be on site food options as well as locations for people to picnic as they meander around the

gardens and engage with a variety of art forms al fresco. Working with our colleagues in Libraries, a range of children's activities will also be presented.

#### Artists 'outdoor studios' (working title)

The Billilla Artists Studio program has been running for 15 years in Bayside, and will temporarily conclude at the end of 2023 while the Billilla house and studios undergo refurbishment. This program has brought 7 artists each year into the Bayside Arts community, providing both support for artists as well as access to diverse artforms and practice for the broader community. Studio artists have been supplementing the existing arts program for little cost as it is a requirement for each artist to provide a public access program such as a workshop, performance or talk annually as part of the free studio space.

The temporary loss of these studios will be keenly felt through the Bayside arts community as well as the community broadly. In response, we are exploring the idea of providing space outdoors to develop site specific works, spatial sound and theatre/dance works on the grounds of Billilla with some painting and visual arts included i.e. plein air artists. Ideally the focus will be on performative and exploratory works that benefit from being created outside. The intent is to have a series of curated outdoor activation programs throughout the year, aiming for 4-5 'residencies' of 1-2 weeks duration over the year.

This project is inspired in part by the City of Melbourne Test Sites program, creating opportunities for public art to be tested in situ in a low stakes environment. This may also lead to the development of works that can be incorporated into Bayside Arts public art and activation projects across public spaces in Bayside.

#### Billilla Oral History project

Working with oral historians, local residents will be interviewed to create a podcast series about the History of Billilla. We will make it available on a number of platforms and via QR code on signage in the gardens.

#### Future Opportunities

In line with the following Objective of the Committee:

- *identify opportunities for programming at Billilla in line with Council adopted future uses*

Committee members are invited to submit suggested opportunities for programming at the Committee meeting. Council officers will consider the suggestions submitted when planning future programming to ensure a well curated and balanced program is put in place for the Committee to recommend to Council.

A 2024/25 program of events will be presented to the Billilla Advisory Committee at the first meeting of 2024.

The Arts and Gallery Coordinator also advised the Committee that local artist, Anne Ross, has proposed to donate the 3 sculptural works 'She gave me a daisy' currently installed in the front gardens of Billilla to Bayside Council. The community has responded well to the works and they are an excellent addition to the Public Art component of the Bayside Arts & Heritage Collection, and accord with relevant Council policy. The donation has been considered by the Bayside Arts and Gallery Advisory Committee and they are supportive and have a proposed a recommendation to Council to accept the proposed donation.

The Committee also raised concerns regarding the marketing of activities at Billilla and indicated that the marketing reach should be far and wide across the municipality. The Committee also expressed a desire to be more informed of all activities undertaken at Billilla.

**Moved: Ms Jenkin**

**Seconded: Mr Reis**

That the Billilla Advisory Committee

1. noted the Billilla Gardens Activation Progress report
2. recommends that Council approves the donation of the work by artist, Anne Ross 'She gave me a daisy' and accepts the significant donation by Anne Ross
3. approves the current siting of the work 'She gave me a daisy' at Billilla for a minimum of 2 years after which time the location will be reviewed and a recommendation as to the permanent location will be submitted to Council.

**CARRIED**

### **6.3 CAPITAL WORKS UPDATE - BILLILLA MANSION**

Environment, Recreation and Infrastructure - Project Services  
File No: PSF/22/9954 – Doc No: DOC/23/367711

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The Coordinator Capital Developments advised the Committee that a Head Consultant has now been appointed to commence the planning of works. Lovell Chan were the successful tenderer who are very reputable heritage consultants.

Lovell Chen have prepared a preliminary schedule of work focussed on advancing the external amenities.

#### External Amenities

Phase 1 - Concept (Including development, presentation to Council, modification to concept (if required) and then Quantity Survey (Budget Estimate), will be completed prior to Heritage Victoria Pre-Application.

Phase 2 – Detailed documentation and Heritage Victoria Impact Statement. At this stage, some time will be allowed for the Heritage Victoria lodgement and permit application review time. The project team will work with Heritage Victoria in pre-application to resolve as many issues as possible, as early as possible, aiming to reduce the time taken for Heritage Victoria Permit Approval.

Phase 3 – Involves Tender, Evaluation, Award, Building Permit Issue and then Construction. The timing of this phase of the works is largely dependent on the time required by Heritage Victoria to assess the application.

#### Outbuildings

Outbuilding investigations will be prioritised to determine whether the artist studio program can recommence as soon as possible.

Main Building

Initial investigations, consolidated consultant reports to match compliance requirements with the Strategic Plan outcomes, initial engagement with Heritage Victoria and ultimately the production of a master schedule will inform the next phase of work.

Concept Design and approval to proceed with Heritage Victoria Pre-Application will precede Heritage Victoria Impact Statement submission and advertising period.

**NOTED**

That the Billilla Advisory Committee noted the report on the capital works progress.

