

# Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee MINUTES



Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023

## Chairperson

Cr Johanna Skelton

## Members present

Jess Rae (YRC), Kym Saunders (YRC), Suzanne Burville (YRC), Graeme George (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Peter Martin (member), Jonathan Gay (member), Bec Brannigan (member), Merryn Kelly (DELWP), Ross Bleazby (Melbourne Water),

## Apologies

Cr Tim Heenan, Lucy Gilchrist (member), Mel Carmody (Melbourne Water), Tom Meek (YRC), Clinton Muller (member), Graham Brew (YRC), Amanda Smith (YRC), Darren Wandin (member), Joanne Antrobus (Parks Vic)

## Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

Moved: Graeme George

Seconded: Melanie Birtchnell

## Declaration of interest

None

Outstanding Actions		
ACTION	<p>Schedule Biodiversity subcommittee meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Nature Plan</li> </ul> <p><i>Amanda will schedule a meeting once the Nature Plan has gone to the Executive Leadership Team.</i></p> <p><i>Cr Skelton will invite councillors.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dixons Creek – Cultural Burn</li> </ul> <p><i>Completed. During the firestick programming another site will be determined for visit.</i></p>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	<p>Progress data set from DELWP (now DEECA) and discuss as subcommittee Biodiversity working group.</p> <p><i>Completed, will be part of Nature plan and Biolinks project</i></p>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	<p>Schedule Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act presentation (potentially a joint presentation by DELWP (now DEECA) on policy and YRC on how it affects council).</p> <p><i>Completed. Scheduled for June meeting.</i></p>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	<p>Arrange for a representative from the State Gov offset team to present at SEAC &amp;/or the Biodiversity Subcommittee.</p> <p><i>Completed. Will be scheduled as part of biodiversity sub-committee meeting</i></p>	Merryn Kelly/Amanda Smith
ACTION	<p>Check biochar and carbon drawdown references in the Sustainability Report 2021 and Council website.</p> <p><i>Pending: Julian will address this at the June meeting.</i></p>	Jess Rae/Julian Guess

ACTION	Consider including the Firestick program as a future topic. <i>Completed. Moved to upcoming topics.</i>	Jess Rae
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New Actions		
ACTION	Supply Community Garden Guidelines	Kym Saunders
ACTION	Follow up on further information requests Biodiversity Offset Program Review	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Tree Canopy Strategy update	Jess Rae
ACTION	Provide update on Preparing Australian Communities funding, regarding Fuel Management Officer	Jess Rae
ACTION	Provide update on private property audit by Graeme Lorimer	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Investigate replacements for members who have resigned	Jess Rae

1. Agency Updates
<b>Ross Bleazby (Melbourne Water), Merryn Kelly (DEECA)</b>
<p>Melbourne Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Incentives Projects – Healthy Land, Healthy Horses</li> <li>• Yarra River autumn fresh flow release</li> <li>• Willow removal along middle Stringybark</li> </ul> <p>Department Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liwik Barring landscape conservation area update</li> <li>• New website for the Weeds and Pests on Public Land Program</li> <li>• Select Committee on Victoria's Recreational Native Bird Hunting Arrangements</li> <li>• Helmeted Honeyeater program bird release in late April</li> </ul>

2. Food Systems Program Development – Kym Saunders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intention is to increase sustainable food production within the Yarra Ranges that stays in the Yarra Ranges</li> <li>• Gardens for Harvest program</li> <li>• Community gardens</li> <li>• Supporting YR food producers</li> <li>• Large landowners</li> <li>• Food to retail</li> <li>• Leases</li> <li>• Next steps and staff resourcing</li> </ul> <p>Comments</p> <p>We could do more to promote the Gardens for Harvest program and growing food at home. Need to link in with schools. Have we identified what food we aren't growing in the region?</p> <p>People with skills who don't have land could be supplied housing to live on large properties, however, council approval is needed to do this. Revegetation needed to protect market gardens.</p> <p>Getting access to land is expensive – need other models, however, there are too many regulations. Small scale food production companies face excessive regulations which make it prohibitive cost-wise. Council needs to relax regulations for small food producers.</p>

Council used to have a permit for B&Bs, there is also something called Farm Stay which may be better suited for landholders allowing others to stay on their land.

Yarra Ranges Council Community Garden Guidelines is mentioned in the policy but has not been supplied.

Public liability insurance (paid by Council) will be extended to cover community gardens.

There are various food producers who would be keen for Council to back a boutique food trail to help boost tourism.

Organic producers can't compete on price/aesthetics.

People need to be taught how to eat seasonally.

Need to champion the eating of vermin i.e. deer, rabbit

Ideally, we would have people with a good foundation in land management before they rent/buy property. Advantageous for Council to teach this.

Does Gardens for Harvest conduct home visits like Gardens for Wildlife? *No*

Integrated programs – leverage this program to promote other programs.

Can we organise a tour of The Cape Community Farm? *This was provided as an example only.*

ACTION	Supply Community Garden Guidelines	Kym Saunders
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### 3. Open Floor

Further information on the Biodiversity Offset Program is yet to be distributed.

Tree Canopy Strategy

- Update requested.

New Fuel Management Officer

- Update on this program and role requested.

Preparing Australian Communities funding

- program update requested.

Update requested on the private property audit by Graeme Lorimer

Resignations

Lucy Southwell-Hambly and Jeff Barlow

- Jeff Barlow recommended a replacement for his position.

ACTION	Follow up on further information requests - Biodiversity Offset Program Review	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Tree Canopy Strategy update	Jess Rae
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Meeting closed

8pm

Next meeting

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June 5.30pm

## Deferred topics

Urban Tree Canopy Strategy

Amendment C148 – Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme

Revised Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

Firestick program

Progress data set from DEECA