**6.4 BILLILLA STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN**

Community and Customer Experience - Libraries, Cultural and Customer Services  
 File No: FOL/23/255 – Doc No: DOC/23/364006

The Acting Manager Arts, Culture and Libraries presented the final draft of the Billilla Strategic Business Plan for the committee’s consideration. The Officer highlighted the key changes since the previous draft which include:

- *Information included on the potential role and utilisation of volunteers*
- *Staffing and associated costs narrowed to one model, and aligned the roles to the potential operating timelines*
- *Rectified some formatting and text including the facility ‘zones’*
- *Added information in ‘finances’ recognising that these are total operating costs, not all new costs, and that there are existing operating costs already at the facility (these are noted in the Report)*

The Committee requested that section 3.8.1 – Governance Table 3 be amended to reflect the support of the Billilla Advisory Committee:

<b>Direct Management</b>	<b>Outsourced/arms length</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Council line management</i></li> <li>• <i>Council supported by the Billilla Advisory Committee</i></li> <li>• <i>Business Unit of Council</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholly-owned subsidiary (as at Ballarat Art Gallery, Brisbane Powerhouse and Gold Coast Arts Centre, with Council as sole member or shareholder.</li> <li>• New, customised non-profit (as at City Recital Hall, Sydney and Shepparton Art Museum), with Council having control over some or all board appointments.</li> <li>• Existing non-profit (as at Wollongong, where Merrigong Theatre was contracted to operate Illawara Performing Arts Centre).</li> </ul>

**Moved: Ms Jenkin**

**Seconded: Mr Smith**

That the Billilla Advisory Committee endorses the updated draft Billilla Strategic Business Plan, subject to the following inclusion relating to Section 3.8.1. – Table 3 to read:

Direct Management	Outsourced/arms length
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Council line management</i></li> <li>• <b>Council supported by the Billilla Advisory Committee</b></li> <li>• <i>Business Unit of Council</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholly-owned subsidiary (as at Ballarat Art Gallery, Brisbane Powerhouse and Gold Coast Arts Centre, with Council as sole member or shareholder.</li> <li>• New, customised non-profit (as at City Recital Hall, Sydney and Shepparton Art Museum), with Council having control over some or all board appointments.</li> <li>• Existing non-profit (as at Wollongong, where Merrigong Theatre was contracted to operate Illawara Performing Arts Centre).</li> </ul>

And that the Billilla Advisory Committee recommends to Council that the operational approach outlined in this plan is used to inform subsequent capital and operational planning for the site, subject to Council's budget considerations and processes.

**CARRIED**

## 6.5 REVIEW OF BILLILLA ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHARTER

Corporate Services - Governance

File No: PSF/23/167 – Doc No: DOC/23/373735

The Manager Governance tabled a review of the Committee's Charter and highlighted some additional changes including the term of members.

The Manager Governance also suggested two other proposed changes as a result of feedback from other Committee's including:

- *reference that membership of the Committee must consist of a majority of Bayside residents.*
- *Minutes of meeting must be circulated to all members in 5 days following the approval by the Chair of the meeting.*

### NOTED

That the Billilla Advisory Committee notes the report on the draft Billilla Advisory Committee Charter 2023 (Attachment 1) and supports the draft Charter with the inclusion of the following clauses:

- *reference that membership of the Committee must consist of a majority of Bayside residents.*
- *Minutes of meeting must be circulated to all members in 5 days following the approval by the Chair of the meeting.*

## 7. General Business

### 7.1 Foundation proposal

Committee Member Charles Reis presented a general business matter seeking the establishment of a Billilla Foundation with a view to generate philanthropic support.

Whilst the Advisory Committee was very supportive of the proposal it was suggested to obtain legal advice pertaining to the establishment of a foundation including the statutory requirements and Deductible Gift Recipient status.

**Moved: Mr Reis**

**Seconded Ms Burke**

That the Billilla Advisory Committee recommends Council obtains a legal opinion on the legal implications and obligations associated with establishing a Foundation for Billilla to provide general philanthropic support and a Deductible Gift Recipient endorsement by the ATO.

**CARRIED**

### 7.2 Establishment of a “Friends of Billilla”

Committee Member Margot Burke presented a general business item to consider a proposal for the establishment of a “Friends of Billilla” voluntary organisation.

The Advisory Committee were all supportive of the proposal. Council Officers present at the meeting suggested that Council has a suite of information to assist the community in setting up groups, including incorporation, voluntary recruitment, Working with Children checks etc.. It was suggested that Officers report back to a future meeting on the requirement in establishing a “friends of Billilla”.

**Moved: Ms Burke**

**Seconded Mr Reis**

That the Billilla Advisory Committee receive a report at a future meeting on the requirements associated with the establishment of a “Friends of Billilla” including format, modelling of the report, reporting and legal requirements.

**CARRIED**

## 8. Confirmation of date of future meetings

The following meeting dates are proposed for 2024:

- Thursday 14 March 2024 at 5.00pm
- Thursday 13 June 2024 at 5.00pm
- Thursday 12 September 2024 at 5.00pm
- Thursday 12 December 2024 at 5.00pm

*The Chair Cr del Porto declared the meeting closed at 6.38pm.*